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AN AUDIENCE-ORIENTED APPROACH
TO ONLINE COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH:
THE CASE OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY MUSEUMS' WEBSITES

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Abstract

This thesis investigates online communication in English on European university museums' websites. It explores the extent to which the production of institutional web texts in English is informed by an audience-oriented approach, and more specifically by the awareness of the need to address readers with different cultural backgrounds and different linguistic needs.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches provides the methodological framework for this interdisciplinary research. First, a survey of English-version websites of European university museums is carried out to assess the extent to which the latter produce content in English on their websites. This survey informs the construction of a corpus including a selection of informative and promotional web pages in English from European university museums' websites. The corpus involves two different contexts: one where English is spoken as an official language and another, more diversified one where English is used as an international language. The text analysis focuses on two aspects: the extent to which texts comply with web writing guidelines, and the extent to which they establish a relationship with their intended readers through stance and engagement features. Finally, individual qualitative semi-structured interviews with museum staff from a subset of museums are conducted. These shed light on the processes underpinning the creation of museum web contents in English and the intended audience for whom such contents are produced.

The results of the survey suggest that university museums in Europe tend to provide an English-version website, especially in countries where Germanic or Ugro-Finnic languages are spoken. In turn, the text analyses generally show an audience-oriented approach to communication: in particular, university museums in the UK seem to be more committed to it than university museums in other countries by structuring texts for readability and establishing textual authority and creating engagement with readers. Finally, insights from the interviews reveal that the production of texts in English does not seem to be informed by the idea of a specific intended audience, and even less so a linguistically diverse audience: textual strategies seem to be limited to the use of a generally clear, simple language, which is supposed to be appropriate for all readers, regardless of their cultural and linguistic background.

These results contribute to current research on the conceptualisation of museum audiences, the processes underpinning museum communication and the use of English as an international language on institutional websites. The research stresses the need for an interdisciplinary exchange between museum and heritage studies on the one hand and linguistics and intercultural studies on the other hand.

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1   Introduction

Museums are storytellers (Bedford, 2001): not only do they take care of material and immaterial heritage, but they also use this heritage to tell stories. As well as being quite often *about* people, such stories are told *to* people. Getting to know the people with whom a museum wants to engage and talking to them are thus essential components of the museum mission. Nowadays, due to increased mobility, a challenge for museums all around the world seems to be talking to a more and more diverse audience, comprising people with different cultural backgrounds, and thus potentially different communicative skills and needs. This thesis opens up to the possibility that museums may have to face this challenge by taking into consideration their intended audience and questioning their own communicative approaches. Two different but related scenarios have informed this thesis: on the one hand, the adoption of audience-oriented approaches to communication in museums; on the other hand, the use of English as an international language to engage with a culturally diversified audience.

In the last few decades, research in museum studies has embraced post-modern constructivist theories (G. E. Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 2000b), advocating an approach to the museum experience which is centred on the audience and stressing the importance of considering the social and inclusive mission of museums. The latter have been defined as institutions that serve the public (Hudson, 1998), and thus have to identify the needs and expectations of their intended audiences in order to actively engage with them. Communication has come to play a pivotal role in this context, especially for the interpretation and dissemination of meanings and for the construction of a relationship with museums' audiences. The digital realm seems to be the place where museums can try to reach out to visitors as well as non-visitors in order to foster a constructive dialogue and enact participatory practices (Gil-Fuentetaja & Economou, 2019). Nonetheless, several questions remain unanswered. What is the real impact that an audience-oriented approach has had on museums' communicative practices? Has the museums' awareness of their intended audiences truly affected their communication?

On the other hand, the role of English as an international language has become undeniable, as it is increasingly used among native and non-native speakers of English in different contexts. At an institutional level, many university and corporate websites in a variety of countries have started to provide an English version as a product of an

internationalisation effort: this version may potentially serve a culturally diverse audience, comprising native and non-native speakers of the language. The phenomenon of addressing a culturally diversified audience seems to be relevant both in countries where English is used as an international language and in countries where it is an official language. The following questions emerge from this scenario: which "English" is being used as an international language on institutional websites? Has the language been adapted to be appropriate for a culturally unspecified audience, and if so, how? Finally, have the possible linguistic needs of such audience been considered in order to craft appropriate communicative strategies, particularly in an online environment?

University museums are a particularly interesting case, lying at the intersection of academia, the cultural heritage sector and society. Being affiliated to the university and thus having to comply with its own general strategies to different extents, university museums need to disseminate academic research, but at the same time they are also concerned with public engagement: as a consequence, they have to mediate between the academic community of researchers and the general audience. The question of which audience to address thus seems to be central for them. Nonetheless, scarce attention has been devoted to the communicative approach employed by university museums, and in particular their use of English as an international language.

The current thesis positions itself in this context and aims to observe the extent to which an audience-oriented approach to communication has been adopted by university museums in Europe. In particular, it seeks to reveal the extent to which European university museums have committed to an internationalisation effort by providing contents in English on their institutional websites. This is done by focusing on the English version of European university museums' websites. Drawing from studies on evaluative language and the extensive literature on web writing, this research combines quantitative and qualitative methods to address the question of whether such English-version websites are created for a specific (potentially international) online audience, and examine the extent to which the conceptualisation of the intended audience has had a real impact on communication, especially as far as the relationship between institution and audiences is concerned.

A couple of remarks are in order regarding the terminology used in this thesis. The focus of this research is on two different contexts, i.e. one where English is an official language (UK-EN) and another one where it is an international language (EU-

EN). As it is used in this thesis, EU-EN represents the variety of English spoken in a selection of European countries. Other labels such as ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) were considered for this context, but were discarded as it could not be assumed that English was consciously used as a lingua franca by the institutions involved in the research. The distinction between native and non-native contexts was also rejected as it could not be supposed that EU-EN texts were written/translated by non-native speakers of English. A classification based on the countries of production was thus preferred.

Furthermore, a concept which recurs within this thesis is that of a culturally diverse audience. This expression is employed to refer to a group of people displaying different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and thus potentially different levels of proficiency of English and different linguistic needs: a culturally diverse audience may include foreign people visiting a country for different reasons (e.g. tourism, work or research), as well as different minority groups living in the same country. Other expressions are also used to refer to this concept, such as "culturally unspecified audience" and "multicultural audience". Although they may have different nuances, these expressions will be used interchangeably to refer to the same idea.

This thesis aims to investigate this kaleidoscopic phenomenon by drawing on studies from several disciplines, as a timid attempt to create a bridge between two academic macro-areas that have rarely come in contact with one another, and yet may greatly benefit from an interdisciplinary dialogue: on the one hand, museum and heritage studies, and on the other hand, linguistics, intercultural studies and translation studies. This research partially represents my experience in wandering (and wondering) across these two areas, trying to wear different lenses and mediate between different perspectives.

The thesis is structured as follows. Chapter 2 reviews existing literature in order to position the research within an interdisciplinary theoretical framework: the chapter draws on three main macro-areas — whose labels were created ad hoc to include different but related sub-disciplines — i.e. museum studies, audience-oriented approaches to the study of communication, and studies on multicultural communication and English as an international language. Chapter 3 outlines the methodology, presenting the research questions and describing the triangulation of three different approaches: first, a survey of English-version websites of university museums in Europe, which informed the construction of the corpus of texts to be examined; two text

analyses, focusing respectively on web writing features and on stance and engagement features; finally, individual semi-structured interviews with staff members of a selection of university museums. Chapter 4 reports on the results obtained from the survey of English-version websites and the text analyses, while Chapter 5 outlines the insights from the interviews carried out. Finally, Chapter 6 addresses the main outcomes of this thesis, as well as its contribution and impact, and discusses its limitations in order to suggest possible future directions for research.

2 Literature review

2.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter outlines the multifaceted theoretical background of the present thesis. Studies from a variety of disciplines are reported to shed light on several aspects related to this research, as shown in Figure 2.1, which represents these disciplines as different drawers: museum studies (with a particular focus on audience-oriented approaches, museum communication, digital heritage and university museums), reader-oriented approaches to communication (studies on evaluative language and writer-reader interaction, web writing theories, readability studies and research on popularisation) and communication aimed at a multicultural audience (research on English as a Lingua Franca, translation into an international language, website translation and intercultural communication). Most of these labels were created ad hoc to bring together different sub-disciplines.

Museum studies	Studies on communication	Studies on multicultural communication
Audience-oriented approaches	Writer-reader interaction	English as a Lingua Franca
Museum communication	Web writing	Translation for an international audience
Digital heritage	Readability	Website translation
University museums	Popularisation	Intercultural communication

Figure 2.1. Theoretical framework

2.2 Museum studies

In this section, after a brief overview of the history of museums as culturally situated institutions with a strong educative function (Section 2.2.1), I try to raise a number of points to demonstrate why language and communication have come to play a pivotal role for museums. This has been partially due to new trends emerging in museum

studies (Section 2.2.2), which have called for a shift in perspective, from an object-oriented to a more audience-oriented approach to museum practices. Issues of communication, language and texts in museums are discussed (Section 2.2.3). Furthermore, two different perspectives on museum communication are explored, i.e. a multicultural one (Section 2.2.4) and a digital one (Section 2.2.5), the latter particularly focusing on the effect of the new constructivist perspectives on museum websites (Section 2.2.5.1). The case of university museums is then described to highlight their peculiarities (Section 2.2.6). Finally, what has been reported in the previous sections is summed up (Section 2.2.7).

2.2.1 Museums in the history

Museums are cultural institutions that intrinsically belong to our modern societies. Most of us have visited a museum at least once in our lifetime and would be able to give a definition of what museums are, something which will be probably based on our own experience. Nonetheless, there is no such thing as "the museum", which is just "an imaginary phenomenon", an "abstraction" (Hudson, 1998: 45). Museums are not all the same, as many different types of museums exist around the world. Even museums focusing on the same subject matter, such as natural history museums, are not all alike, but rather differ on a number of levels, e.g. in terms of museological approaches, intended audiences and cultural factors. Furthermore, a single museum is not a fixed, static institution, but rather evolves over time due to societal and cultural changes and new needs, as well as the input of new staff, audiences or stakeholders. Therefore, the assumption that an "essential museum" exists is questionable: there is no one pre-determined, stable definition of it which can embrace the many different forms of "museum" as we all know it, but rather an evolving, multifaceted concept (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 191), as confirmed by the impressive range of different proposals for the new ICOM definition of museum[1].

Education has been one of the most important functions performed by museums since the birth of the first public museums (G. E. Hein, 1998). The first "cabinets of curiosity" were born in the Renaissance as private collections used to highlight the economic power of wealthy merchants (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 78). At the end of the

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[1] See ICOM's website: https://icom.museum/en/news/the-museum-definition-the-backbone-of-icom/.

fourteenth century, these collections proliferated and some of them were made partly open to visitors — mainly scholars, intellectuals and travellers — as a display of superiority and wealth. After the French Revolution, most private collections were dispersed and later reconstituted in public spaces (e.g. the Louvre): our current conception of museums was born then, with the aim of educating the "general" public (Bennett, 1995). As a matter of fact, "museums are creations of the Enlightenment", when the aim was to construct a reliable, solid knowledge through reason and rationality (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000a: 13).

In the nineteenth century, museums allowed a limited public access, and were in charge of "the production and dissemination of knowledge", which was organised into "a range of collection-related disciplines": the aim of "the modernist museum" was to fulfil an "encyclopaedic" function and represent the universal knowledge through the creation of a comprehensive collection (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000a: 14). During the second half of the century, museums were mostly focused on emphasising the authority of governments by exhibiting the exotic items brought to Europe through the colonial conquests (G. E. Hein, 1998). At the end of the nineteenth century, museums, together with schools, became institutions for the education of the masses (Bennett, 1995; G. E. Hein, 1998), as culture was considered as a useful resource for governing (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). As such, museums were expected to change and improve people's conduct, i.e. to edify and civilise them. In this "disciplinary museum", the "visitor" was intended as the receiver of a message offered by the "curator" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 168). Thus, the relationship — and consequently the communication — between a museum and its visitors was highly vertical (Jung, 2010). This didactic function implied the use of explanatory texts on the works on display in order to make them accessible for the public. It was at that time that museums started to employ most of the education tools which are still widely used today, such as didactic labels, events for the general public and activities for school groups (G. E. Hein, 1998). Cheap catalogues and guides were made available, and lessons were held in the museum spaces (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992).

The modernist museum continued to be "the dominant model" for most of the twentieth century (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000a: 15). During the First World War, museums were fundamental public spaces used for education: they provided children with schooling, and conveyed knowledge about health and welfare to the general public

through exhibitions. Museums thus embraced a fundamental educational mission, as well as the responsibility to offer visitors the instruments to interpret what was on display. However, most of the attention was paid on issues related to conservation of the collections, rather than on how to engage visitors with them: museums were "less interested in the public use [...], and more interested in the accumulation of collections" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991: 25). Visitors were assumed to learn and "be enlightened" by their visit to museums (G. E. Hein, 1998: 5). Furthermore, the objects belonging to a collection and the interpretation offered by the curators had the primacy over the audience engagement, as visitors' needs and expectations were not considered. The museum voice was perceived as authoritative, unquestionable and "sacred", and enjoyed a superiority over that of the visitors, considered as "passive recipients of knowledge" (Jung, 2010: 274).

Nonetheless, over the last fifty years scholars — especially in the Anglo-Saxon context — have strongly supported the need for a paradigmatic shift from this traditional vertical relationship to more horizontal dynamics. The appearance of the "New Museology" (Vergo, 1989), the constructivist approach to learning at the museum (G. E. Hein, 1998), the emergence of visitor studies, the idea of the "interactive museum experience" (Falk & Dierking, 1992) and the conceptualisation of the "post-museum" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000b) and the "participatory museum" (Simon, 2010) have all been important contributions paving the way for a change. A general trend has started to recognise that museums need to lose their aura of "uncontested authority" (Reeve & Woollard, 2006: 5), and change the way in which they deal with their educational function, as well as with audience engagement.

2.2.2 Audience-oriented approaches in museology

The paradigmatic shift in approach envisioned by museum scholars from the 1970s on has been a move from the idea of a museum *of objects*, i.e. almost exclusively concerned with collecting and preserving collections, to a museum *for people*, i.e. focused on visitors (and partially also non visitors) as active subjects (Weil, 1999). Different approaches have contributed to this shift.

The "New Museology" proposed by Vergo (1989) advances the need for rethinking the position of museums, criticising the "old", traditional museology for being "too much about museum methods, and too little about the purposes of museums"

(Vergo, 1989: 3). The New Museology is based on the belief that the role of museums within society needs to change: in particular, Vergo (1989: 58) questions whether museums are expected to fulfil an "educational" function, or "simply to give pleasure, to provide entertainment or diversion, to afford a rare opportunity for reflection or quiet contemplation". In addition, the traditional thought of a museum as "a collections-focused, building-based institution" (McCall & Gray, 2014: 20) is considered problematic: scholars start to argue that collections per se occupy too much of a privileged position, while scarce attention is devoted to whom could benefit from those collections, i.e. museum visitors. According to Vergo (1989: 52), curators and exhibition-makers have tended to focus more on the disciplinary content and the display of the exhibitions, and have paid less attention to "the mental set" and "expectations" of "the intended audience". A new branch of research has thus begun to emerge, i.e. visitor studies, aimed at identifying museum visitors, as well as their reasons for visiting, their learning styles and their cultural baggage — who they are, what they know, what they expect and, most importantly, what they need. Overall, the New Museology calls for a redefinition of the relationship that museums establish with different communities, pointing to the need for broadening and diversifying museum access, as well as inviting the public to have a more active role in the meaning-making process.

Furthermore, the New Museology recognises that every choice that a museum makes imposes a certain view of the world and places "a certain construction upon history" (Vergo, 1989: 2). Vergo acknowledges that every action performed by a museum to organise an exhibition, such as selecting (or discarding) items and deciding how to display them and what additional information to include or not, is not neutral, but rather contributes to constructing and shaping the narrative created around such exhibition. Through the inclusion of specific objects and their juxtaposition in a certain order, they all become "part of a story one is trying to tell": they are converted from "tokens of a certain culture" into "elements of a narrative", which altogether create "a more complex web of meanings" (Vergo, 1989: 46). This also implies that the story which is selected by a museum is just one among many "possible stories to be told" about the same collection (Vergo, 1989: 54).

Museums have thus started to be identified as institutions which shape knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992) and convey a certain vision and construction of the world. Contents in museums are mediated and constructed: the museum is not "a

repository of the 'truth'", but rather a place where "contents are arranged by fallible and culturally influenced humans" in order to create "stories, narratives to be read and understood by visitors" (G. E. Hein, 1998: 151). The choice of contents and the way of displaying and talking about them is itself a construction: thus, the knowledge transmitted in museums is not something undisputed. This definition of museums acknowledges the fact that "multiple levels of meaning" exist (Stylianou-Lambert, 2010: 138): the single totalising interpretation imposed by the museum is contested to open up to multiple perspectives and interpretations.

Social constructivist theories of education have also played an important role in redefining the museum educational function and the role of visitors. Hein (1998: 3) recognises that museums need to take into account the visitors' learning experience at the museum due to their established educational role and "the increasing pressure on museums to justify their existence". He argues that theories of learning can be positioned on a long continuum, with two extremes representing two opposite arguments. According to Hein (1995: 2), at one extreme is the assumption that "learning consists of the incremental addition of individual 'bits' of information into the mind": this perspective is based on the idea that knowledge exists a priori as an independent reality from the learner, who starts as "a tabula rasa" and absorbs information in a unidirectional way. At the other extreme is the constructivist belief that "knowledge consists only of ideas constructed in the mind" of the learner (G. E. Hein, 1995: 1). Learning is thus intended as an active process, as the learner is involved in the meaning-making process and actively constructs knowledge.

Constructivist education is based on two assumptions: firstly, learning is mediated by the active involvement of the learner; secondly, the interpretations constructed by the learner do not need to be "validated" by the museums as they do not need to "conform to some external standard of truth" (G. E. Hein, 1998: 34). Hein claims that museums and their exhibitions differ according to the theory of learning embraced. The "constructivist museum" is one where the visitor engages in an active process of knowledge creation — which is itself a constructive act — by making meanings out of the exhibition and drawing personal conclusions. In order to facilitate this process, a constructivist exhibition needs to provide multiple "entry points", without a fixed, pre-determined path, but also several different learning modalities and activities to "present a range of points of view" and enable visitors to connect the

acquired information with life experiences (G. E. Hein, 1998: 35). The latter is of paramount importance, as visitors need to be able to relate the museum experience to prior knowledge. Ultimately, the constructivist museum as proposed by Hein prioritises the visitor/learner as an active agent, as opposed to the content of the museum itself.

The concepts of visitors and "audience" have thus acquired a more active meaning: there has been a shift from "education" as an action performed by the museum to "learning" as an action performed by visitors, who are no longer conceived as passive addressees, but rather as active learners (Falk & Dierking, 2013; Henning, 2006; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Hudson, 1987; Lang, Reeve, & Woollard, 2006). The conceptualisations of heritage have also changed, according to a more user-centred perspective (Conway & Leighton, 2012) based on the visiting "experience" and on new modes of interaction with visitors. The visit to the museum has started to be regarded as a personal learning experience made by the visitor, opposed to passive transmission of knowledge (Falk & Dierking, 2013): visitors are now able to construct their own individual, differentiated experience.

Falk and Dierking (1992) provide a holistic framework with which to approach the museum experience, what they refer to as the "interactive museum experience", later refined and defined as "the Contextual Model of Learning" (Falk & Dierking, 2000). According to their framework, learning is not an "abstract experience" but is "situated within different contexts" (Falk & Dierking, 2000: 10), i.e. personal, social, and physical context, each one including factors which contribute to create the visiting experience. Personal factors may be preferences, expectations, prior knowledge, which have a great impact on the way visitors experience museums. Visiting museums is also a social activity: it may be either an individual or a collective experience where "cooperative learning" takes place (Falk & Dierking, 2013: 157). Finally, physical factors also contribute to the museum experience, including the structure and size of the building, the disposition of the objects of display, and the feelings they evoke. Falk and Dierking (2000: 10) claim that "learning is the process/product of the interactions between these three contexts", which overlap among them and are not stable, as they change over time. In addition, they argue that learning as it happens in museums is "free-choice", as opposed to formal learning in other contexts, such as schools (Falk & Dierking, 2000: 13).

Another fundamental contribution to the field of museum studies comes from Hooper-Greenhill, who claim that objects in museums acquire meanings according to interpretive frameworks which are culturally situated, assuming that different interpretive frameworks can be adopted to apply different meanings to the same object (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000c). The encounter between subjects (i.e. visitors) and objects occurs according to the way in which objects have been selected and displayed. Furthermore, she criticises the traditional idea of the audience as a single, integrated group, thus stressing the need for carrying out visitor studies in order to get a better understanding of the variety of visitors and communities. Finally, she postulates a new, emerging concept of post-modern museum, i.e. "the post-museum", which is still in its embryonic stage. Although she does not describe it in detail, Hooper-Greenhill outlines some of its characteristics by distinguishing it from "the modernist museum". According to her, the museum of the future is not defined by a single space, but can occupy different places and take different forms, as it is conceptualised as "a process or an experience" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000b: 152): the focal point does not seem to be the architecture, nor the display of the collections, but rather the diverse communities participating in the museum-related processes.

More recently, other scholars have engaged in this discussion around the roles expected to perform by museums in relation to their audiences. Among them, Simon promotes the idea that museums can demonstrate their value in the contemporary society by engaging people as "cultural participants" instead of "passive consumers" (Simon, 2010: i). Simon invites museums to combine the promotion of institutional goals with community engagement, so as to create "a participatory cultural institution", i.e. "a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content" (Simon, 2010: ii). Drawing on the idea of the audience-centred museum and the constructivist learning theories, Simon proposes the need for creating "diverse, personalized, and changing content co-produced with visitors", thus recognising the importance of the visitors and their contributions to the museum: ultimately, she rejects the concept of the museum "being 'about' something or 'for' someone", but supports that of the museum being "created and managed 'with' visitors" (Simon, 2010: iii).

Overall, in the last few decades scholarship in museum studies has started to address the perceived failings of the modern museum, criticised for being mainly underpinned by values of preservation and conservation. Scholars have called for a

"reconceptualisation of the museum-audience relationship" and "the recognition of differentiated audiences" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000a: 28-29). They have further recognised the importance of the active role of visitors in the construction of meanings, and called for the need for engaging them as co-producers of museum contents. Museums have been invited to shift their priority — from collection-based organisations viewed as "treasure-houses" to "centres of activity and discussion" around the past, the present and the future (Hudson, 1998: 50): while the "old-style museum" used to see its collections as its major responsibility, museums are now increasingly expected to "serve the public" (Hudson, 1998: 43). Post-modern perspectives to museology have stressed the need for a paradigmatic change, "from an object-oriented to an experience-oriented approach", which is centred on the visitor (Babic & Miklosevic, 2013: 309). The emphasis has moved from the collection as depository of meanings to the visitor as subject of the museum experience and producer of meanings. Museums are increasingly required to be "people-centred" institutions (H. S. Hein, 2000) where multiple perspectives, coming from different interpretative communities, are encouraged. Museums nowadays thus face new challenges, which are contributing to the changing contours of these institutions: on the one hand, "issues of narrative and voice", i.e. "what is said and who says it"; on the other hand, "an issue of interpretation, understanding and construction of meaning" (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000a: 18).

Some scholars, such as Smith (Smith, 2014) and McCall and Gray (2014), have questioned whether the principles advocated by these new perspectives have actually had a practical impact on museum approaches: many have argued about the possibility that a "constructivist museum" or a "post-museum" do not exist yet, and have set up to conduct analyses of current museum practices in order to investigate the extent to which the proposed changes have actually occurred. However, it is clear that these new trends in museum studies have contributed to the emergence of the conviction that communication plays a fundamental role for museums: in particular, the adoption of a more audience-oriented approach has called for a thoughtful consideration of the intended audience for museums, which may also affect their communicative approach.

2.2.3 Museum communication: language and texts

Partially due to this renewed attention towards the audience and the learning experience, there is a large body of literature that has acknowledged the centrality of communication in museums (Coxall, 1991; Ferguson, MacLulich, & Ravelli, 1995; P.

McManus, 2000; L. Ravelli, 2006; L. J. Ravelli, 1996; Weil, 1995). These studies have revealed that the generation and transmission of meanings in museums depend on the use of *language* − considered in a broad sense as either verbal or visual. Museums are "language rich", as they may be crowded of objects as well as texts (Fritsch, 2011a). Therefore, language plays a fundamental role to create and mediate meanings in the museum context, as stressed by Ravelli (1996). People who are not familiar with an object may feel excluded from the interpretation of the meanings involved (Weil, 1995), and may thus need a form of "mediation" of knowledge: objects need to be interpreted and contextualised, so that meanings can be accessed by everybody. Curation and methods of display create a context and give a voice to the objects by telling a story about them (Coxall, 1991), which has been broadly defined as "interpretation" within the museum context.

The role played by interpretation and interpretive texts in museums has been much debated, especially in relation to learning and visitor research (Fritsch, 2011b). Tilden (1977: 8) defines heritage interpretation as a function performed by museums, national parks and other cultural institutions describing it as

> "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience, and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information."

Although Tilden's definition has been largely adopted in the museum context, it has also been criticised. According to Staiff (2014: 37), the inherent idea of "revelation" seems to create "a hierarchical power relationship" between the knowledgeable expert and the non-expert, and suggests that a profound meaning resides in the objects in the first place. Nonetheless, in light of the new constructivist theories (cf. Section 2.2.2), it is thought that "meaning does not lie crystallized within physical objects" but is mediated through different forms of "representation" (Staiff, 2014: 37). Ludwig (2015: 10) also acknowledges the multiplicity of possible "meanings", which is inherent in Tilden's definition, as any object or event can have "different meanings for different people". The author further stresses the importance of language for interpretation, claiming that the latter "means translating the language of the phenomenon, the sender [or object], into the language of the listener, the receiver [or visitor]" (Ludwig, 2015: 23), which seems to point to the need for a popularisation effort (cf. Section 2.3.4). Beck and Cable (1998: 1) define interpretation as "an informational and inspirational

process designed to enhance understanding, appreciation, and protection of our cultural and natural legacy": this process enables visitors to "see, learn, experience, and [be] inspired firsthand" (Beck & Cable, 1998: 3). Finally, Lahav (2011: 80) conceptualises interpretation in museums as a "specialist form of writing", which may take different shapes, e.g. wall texts, object labels, leaflets and exhibition catalogues. Other interpretive resources or activities may be talks, tours, audio guides, guided and self-guided tours and digital interactives.

The concept of language as "a system for creating meaning" which is used to describe and understand reality (Ferguson et al., 1995: 4) is connected with the constructivist theories of learning (cf. Section 2.2.2): knowledge is constructed through language in a manner that represents a certain socio-cultural vision of the world. Coxall (1991) claims that through the choice of what is stated and what is not stated — as well as how it is stated — museum texts convey "implicit or mediated meanings" which are influenced by the people and institutions involved in the content creation: texts reflect the "writer's socially constructed way of looking at the world", as well as the "policies and aims of the museums" (Coxall, 1991: 90-2). Although museum texts have long enjoyed an "aura of unquestioned truth" (Coxall, 1991: 93), scholars have claimed that texts can never be completely objective and impartial. Language per se cannot be considered as a neutral medium (Ferguson et al., 1995), and "the construction of language is itself a construction of reality" (Coxall, 1991: 93). Museum texts convey a certain construction of knowledge according to the ways language is shaped, but they also establish a specific role and "relationship between the museum and the visitor/user" in terms of textual authority (Bradburne, 2005: 8). Who is speaking in museum texts, who they are speaking to and what are speaking about are relevant questions that need to be taken into account for a complete understanding of how a museum acts, "not just [as] a preserver of precious relics but [as] an information link with these objects and the world" (Coxall, 1991: 93).

Kinsley et al. (2016: 57) maintains that museums need to pay attention to the way they communicate as it "can inadvertently exclude and alienate visitors", depending on the choice of words. The use or omission of certain words may convey and legitimate dominant narratives, and thus "perpetuate unjust power dynamics" (Kinsley et al., 2016: 57). For instance, the authors argue that in some cases the use of the personal pronoun "we" may be dangerous, as it "can provide a false sense of

consensus that can be experienced as marginalizing" (Kinsley et al., 2016: 58). In the example suggested by the authors ("we won the war"), the museum assumes a specific audience and at the same time "exclude[s] anyone with a different experience" (Kinsley et al., 2016: 58). In other cases "we" may refer to an identified group or to humankind in general, and thus it may be more inclusive and less problematic. The authors suggest that a museum may want to make "more inclusive choices that avoid making assumptions about staff and visitors' lived experiences", as well as think carefully and critically about the meanings of a word to understand whether the latter expresses the intended mission of the museum (Kinsley et al., 2016: 59).

A wealth of literature has been published on museum texts. The perspective discussed here is specifically representative of the Anglo-Saxon context, and is largely based on an Anglophone starting point in terms of "plain language" (cf. Section 2.3.2) and audience expectations. Most of these studies have focused on on-site interpretive texts within museums' permanent and temporary exhibitions, e.g. labels, panels, wall texts, take-away information sheets and audio-visual materials. Much of the research conducted (Dean, 1994; Ekarv, 1994; Gazi, 2018; P. McManus, 2000; Serrell, 1983, 1996) has sought to create practical guidelines aimed at improving text readability (cf. Section 2.3.3). For instance, the "easy-to-read method" proposed by Ekarv (1994: 202-3) includes specific recommendations to condense the material but at the same time adopt a "poetic" style: Ekarv recommends the use of short and simply structured sentences, active tense verbs, texts broken into paragraphs, a conversational tone directly addressing the reader and references to the related exhibits. Due to the museums' educative function (Ferguson et al., 1995), scholars have emphasised the importance of mediating between two aspects: on the one hand accuracy and complexity, and on the other hand comprehensibility. Although museums as cultural institutions are expected to provide contents which are scientifically precise and convey the complexity of knowledge, contents need to be easily understandable and appealing to a diversified audience, including both experts and non experts.

Serrell (1983: 19-20) describes the notion of "average visitor" to suggest that museum texts are made not only for specialists, but also for a "broader audience". Creating contents in a "visitor-friendly style" means giving priority to visitors by trying to understand their needs, expectations, and perceptions: this implies that visitors' experience is more important than "communicating new knowledge" (Serrell, 1996: 92).

Texts should thus "talk" in a language that can be comprehensible to the intended audience. However, Blunden (2006: 31) argues that museum should not "write down for a general audience" in a simplistic way, but rather "write differently": the myth that museums need to "simplify the message" has been questioned, as an over-simplification may lead to trivialising contents, as well as underestimating audience abilities. Therefore, the challenge is finding a balance between these two opposite but complementary forces, i.e. accuracy and comprehensibility.

The issue of accuracy is intertwined with that of technicality. Some have argued that jargon and specialised language should be avoided, as they undermine text clarity (Ambrose & Paine, 2006). However, scholars generally agree on the use of technical terms as an integral part of the language of museums, since avoiding technicality may compromise content accuracy and correctness (Ferguson et al., 1995; L. Ravelli, 2006). Technical terms necessarily describe and define the knowledge concerning a specific subject or domain, but they may be obscure to some readers, so they require a definition or an explanation that make them accessible and clear to a lay public. Ferguson (1995: 5) suggests that defining technical terms is a powerful tool that can be used to "make links between 'ordinary' language and 'theoretical' language", thus creating a common space between the museum experience and everyday life and bridging the gap between correctness and comprehensibility. The way in which a definition is provided can be different according to the targeted audience, the medium where the text is presented and the function of the text itself. Another important aspect is understanding where to introduce technical terms, i.e. on what level of the hierarchy of information offered (Fritsch, 2011a): this applies to different interpretive contexts, such as an exhibition or a museum website.

Another common aspect that is often linked with text simplicity is brevity. Text length has always been regarded as a dilemma, as studies have shown that most museum visitors are not willing to read a large amount of text (Ferguson et al., 1995). For this reason, guidelines usually advise not to overwrite, and to be concise and to the point (Ambrose & Paine, 2006; Ferguson et al., 1995; Kentley & Negus, 1989; P. M. McManus, 1991). Furthermore, "flash writing", i.e. writing quick, short texts, is supposed to contribute to audience engagement in the meaning-making process: according to Bossert (2016: 20), "a flash piece […] requires the reader to fill in the

blanks using their own experience and imagination", thus fostering participation and learning.

Bartlett (2016: 32) claims that experiments in cutting down exhibition labels have been successful, as this enables to "increase visitor reading". She argues that technology has transformed the way we read and process texts: nowadays, people are generally not used to read long, dense texts, especially on screens or in situations where they are not comfortable — e.g. standing for a long time in a crowded place. However, the author refers not just to "decreasing the number of words on a text panel", but also to "simplifying the language, and increasing visuals" (S. Bartlett, 2016: 31). Nonetheless, short texts are not necessarily more understandable: a short text may include few sentences, but be packed with information, resulting in a great amount of effort by the reader, who needs to "unpack" words or groups of words which are highly meaningful and necessary for the comprehension of the text. A long text, instead, may contain fewer complex words, but have many complicated, whirling sentences that need to be unravelled.

Ravelli (2006) draws on Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (1985) to explain that complexity is an ambiguous term which has to be broken down into two meanings: on the one hand is lexical complexity, i.e. the complexity related to the words used in a text; on the other hand is grammatical complexity (or intricacy), which depends on the structure of sentences. Lexical complexity is typical of written language, which is usually lexically dense, i.e. full of lexical items carrying meaning: this is the consequence of the use of linguistic devices such as nominalisations, a higher number of lexical than grammatical items, technical terms, abbreviations and acronyms. On the other hand, grammatical complexity is a distinctive feature of spoken language: while speaking, people tend to use an intricate system of sentences, each new one adding to the latter and creating a complex syntactical structure, e.g. through the use of subordinates and passive voice verbs. Nonetheless, a written text may be "more spoken" and a spoken text may sound like a "written" text: Ravelli (2006) explains that this is true because medium and mode do not coincide. The medium is "the channel of communication", i.e. "the physical way in which communication takes place" (L. Ravelli, 2006: 50): if one is speaking, then the communication occurs through a spoken medium, while a paper text is conveyed through a written medium. However, not all texts occurring in the same medium work in the same way: somebody who is speaking

may "talk like a book", while a book may report a conversation and thus sounds like it is "spoken" (L. Ravelli, 2006: 50).

Ravelli (2006: 72) argues that the difference between the "old modernist museum" and the "new post-museum" can be described in terms of different "interactional approaches": while the former prefers to perform the role of the "authoritative expert" and talk to the visitor as "novice" through the use of a formal, impersonal style and a neutral, objective stance, the latter (i.e. the post-museum) aims to establish a relationship with the visitor as equal partner by adopting a more informal, personal style and an opinionated, subjective stance. Table 2.1 shows the differences between the two approaches.

	Old modernist museum	New post-museum
Roles	Authority to novice	Equal partners
Style	Formal/impersonal	Informal/personal
Stance	Neutral/objective	Opinionated/subjective

Table 2.1. "Old" and "new" interactional approaches (adapted from Ravelli, 2006)

Text structure and organisation are other ways to enhance text clarity. A good structure of headings and sub-headings, the use of a topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph, the concept of writing one paragraph per idea, the Theme-New structure — these are all devices that improve comprehensibility and readability (cf. Section 2.3.3). The basic idea of these devices is to present the most relevant information so that it is easy to spot through scanning. As far as organisation is concerned, Ferguson (1995: 8) suggests that museums cannot rely on "visitors having already read 'preceding' texts", because each visitor will decide what path to follow within an exhibition — the same being true for online navigation (cf. Section 2.3.2.2). This is why it is helpful to make each section of the text "self-contained" (Ferguson et al., 1995: 8), so that it can be a meaningful stand-alone section.

Coxall (1991) and Ravelli (2006) criticise some of the most common writing guidelines and readability formulae found in museum contexts, because they are based on "linguistic fallacies" (L. Ravelli, 2006: 64). According to Ravelli, the level of comprehensibility simply cannot be judged according to a fixed set of parameters, "nor any magic (or scientific!) formula" (L. Ravelli, 2006: 68), as the ability to understand a text depends on a variety of factors characterising communication. However, Ravelli recognised the importance of these guidelines — e.g. use active verbs, keep sentences

short, and avoid jargon — because they have nonetheless provided insightful perspectives on language, and most importantly they have drawn attention to linguistic issues in the museum context.

Studies in linguistics have also investigated museum communication. Liao (2011) focuses on how museum texts mediate between visitors and objects on display. According to the author, exhibition labels are a site of interaction between writers and receivers, and guide the process of meaning-construction, which takes place throughout reading: her assumption is that "writers and readers mutually anticipate and infer each other's responses" (Liao, 2011: 101). Lazzeretti (2016) offers a diachronic perspective to museum communication by focusing on a specific textual genre, i.e. museum press releases. Through a corpus-based discourse analysis and a genre analysis of press releases published by eight British and American museums from 1950 to 2016, the author describes the typical features of this genre, and explores how it has evolved after the emergence of the new technologies.

Few linguistic studies have explored museum communication on their websites and social media. Among them, Bondi (2009) focuses on description and evaluation in exhibition presentations on museum websites, by considering these as a promotional genre: the study highlights specific promotional strategies, such as the use of evaluative language to describe the exhibition and the works of art, and the effort for establishing "a relationship with the potential visitor" (Bondi, 2009: 127). A different stance is taken by Saiki (2010), who assesses the degree of user interaction through a content analysis of the education section of a selection of US costume and textile museum websites by considering five cognitive levels, each one facilitating a certain degree of user interaction. Her research shows that museum websites generally allow a low degree of interaction, and are mainly designed to invite users to visit the museum. Finally, Sabatini (2015) adopts a contrastive approach and analyses "Museum Discourse" in English and Italian texts from museum websites through two case studies, i.e. Tate Gallery in London and the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Turin: by focusing on their mission statements, he investigates the different textual features employed by the two museums to "set an authoritative self-representation and establish rapport with their respective audiences" (Sabatini, 2015: 105).

2.2.4 A multicultural perspective to museum communication: translation in museums

The increased attention to audiences and to the important role played by language and communication have contributed to the museum acknowledgement of the need to serve and engage culturally and linguistically diverse audiences. Although museums have only recently recognised strategies for including multilingual audiences, translation and multilingual practices in museums have gained momentum, and have started to receive attention by the academia.

Translation, intended in a very broad sense, is not a foreign concept in museums, but a key process embedded in museum practices. Sturge (2007: 130) argues that the museum itself — especially the ethnographic museum — is a form of translation and mediation meant as a "representation of cultures". According to the author, museums employ a variety of sign systems to produce meanings around the objects displayed. Sturge claims that "the Other", i.e. the people represented through the collection, is not a given, but is created by the curator through a form of translation. In this scenario, the "source text" of this translation process is the culture represented, the ethnographer or curator acts as a cultural translator, and the artefacts on display are the products of the translation carried out for the visitors, who are the witnesses of how otherness has been translated and represented in, through and by the museum. The "translation" Sturge refers to is also a linguistic one, as the written discourse of the explanatory texts accompanying artefacts acts as a further "translation" of the objects.

However, other forms of translation also occur in museums, which have to some extent committed to translating their texts into other languages, either for international tourism or for the integration of local minorities. Research on multilingualism in museums has underlined the basic dilemma that many museums face, i.e. whether or not to embrace multilingual practices to engage different audiences in the co-construction of meanings. Most of the studies in this area come from the North American context and focus on the extent to which museums provide on-site bilingual or multilingual materials in different formats, as well as the visitors' perception of these resources (Jenni Martin & Jennings, 2015). Garibay and Yalowitz (2015) challenge the most common assumptions used by museums as justifications for not committing to multilingualism: e.g. they argue against the ideas that linguistic diversity is not a common issue and that creating multilingual contents is too expensive and challenging.

Similarly, Renner (2003) discusses reasons for committing to bilingualism/multilingualism in museums in order to facilitate the dialogue between first and second-generation immigrants (N. O. Renner, 2003: 15).

Champ (2016) claims that not only does a bilingual effort foster inclusivity, but it also improves the quality of all visitors' experience. Providing exhibition contents in different languages is a "multistep process" which requires the museum staff to thoroughly consider "the key messages" of the exhibition (Champ, 2016: 43), due to the limited space available for each language: ultimately, texts in both languages benefit from this process in terms of quality. Champ presents situations where the translation process contributed to the improvement of the original text, e.g. when a sentence in the original language (in this case, English) did not have "much substance" (Champ, 2016: 45) or was misinterpreted by the translator: in these cases, the museum staff realised that the original text needed to be partially rewritten in order to be clear for visitors.

Renner et al. (2015) present the results of the Bilingual Exhibit Research Initiative on the current state of bilingual exhibits for informal science education. Interviews with staff showed that professionals first created exhibit content in English, and then translated it into Spanish. One respondent suggested that they are not at "the co-development stage yet" (N. Renner et al., 2015: 72), thus referring to the possibility of working on English and Spanish contents simultaneously, which may ideally facilitate the process and improve quality. Some interviewees also noted that sometimes the translation process contributed to a refinement of the English texts.

Kelly and Leyman Pino (2016) highlight some best practices for the process of translation and "remediation" of the contents at the San Diego Natural History Museum to engage with the increasing Latino population, e.g. using "neutral" Spanish, "which will be understood by the majority of Spanish speakers" (E. Kelly & Leyman Pino, 2016: 52). Although "neutral" language seems to refer to avoiding words belonging to a specific variety and used only in a country/region, the concept remains quite vague.

Soto Huerta and Huerta Migus (2015) report concerns as to whether the translation may be satisfactory and successful, and thus whether the effort is beneficial. Providing on-site contents in two languages requires practitioners to limit the amount of content to accommodate texts in both languages, which is definitely a challenge. Furthermore, the decision of providing multilingual contents requires the museum to

manage the translation process, as well as decide in which language(s) to translate the texts: the choice of offering contents in a language and not in other languages may still involve a discrimination against other linguistic communities.

Petry (2017) argues that providing contents in more than one language is often a matter of international tourism, rather than an effort to engage with local minority communities (Petry, 2017: 447). Petry suggests that museums may employ alternative strategies to welcome local minorities, e.g. training bilingual members of the staff to orally translate exhibition texts or provide guided tours in another language.

A different approach to linguistic and social inclusion is proposed by Clarke (2013), whose research explored museums as sites for language learning by adult migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The author suggests the possibility of integrating English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision in museums in an Anglo-Saxon context in order to foster confidence and linguistic competence, as well as facilitate social inclusion.

The European scenario is more diversified: multilingualism appears to be a major challenge for museums in order to widen audience engagement and address different linguistic communities, both at a local and at an international level. For instance, Shelley (2015) explores how inclusivity is addressed by museums in Belgium, where different communities speak different languages: she draws on linguistic and performance theories to suggest the possibility of creating interactions between museums and multilingual audiences through a variety of communicative forms, e.g. live performances.

As far as websites are concerned, the need to limit contents to include texts in more than one language may not be an issue, but problems of budget and language choice do apply online as well. Museum websites may be accessed not only by the local community, but also by distant, international users, which may make the choice of language(s) more difficult. Furthermore, in many cases only a selection of web pages are translated into other languages, resulting in a gap between the amount of contents available in the "dominant" language and that in other languages: ergo, museums also need to choose which contents should or should not be translated, as well as whether it is easier to translate those texts or create new ad hoc texts in another language. Few studies have focused on the translation of museum websites. For example, Marlow and

Clough (2007) carried out a study on Tate Online, i.e. the website for Britain's Tate art galleries, investigating the linguistic needs of international users visiting the website. Tate Online offered a great deal of material which could be of international interest, but at the time when the research was conducted, most of it was only accessible in English.

Studies in applied linguistics and translation have focused on specific aspects related to the translation of museum exhibition texts. Neather (2012: 198) investigates the relationships "within and between differing systems of signification" in Chinese museums offering bilingual texts in Chinese and English. In particular, he stresses the essential intrasemiotic and intersemiotic relationships between objects, texts and museum spaces (Robert Neather, 2005). Guillot (2014: 75) further investigates the extent to which "the language used in museum texts reflect[s] culturally determined 'ways of seeing'". The author points out that little work has been devoted to interlingual museum translation, and comments on Ravelli's study on museum texts, stressing its "monolingual (English) stance" (Guillot, 2014: 78). According to Guillot, the paradigmatic shift advocated by museum academics such as Ravelli has resulted in a communicative change from a "formal, objective, impersonal language style" to "a more informal, interpersonal, subjective style" (Guillot, 2014: 78). According to Guillot, this new approach to museum texts may not be working in non Anglo-Saxon scenarios. A comparison between texts from British and French thematic art exhibitions revealed deeper differences which "are likely to promote different responses" from the readers according to their cultural background (Guillot, 2014: 89): in her study, native French and Spanish-speaking students perceived exhibition texts in English as "excessively simple, in content and form"; native German-speaking students thought they were "not explicit enough"; finally, native English-speaking students perceived the texts translated into Spanish and French as "formal, specialised and distant" (Guillot, 2014: 74). This seems to point to the need for considering the cultural system of the intended audience (cf. Section 2.4.4).

Sonaglio (2016) examines the translation of object labels from Italian into English in Italian museums, and how they reflect specific museological approaches. Drawing on Ravelli's framework (2006), she analyses "how translation deals with the ideational and interpersonal choices of the original text by examining in particular issues of transitivity, modality, attitude and the use of cultural specific items" (Sonaglio, 2016: 2). Results show that the target texts in English reflect "socio-cultural norms"

belonging to the target culture, and more specifically to the Anglo-American museology, which privileges "less formal text and more subjective discourse devices" (Sonaglio, 2016: 227-8). Other studies have investigated the assessment of translation quality of museum texts (Jiang, 2010; Leiva Rojo, 2018).

The case of English used as an international language, which is thus expected to serve a museum multicultural audience, has not been fully explored. Chen and Liao (2017) investigate how national identity is outlined in Chinese museum texts and reframed in their translations into a different language, i.e. English, designed for international visitors. Having different cultural backgrounds, the latter rely on the information provided in interpretive texts in order to make meaning out of objects which may not be familiar to them. Translated museum texts thus act as "a further layer of mediation in museum communication" (Chen & Liao, 2017: 58). The scholars focus on Taipei 228 Memorial Museum, and compare the exhibition texts in Chinese and their translations in English, suggesting that translation shifts may produce "a different narrative of national identity" for international visitors (Chen & Liao, 2017: 65).

Petry argues that English is considered the "default *lingua franca*" (2017: 443, emphasis in the original), which is why most cultural websites offer contents in English in order to address international tourists, while little material is provided in the languages of the largest minorities. The assumption that English can be used as an international language does not provide any clues on whether contents in English can be inclusive to everybody, as it does not account for the differences within the audience, e.g. in terms of language proficiency and cultural background. Scholars seem to be partially aware of the problem of addressing people with varying degrees of language proficiency: for example, McManus (2000) recommends to keep in mind those readers who do not consider English as the first language, and help them by using "simple words and sentences without subsidiary clauses". Similarly, Ferguson (1995: 28) suggests avoiding "references that are culturally specific" and which could be incomprehensible to non-English speaking visitors/users. Nonetheless, research does not seem to have addressed the issue of addressing English-speaking readers with different cultural backgrounds, and thus the question of whether an Anglo-Saxon approach to writing museum texts may be appropriate for that audience. The question of whether communication in English works for any reader with some kind of understanding of the language remains unanswered: in particular, scarce attention has

been devoted to strategies used for writing online user-centred contents in English addressed to a culturally diverse audience.

2.2.5 Digital heritage

In the last few decades, the role played by digital media in museums and more generally in the heritage sector has received great interest, resulting in the birth of a new academic branch which has been called "museum informatics" (P. F. Marty & Jones, 2008) or "digital heritage" (Parry, 2005, 2007). As an emerging field, this has included research on the theory and practice involving the use of digital media in museums for curation, interpretation, communication and learning, both within and beyond the museum walls. Economou (2015) reports a list of the main digital heritage applications: Virtual and Augmented Reality, geographic information systems and 3D modelling, mobile apps for guided tours or virtual exhibitions, gaming, social media, crowdsourcing and intangible heritage. Studies have examined the adoption of digital technologies by museums to create on-site interactive experiences (Parry & Sawyer, 2005; Tallon & Walker, 2008). More recently, research in digital heritage has focused on the use of social media as an instrument which can foster audience engagement (J. Kidd, 2011): studies have underlined that the "web 2.0" has had an impact on museum communication and learning (L. Kelly, 2010; L. Kelly & Russo, 2008), and more specifically that social media may contribute to develop online communities (Gronemann, Kristiansen, & Drotner, 2015), increase users' interaction (Laursen, Mortensen, Olesen, & Schrøder, 2017) and allow practices of users' participation, collaboration and co-creation of meanings through UGC, i.e. user generated content (Jenny Kidd & Cardiff, 2017).

A great deal of attention has also been paid to museum websites as the online institutional space, allowing access to the collections "beyond the four walls of the gallery" (Economou, 2008: 145-6). The first museum websites simply replicated the printed material online and provided practical information. Later on, many institutions have started to digitise their collections to allow the public "to magnify art pieces and delve into technical and historical details" (López, Margapoti, Maragliano, & Bove, 2010: 235). As virtual visits have progressively become popular (Cunliffe, Kritou, & Tudhope, 2001: 229), museums have tried to develop new ways "to increase and improve visitor interaction with their virtual and physical collections" (Lopatovska, 2015: 191). According to Economou (2008: 149), digitised museum contents offer several advantages: first, the site can show "high quality surrogates" of the original

items, which can be zoomed and observed so as to notice details that would not be "clearly visible with a naked eye". Second, the screen enables users to juxtapose "objects normally displayed in different galleries", or even countries, and to see them from anywhere in the world (Economou, 2008: 149). Third, the museum online collection supports formal and informal teaching and learning, offering the chance "to reuse information", as well as "to personalize and adapt the educational or interpretative material" in terms of user learning style (Economou, 2008: 149). Finally, since all contents may be easily offered in different forms, data may be adapted for users with disabilities or for multinational audiences, being it a "potential for combating social exclusion and the marginalization of various groups" (Economou, 2008: 151).

Museums strive to address a heterogeneous audience and accommodate users' educational needs (Zorich, 2008). However, the range of online users is so diverse that it is not possible to limit them to one sort of visitor. Peacock and Brownbill (2007) claim that referring to an online audience for museum websites is anachronistic, as everyone uses the web for their own purposes. Some studies (P. Bowen, 1999) have tried to identify the profiles of users visiting museum websites according to parameters such as age, gender, origin, individual/groups, purposes for visiting, etc. However, Peacock and Brownbill (2007) argue that most studies about online visitors tend to focus exclusively on the identity of users, rather than on what they need and do online. Other studies have examined the most common motivations for online visitors to visit museum websites: among them is the need to get information about museum collections or to look for digital images which are not otherwise accessible (Kravchyna & Hastings, 2002).

According to the needs and expectations that usual online visitors have about museum website resources, Cunliffe et al. (2001: 234) divide online users into four different categories: "potential visitors", who need pre-visit information about the museum collections and facilities, and may decide to visit them; "technical enquirers", who need technical information related to the collections; "schools enquirers", who need information access for school projects; "virtual visitors", who may be interested in visiting the collections but cannot do that in person.

Kravchyna and Hastings (2002) propose a similar typology, dividing online museum visitors into the following groups: people planning a visit to the museum, people who have already visited it, educators, researchers, students, curators, children,

potential museum visitors who are not able to make a real visit, managers and donators. This classification include a type of visitors which was not considered by Cunliffe et al. (2001), i.e. people who have already visited the museum in person and need post-visit information: this sheds light on the importance of promoting the site "before, during, and after museum visits" (P. F. Marty, 2007: 96).

According to a study made by Roth-Katz (2012), 57% of the users visiting a museum website before seeing the museum stated that the information found online increased their desire to visit the museum in person: ergo, not only is a museum website fundamental as a medium of information per se, but it also promotes, facilitates and re-shapes the physical visit. Earlier studies have addressed the role of museum websites in encouraging physical visits to the museums (J. P. Bowen, 2000), compared physical and online visits (Barry, 2006; Thomas & Carey, 2005; Wilson, 2011) or investigated the museum websites in terms of user needs (P. F. Marty, 2008).

Studies have also proposed and tested evaluative frameworks for museum websites. Cunliffe et al. (2001) have examined four methods for evaluating the use of museum websites, i.e. direct observation, log analysis, online questionnaires, and inspection methods. Di Blas et al. (2002) suggest a method for evaluating the quality and usability of art museum websites based on user profiles combined with specific tasks. Pallas and Economides (2008) have developed a Museum's Sites Evaluative Framework (MUSEF) to evaluate 210 websites of art galleries around the world. They distinguish six different dimensions within MUSEF (Content, Presentation, Usability, Interactivity & Feedback, e-Services, and Technical), each one including a set of specific elements. The study reveals that most of the analysed websites need some improvement in relation to Interactivity & Feedback and E-Services.

López et al. (2010) have investigated the presence of "web 2.0 tools" on museum websites by adopting a user perspective approach and searching for 24 identified features, e.g. RSS feed, free or moderated forums, blogs, chat-rooms, games, wikis, commenting tools, tagging tools and sharing tools (connected with social media platforms such as YouTube and Flickr). Results from this study show that these tools are more common on websites belonging to museums located in English-speaking countries, namely the UK and the USA, while Italian, Spanish, and French museum websites seem to use tools that do not actively promote user participation, e.g. static text and images.

Capriotti et al. (2016) have analysed the degree of interactivity of museum websites in order to consider whether museums are employing more dialogic systems in relation to their public: a content analysis was carried out based on two categories, i.e. presentation of information tools and resources for virtual visitor interaction. The former includes different types of resources, i.e. expositive, hyper-textual (use of links) or participative (use of interactive or immersive elements, such as interactive graphics or virtual tours). Results show that the analysed museum websites allow a low level of interactivity, but a general trend towards new approaches for more collaborative communication systems with users can be observed.

Digital technology has constituted a major revolution for museums (P. Marty & Parry, 2009: 307), affecting several aspects of the museum experience, such as instruments used for the visit (e.g. an audio guide or a tablet), location (onsite, online or both), exhibits (e.g. objects or digital files) and exhibitive approach (e.g. a traditional visit or a game). As the boundaries between "inside" and "outside" have blurred and created a "museum without walls" (P. F. Marty & Jones, 2008: 133), it is important to understand how museums may be effectively mediated by their websites (Wilson, 2011: 374): museum professionals cannot "re-create the 'traditional' museum experience" online, but can offer a new, powerful and interactive experience (J. P. Bowen, 2000: 4). Digital heritage is thus an evolving field of research, where communication plays a key role, as demonstrated by a recent publication by Drotner et al (2019), who adopt mediated communication as a key concept to investigate media-related museum practices.

2.2.5.1   Constructivist perspectives on museum websites

Museums have always exerted a certain cultural authority on the public. Walsh (1997: 77) defines this authority as the "Unassailable Voice", i.e. an "impersonal and disembodied" attitude encompassing the whole institutional communication: this has resulted in a "slightly patronizing, intimidating atmosphere", especially in monumental museums having a long history and prestige (Walsh, 1997: 78). Many museums have adopted the same "ivory tower approach" (Walsh, 1997: 83) on their websites, where pages seem the electronic duplicate of the material museum. However, Walsh (1997: 79) claims that the nature of the web does not support this approach, and thus museums need to find a new one for their online presence. According to Walsh (1997: 82-84), effective museum websites a) are regularly updated, b) facilitate interactivity and c)

allow the possibility of showing "the layers of knowledge", instead of a single, totalising interpretation.

According to Cameron (2003), poststructuralist and postmodernist theories facilitated the adoption of the Internet as information architecture: Internet and the new digital media support "new styles of postmodern texts", which are supposed to replace the typical modernist "grand narratives" (Cameron, 2003: 326). Cameron claims that self-perception and interpretation, which are called for by postmodernist theories, are allowed online by features such as "searching and browsing tools, hypertext, hypermedia, and […] semantic maps" (Cameron, 2003: 326). In this scenario, knowledge may be personalised and customised, instead of being a single, stable unit, as the information architecture and the interactivity inherent in the digital media allow "new styles of readership and authorship" (Cameron, 2003: 326). Cameron's study outlines three different "generations" of online collections. The first generation includes "thematic solutions to narrative" based on "a hierarchical story line", privileging certain narratives over others and supporting the cultural authority of the museum (Cameron, 2003: 328). The second provides users with "alternative pathways" to discover the information on the collections by showing "greater contextual possibilities", e.g. through "semantic maps" emphasising relationships and allowing multiple narratives (Cameron, 2003: 329): this approach contributes to "a shift in knowledge/power relationships between museums and users", as the latter are now able to choose their path and construct their own interpretation. Finally, the "potential for a third generation" (Cameron, 2003: 330) is suggested by focusing on four broad groups of users and their needs: curators, collection managers, educators and non-specialists. Insights from this diverse range of users highlight the demand for "multiple skill levels" to meet different learning and entertaining needs (Cameron, 2003: 335). In general, the study reveals that the modernist text, feeding readers with "knowable facts", is still important and preferred by some user groups such as elderly people and educators, but new tools, such as hyperlinks, are also increasingly provided, allowing users to "select and combine information in a new way" (Cameron, 2003: 337).

Hellin-Hobbs (2010) examines how the concept of the constructivist museum (cf. Section 2.2.2), which challenges the assumption of an absolute truth, emerges in museum websites through the incorporation of UGC (e.g. photographs and comments), as well as the use of tagging and folksonomies (i.e. including users' own keywords to

describe museum objects and thus create an alternative taxonomy). The study reports examples where UGC is adopted on museum websites, which may thus contribute to fulfil the constructivist museum approach on the web, e.g. by allowing the use of "vernacular language" to describe art collections whose interpretation generally includes only the "specialist language" (Hellin-Hobbs, 2010: 74). According to the author, the web has offered museums new opportunities to facilitate users' interaction with their collections, and most importantly with their "repositories of knowledge", thus enabling new ways of exploring and interpreting the collections (Hellin-Hobbs, 2010: 73). However, Hellin-Hobbs notes that museum professionals still seem reluctant to include new interpretations, due to issues of trust, cultural authority and knowledge control: if the constructivist approach is adopted on the web, it seems to be relegated there, without being incorporated into documentation or exhibition content (Hellin-Hobbs, 2010: 76). Therefore, the web seems to be a "more anarchic" place (Hellin-Hobbs, 2010: 77) which can support the adoption of a more constructivist approach to knowledge creation and dissemination.

More recently, Gil-Fuentetaja and Economou (2019) have analysed "the communication philosophy" of a large number of museum online catalogues by adopting Hein's (1998) constructivist approach to learning theory and theory of knowledge (cf. Section 2.2.2). The two authors claim that the "new museology" (cf. Section 2.2.2) has affected digital practices of museums, calling for new communication models and new activities, such as crowdsourcing projects (Oomen & Aroyo, 2011; Ridge, 2014). But they also argue that museum websites, and in particular the online collection catalogues, have not received enough academic attention. Their study involves the analysis of a sample of museum online catalogues to categorise how information is organised and presented: the authors assume that the communicative approach of the institution can emerge from the implementation of specific web tools supporting users' exploration, learning and knowledge construction. In order to analyse whether the selected museum websites support the acquisition or the construction of knowledge, Gil-Fuentetaja and Economou draw on Hein's four theoretical models of communication in museums (i.e. the didactic museum, the discovery museum, the stimulating museum and the constructivist museum), arguing they can also be applied to the digital media, and add a new model (i.e. the participatory museum), where users play "an active contributor's role" (Gil-Fuentetaja & Economou, 2019: 6). Institutional intervention and user's possibility of interaction are measured according to specific

parameters, namely user freedom, acquisition of knowledge, and construction of knowledge, which are converted into empirical variables including the following features: presentation of the collections, existence and type of searching tool, presentation format and educational resources. The study highlights a shift in the communicative paradigm of museum websites: although the analysed websites replicate the models proposed by Hein, there seems to be "a growing participatory museum in the digital sphere" (Gil-Fuentetaja & Economou, 2019: 14).

The studies previously discussed seem to point to the assumption that higher degrees of user participation and more possibilities for co-creation have started to be offered on museum websites, which may partially be a result of new museological approaches (cf. Section 2.2.2). This thesis follows this direction of research, aiming at investigating whether such approaches have had an impact on museums' online communication from a linguistic perspective.

2.2.6 University museums

University museums as a specific type of museums have started to gain increasing academic attention in the last few decades. Universities have always had museums and collections for different reasons: since their foundation, European universities have collected art, antiquities and religious items, and have had their buildings decorated in order to increase their prestige. In addition, they have gathered collections for teaching and research purposes, and thus for "the construction and transmission of knowledge in different disciplines" (Lourenço, 2005: 3). However, as Lourenço notes, "collections are the 'dark matter' of universities" (Lourenço, 2015: 59): researchers know they exist, but it is difficult to "measure" them — and in certain cases even to have access to them — which is the reason why a comprehensive survey of European university museums and collections does not seem to exist. As a consequence, the value and peculiarity of this academic heritage has only partially been acknowledged and researched.

The diversity of university museums and collections is astounding, especially in terms of disciplines (e.g. zoology, archaeology, art, science), types (e.g. museums, herbariums, archives, science centres, house-museums, castles), size and management models (e.g. university museums, national museums administered by universities), purposes (e.g. teaching, research, public display), position within the university structure and degree of autonomy (e.g. museums under departments, under faculties,

under the university executive board), as well as in terms of access and intended audience (e.g. open to everybody, open to researchers only, closed and "orphaned") (Lourenço, 2005: 46). As the range of organisations is so diverse, it may be difficult to generalise (M. Kelly, 2001). However, the terms "university museum" and "university collection" are commonly used, the first one representing an organisation which is institutionalised and more structured: a museum is made of collections, but a collection does not necessarily coincide with a museum, because the latter is also committed to the interpretation of collections for academic and, to different extents, non-academic audiences (Lourenço, 2005: 20).

Lourenço (2005: 49-65) offers a historical account of how university collections and then museums were born and developed, spanning from early "collections" from the ancient times to collections accumulated for study and teaching, such as the botanical gardens and anatomical theatres of the Renaissance, which would lead to the first teaching "museums", up to the first university museums. Although the Ashmolean Museum of the University of Oxford is normally recognised as the first "modern" university museum — with a permanent institution and collections accessible to the public since 1683 — the concept of "a primordial university museum" is problematic, as university museums cannot be traced back to a common "ancestor" (Lourenço, 2005: 65). As a consequence of the scientific progress, the quantity and quality of collection-based research increased during the 18th and 19th century, which stimulated the expansion and flourishment of university museums, allowing for what has been defined as the "Golden Age of university museums" (Lourenço, 2005: 66). At the beginning of the 20th century, the "second generation" of university museums appeared, i.e. the historical collections including items which were "no longer relevant for their original purposes" (Lourenço, 2005: 76).

In the second half of the 20th century, three main factors affected the panorama of university museums, as well as their role and public perception, leading to a general "crisis" (Lourenço, 2005: 86). First, the higher education system experienced considerable changes in management, with an increasing number of students and an expansion of universities. Second, the museum sector also saw major advancements, e.g. new accreditation schemes, new museum journals and improved museum staff traning and general standards. Third, the scientific advancements and the introduction of new technologies led to curricular changes and a decreased use of collections for research

and teaching as a product of "a different approach to the generation of knowledge" (Nykänen, 2018 : 13). Due to reduced financial resources and staff, as well as to a lack of interest, museums and collections, which were once used by universities to show their prestige, started to be considered as "a burden" (Dreyssé, 2015: 57). Although the situation varied across different countries, at the end of the 20th century many university museums and collections in Europe "were at best at a crossroads and at worse threatened" (Lourenço, 2005: 87). To complicate this further, some university museums did not have a clear idea of their position within the university, nor within the museum sector as a whole (Stanbury, 2003).

A turning point was marked by the publication of academic articles on the diagnosed "crisis" of university museums (Warhurst, 1984; Willett, 1986). Having recognised this impasse, university museums slowly started to feel the need to gather together and react to the situation in order to protect their collections: many national associations of university museums were founded in Europe and around the world, such as the British University Museums Group (UMG)[2] (1987), the Dutch Foundation for Academic Heritage[3] (1997) and the University Museums in Scotland (UMIS)[4] (1998). International associations were later established, i.e. the European network Universeum[5] (2000) and ICOM's International Committee for University Museums and Collections (UMAC)[6] (2001). Since their creation, the latter two have been organising international conferences and producing a substantial body of literature on university museums. Furthermore, through the creation of UMAC, ICOM, i.e. the most important organisation of museums worldwide, acknowledged "the distinct identity of university museums" (Lourenço, 2005: 7). Another important initiative at an international level was the delivery by the Council of Europe of the Draft Recommendation on the Governance and Management of the University Heritage (2004).

A general trend from the 1960s saw university museums becoming more concerned with public engagement and "the need to serve broader audiences" (Lourenço, 2005: 90). Lourenço (2005: 123) also recognises that many university museums are no longer used for teaching and research; as a consequence, some

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[2] See UMG website: http://universitymuseumsgroup.org/.
[3] See the website of Dutch Foundation for Academic Heritage: https://www.academischerfgoed.nl/.
[4] See UMIS website: http://www.revealing.umis.ac.uk/.
[5] See Universeum website: https://www.universeum-network.eu/.
[6] See UMAC website: http://umac.icom.museum/.

universities are disposing of collections and shutting down their museums, while others are approaching the issue from a different perspective by creating new museums in which to display their collections. At least two issues affect university museums according to Lourenço (2015: 60-1): first, there is a problem of "perception", as university museums are expected to have other museums as "reference models"; second, university museums still do not have a clear understanding of their role within the university and in society.

As noted by Nykänen (2018 : 12), "the only permanent and common feature of university museums and collections is their status as a tangible knowledge bank and a vital component of the academic tradition": university museums can act as repositories of academic knowledge produced through centuries of research. Similarly, Lourenço (2005: 83) stresses that a common element is "the quest for knowledge". As a consequence, the peculiarity of university museums and collections is that they represent "a research track" through the display of their collections (Tucci, 2001: 19). The objects in university collections are at the same time "the sources of knowledge production, the storehouses of that knowledge, and the means of its dissemination" (Robertson & Meadow, 2 000 : 224). University museums are the only custodians of "the material evidence of how scientific knowledge was constructed and taught" (Lourenço, 2002: 52). Furthermore, university heritage is "a living heritage", as it is "constantly developed and created" (Bulotaite, 2003: 450).

The literature on university museums and collections has stressed on the one hand their belonging to the academic world, and on the other hand the "Third Mission" they are expected to accomplish within the university's strategic plan (Talas, Wittje, Mouliou, & Soubiran, 2018). As the cultural role of universities in communities and in society at large has changed, there is a call for the public-oriented potential of university museums to create a bridge between academia and society: not only do university museums increase the university prestige, but they also have the power to "establish new links with the society" (Dreyssé, 2015: 58). This suggests that the role of university museums is important within "the public service and outreach mission of the university" (King, 2001: 19). In order to become "third mission incubator(s)", university museums need to consider communities' needs and perceptions and deliver activities oriented towards "dissemination and social engagement" (Donadelli, Gallanti, Rocca, & Varotto,

2018: 33-4). They are also expected to provide informal learning for all visitors and contribute to the public engagement with academic research (MacDonald, 2008).

One of the fundamental roles performed by university museums as "an integrated part of the university" seems to be that of disseminating "university values" (Burman, 2005: 18): university heritage may be the perfect showcase for the affiliated university in order to develop the brand and "communicate the 'corporate identity'" of the university itself (Bulotaite, 2003: 450). University museums play an important role in interacting with and mediating between two different communities: on the one hand, the internal, academic community of students, scholars, and specialists, and on the other hand the external, public community of "lay people". As the audience includes different groups, the need for an effective communication requires university museums to adopt strategies aimed at each single group, as "one size usually does not fit all" (Kremer, 2014: 130). University museums can be "translators" of academic research by explaining the meaning of complex concepts in a straightforward form for public dissemination (King, 2014: 69). However, this does not mean that museums want to "dumb down their writing" (King, 2014: 70), but that they want to make it understandable to specialist as well as non-specialist audiences through a popularisation effort (cf. Section 2.3.4).

University museums have been defined as "strange beasts", living on the border between academia and the general museum sector (Lourenço, 2005: 156). This is "an uncomfortable hybrid state" (M. Kelly, 2001), as their communicative approach needs to be targeted to a diverse, heterogeneous audience, which is not limited to people from the academia. This fact, as well as their position within the academic sphere and strategies — among them, the internationalisation of universities (cf. Section 2.4.3) — puts university museums in a very interesting place and calls for further research on their intended audience and their language use.

2.2.7 Interim summing up

Section 2.2.1 has served as a gateway to the world of museums, presenting their history and identifying one of their main missions, i.e. education, which makes communication central in museology.

Section 2.2.2 has described the shift from a museum *of objects* to a museum *for people* (Weil, 1999) and constructed *with* people (Simon, 2010). New approaches in

museology have stressed the importance of considering the intended audience (Vergo, 1989), and in particular their needs and expectations: visitors are seen as active learners, who can contribute to meaning-making processes (G. E. Hein, 1995). Understanding the diverse range of visitors and communities, as well as the role that museums wish to play in relation to them, is thus fundamental in order to reconceptualise the museum-audience relationship (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000c).

Section 2.2.3 has highlighted the key role played by language to create and mediate meanings in museums: museum texts convey a certain construction of knowledge and establish a specific relationship between institution and visitors/users (Coxall, 1991). It has been stressed that museum texts are generally made not only for specialists, but also for a broader audience (Serrell, 1983): ergo, the discussion on whether and how to simplify texts has been presented. Issues of accuracy and comprehensibility have also been discussed, especially in relation to textual simplicity and brevity (L. Ravelli, 2006).

Section 2.2.4 has introduced a multicultural perspective, reporting on the translation of museum texts into other languages. It has been noted that readers with different cultural backgrounds may have different responses to museum texts (Guillot, 2014): for instance, Anglo-American museology privileges less formal and more subjective texts (Sonaglio, 2016), which may appeal to different readers in different ways. Furthermore, English seems to be the "lingua franca" for engaging a diverse, international audience (Petry, 2017) and more research may be needed on the use of English in the museum context, taking into account issues of language proficiency and cultural background.

Sections 2.2.5 and 2.2.5.1 have explored relevant studies within the emerging field of digital heritage, in particular those which have investigated museum websites as the online identity of museums. Some scholars have suggested that postmodernist theories have affected the implementation of museum websites and provided instances for co-creation and interpretation (Cameron, 2003), while others have proposed evaluative methods, e.g. focusing on the degree of interactivity of museum websites (Capriotti et al., 2016). Finally, studies have examined whether the constructivist theories have had an impact on museum websites (Hellin-Hobbs, 2010), and in particular on the communicative approach adopted online (Gil-Fuentetaja & Economou, 2019).

Section 2.2.6 has described university museums as repositories of academic knowledge produced through research (Lourenço, 2005). The need to mediate between two different communities, i.e. academia and the "general public", makes university museums a special case, as far as the adopted communicative approach is concerned. In addition, being an academic organ, they are expected to communicate the "corporate identity" of the university itself (Bulotaite, 2003), which means they may be required to commit to university strategies, such as internationalisation (cf. Section 2.4.3).

We now turn to studies from other disciplines (i.e. linguistics and Internet studies) which can allow to investigate the relationship between museum/author and audiences as it is enacted in texts.

2.3 Reader-oriented approaches to communication

As museums seem to have turned to audience-oriented approaches (cf. Section 2.2.2), this section outlines different approaches to the study of communication which can be considered as "reader-oriented", i.e. focused on the readership. The common assumption underlying all the considered approaches is that any text is written for a specific intended audience.

Studies on the intended reader have mainly addressed literary texts, but some of the insights provided may well be applied to other genres. The intended reader has been referred to by different scholars in different ways, such as "mock reader" (Gibson, 1950), "implied reader" (Booth, 1961), "postulated reader" (Booth, 1961), "implicit reader" (Iser, 1972), "model reader" (Eco, 1979), as well as "intended reader" (Wolff, 1971), the latter being the term that will be used in the present thesis — as used in museum studies, e.g. by Vergo (1989). The intended reader is the representation of the reader in the author's mind while writing: as such, Gibson (1950: 266) describes it as an "artefact" by the author. However, the image of an intended reader materialises in the text through the use of specific signs. According to Eco (1979), the author of a text adopts a set of codes with which the reader is assumed to be familiar: this requires the author "to foresee a model of the possible reader", who can supposedly "deal interpretatively with the expressions in the same way as the author deals generatively with them" (Eco, 1979: 7).

This section presents different ways of looking at how the relationship with intended audiences of texts may be studied. Section 2.3.1 discusses linguistic

approaches to investigate how the relationship between author and reader is construed within texts through issues of evaluation, appraisal, stance and engagement. Section 2.3.2 focuses on online readers by drawing from a field, i.e. Internet studies, which does not belong to linguistics strictly-speaking: the section presents the peculiarities of web-based texts, which make reading from a screen different from reading from paper (Section 2.3.2.1), and then offers a different perspective, i.e. guidelines for writing texts aimed at online users (Section 2.3.2.2). Section 2.3.3 explores issues of readability and research on how to study whether texts have been written to be easily readable. Section 2.3.4 reviews linguistic studies on popularisation to shed light on dissemination, i.e. writing texts aiming at a non-specialist audience. Finally, Section 2.3.5 brings together the insights previously offered.

2.3.1   Interaction: constructing a relationship with the intended reader

Extensive research in linguistics has been carried out on the author-audience relationship and on the ways in which this manifests itself within a text through different lexical and grammatical features. Different scholars have investigated this issue from different perspectives, and identified linguistic resources that convey either the position taken by the author or that given to the intended reader within a text. First, four main approaches to the analysis of interaction are discussed to then report on studies specifically concerning the textual presence of the intended readers and a study on evaluation in texts from museum websites.

Biber (2006) has studied the personal stance of the speaker/writer in spoken and written academic registers by focusing on grammatical structures conveying grammatically marked stance. According to him, stance expressions are used in a variety of cases, e.g. to express "attitudes that a speaker has about certain information, how certain they are about its veracity, how they obtained access to the information, and what perspective they are taking" (Biber, 2006: 99). Biber's research confirms that the expression of stance is key in academic registers, but shows that it is more common in spoken academic registers than in written ones.

An analogous approach is that of Hunston and Thompson (2000: 5), who focus on evaluation as a more comprehensive concept. Evaluation expresses a "user-orientation" in texts (ibid.) and may be used to perform different functions, such as expressing one's opinion (and thus reflecting a specific value system), establishing

author-reader or speaker-hearer relations and organising the discourse. Like Biber, Hunston and Thompson adopt a quantitative, corpus-based approach to evaluation. Nonetheless, Hunston (2010: 4) argues in later work that "evaluative language is more suited to text-based than to corpus-based enquiry", and that "very close reading is required" due to the need for analysing the implicitness inherent in it, as well as the context of use. Furthermore, she notes that evaluation "is indicated by such a large range of lexical and other items that it would be pointless to try and list them" (Hunston, 2010: 13).

A different perspective is adopted by Martin and White (2005), who tackle evaluation from the point of view of appraisal theory. Drawing on the systemic functional linguistic paradigm developed by Halliday (1985), the scholars explore interpersonal meanings in language by focusing on "the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts" (James Martin & White, 2005: 1). Martin and White propose the use of this framework — including different levels of semantic resources — for a qualitative analysis aimed at studying interpersonal meanings in texts. Other studies have adopted appraisal theory: e.g. Fuoli (2012) analyses the construction of corporate identity in social reports, while Turnbull (2009) examines the mechanisms of description and evaluation for self-representation on corporate websites.

The fourth approach discussed here is Hyland's model of metadiscourse, which he adopts as "a framework for analysing the linguistic resources of inter-subjective positioning" and "examining how interaction is achieved" (Hyland, 2005a: 196). According to Hyland (2005a: 37)

> "metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate
> interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint
> and engage with readers as members of a particular community."

Metadiscourse embodies the interactions between writer and reader in a text. Hyland's model of metadiscourse distinguishes between interactive resources organising a text and interactional resources expressing evaluation and the writer's textual "voice" (Hyland, 2005a: 49). As writing and speaking are "acts of meaning-making", Hyland stresses that they "are never neutral but always *engaged*" (Hyland, 2005a: 4, emphasis in the original) in the realisation of the writer's interests and positions. Furthermore, Hyland claims that for a text to be successful, it needs to "display the writer's awareness of […] their readers" (Hyland, 2001: 550). This requires

writers to make "evaluations about their audience and their own relationship to this audience", which affects the way in which writers choose to position themselves and their readers within the text (Hyland, 2008: 4). As part of his metadiscourse model, Hyland (2008) proposes a framework which consists of two different dimensions, i.e. stance and engagement: these include specific grammatical devices corresponding to the space that writers create for themselves and for their intended readers within a text. The scholar uses such framework to examine interactive persuasion in academic writing, but the same framework has been adopted by others to analyse different genres, e.g. promotional tourist web pages (Suau-Jiménez, 2016). Hyland's framework seems to be particularly relevant to investigate the intended readership of university museums' websites.

Drawing on Hyland's model, Bondi (2012) argues about the importance of studying the explicitly marked presence of the intended reader, as "reference to discourse participants plays a key role in the textual construction of the identity of the writer and the reader" (Bondi, 2012: 102). Other studies have focused on the presence of the intended readers in different types of texts. For instance, Caiazzo (2011) examines the expression of the writer's stance through the use of "we" on "About" pages of British and Indian university websites. Drawing on studies of corporate communication, Caiazzo analyses how "About" pages convey an institutional profile through the use of promotional strategies. She further suggests that it is important to analyse pronouns and possessive adjectives such as "you", "your" and the inclusive "our" to investigate how intended readers are brought into the discourse.

One of the few studies which have looked at evaluation in museum texts is Bondi (2009), who focuses on museum websites as a place for "online promotion" offering "interesting material for an analysis of how museums communicate with their users" (Bondi, 2009: 113). Bondi explores the combination of description and evaluation in online exhibition presentations. Although she recognises that distinguishing between descriptive and evaluative elements may be difficult, she introduces the notions of perspective and position to identify descriptive and evaluative discourse respectively: the former is connected with "the identification of elements and […] the spatio-temporal relations they establish", while the latter involves "emotional and ideological point[s] of view" (Bondi, 2009: 125). According to Bondi, perspective and position support a twofold promotional strategy: on the one hand, the museum can

stress the value of its collections; on the other hand, it can establish a relationship with its intended audience.

The different approaches described take into consideration the relationship between author and reader in different ways. Hyland's perspective seems the most appropriate to focus on interaction and on the marked presence of the intended readers within the texts: this is thought to allow the study of how museums depict their intended readers, as well as how they seek to interact with them and guide their reading (cf. Section 3.4.3.1).

2.3.2   Web writing: writing for online users

2.3.2.1   Reading web-based texts

Since its emergence, the web has been the object of a variety of studies focusing on the influence of this medium on language and texts. Drawing from some of these studies, we shall now account for the intrinsic characteristics of the web, as they add unique properties to online texts in terms of production, function and reception.

One of the most interesting facts about the web is its architecture based on hypertextuality (Crystal, 2011), i.e. the ability of creating links and allowing information to move freely online. Askehave and Nielsen (2005) define hypertext as "a system of non-hierarchical text blocks where the textual elements (nodes) are connected by links" (ibid: 126). By creating a connection between a point of a web page and a point of another page, a link allows the user to decide whether or not to move from the former to the latter, and in what order to move around one or more websites. Before actually processing information, users constantly need to decide what to read, and whether to continue reading it or move to another page, shaping their own navigating and reading path (Askehave & Nielsen, 2005).

The nature of hypertexts affects both text production and reception on the web. Reading texts online has been defined as "hyper-reading" (Sosnoski, 1999: 135), i.e. a non-sequential way of reading texts. Some scholars do not consider it to be a phenomenon limited to the web: Finnemann (1999) claims that readers skim and scan texts in printed documents as well. However, the main difference lies in the capacity of online users to create their own path through links. According to Finnemann (1999: 27), hypertext triggers a modal change in which two modes are repeatedly activated: the

linear "mode of reading" and the "mode of browsing or navigating". Users online read and navigate, switching from one mode to the other.

According to Nielsen (2000: 101), "reading from computer screens is about 23 percent slower than reading from paper". Human eyes get tired quite fast when reading from a computer screen, and attention decreases quickly. For these reasons, users may not always be willing to read a long text on a website, while they prefer to read short, reduced texts. The way users read web-mediated texts affects the way in which those texts need to be produced. Adapting language and contents to conform to specific guidelines when writing on the web thus seems to be fundamental to meet the needs of screen reading.

2.3.2.2   General guidelines for web writing

Much work has looked at how web-based texts should be written. Web writing principles are the product of a long-standing tradition of writing guidelines referring not only to the web but also to other media, and expressing mainly monolingual, Anglo-Saxon beliefs and practices which are supposed to make texts (in English) easier to read and to understand. One of the trends that have paved the way to this attitude was the Plain English movement (Gowers & Fraser, 1977), which started in the UK towards the end of the 1940s and continued in the US in the 1970s. Many publications have since then appeared on the use of Plain Language (Bailey, 1996; Blamires, 2000; Cutts, 2013; Eunson, 1998) — some of them focusing on specific genres, e.g. legal texts (Wydick, 2005) — which have informed subsequent research on writing for the web. Due to their monolingual perspective, these theories have generally failed to take into account cultural differences (cf. Section 2.4.4), assuming that the same guiding principles may apply to any reader, no matter their cultural background.

Web writing guidelines seem to be especially relevant for the purposes of this thesis, as they share common features with guidelines for writing museum texts discussed in Section 2.2.3, such as Ekarv's (1994) method. Jiménez-Crespo (2011) offers a review of some of the major web writing style guides — mainly intended for website translators. He divides the reviewed writing guidelines into six categories:

- lexical-semantic aspects;
- syntax;

- stylistic aspects;

- structural level;

- typographic aspects;

- iconic-visual aspects.

Here the categories provided by Jiménez-Crespo are used to offer an overview of the "golden standards" of web writing according to the literature. Table 2.2 shows the most common guidelines for producing online texts and the main publications in the field of web writing discussing them.

Categories	Guidelines	References
Lexical-semantic aspects	Use simple, common terms that are easy to understand.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); McAlpine (2001); Newman Lior (2013); Nielsen and Loranger (2006); Redish (2012)
	Be consistent in the terminology used.	Bly (2002); Jeney (2007); Yunker (2003)
	Avoid acronyms and abbreviations, or define them. They may be appropriate in sections intended for specialised/semi-specialised users.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Garrand (2001); Mill (2005); Redish (2012)
	Avoid technical terms, if the section is not addressed to specialists.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Krug (2014); Newman Lior (2013); Redish (2012)
	Avoid slang, clichés, or generalisations.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Jeney (2007); Nielsen and Loranger (2006)
	Avoid ambiguous constructions and polysemous words.	McAlpine (2001); Yunker (2003)
	Use sarcasm and humour sparingly. When used, make it clear.	McAlpine (2001); Mill (2005)
	Avoid language uses limited to certain dialects or regional varieties.	McAlpine (2001)
Syntax	Use a simple syntax: prefer sentences that are simple, short, and complete (max 25 words).	Mill (2005); Yunker (2003)
	Include one idea per sentence.	Mill (2005); Yunker (2003)
	Use the active voice.	Bly (2002); Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Jeney (2007); McAlpine (2001); Redish (2012)
	Start paragraphs with short topic sentences.	Nielsen (2000); Nielsen and Loranger (2006); McAlpine (2001); Mill (2005)
	Use verbal forms instead of noun forms when possible.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Redish (2012)

	Avoid using too many phrasal verbs.	McAlpine (2001)
	Use single verbal forms over periphrasis.	Mill (2005)
	Use descriptive nouns and adjectives.	Garrand (2001)
	Use simple verb tenses when possible.	McAlpine (2001)
Stylistic level	Use a conversational tone and address the user directly.	Bly (2002); Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Garrand (2001); McAlpine (2001); Mill (2005); Newman Lior (2013); Redish (2012)
	Include a positive attitude, e.g. by excluding double negatives and, instead, using positive expressions.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Mill (2005)
	Use an informative style.	Bly (2002)
	Avoid sexist language.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Redish (2012)
	Avoid stereotyped language, e.g. "site under construction", "welcome to my site", "click here!" or "check this out!".	Nielsen and Loranger (2006); Yunker (2003)
Structural level	Divide the information into short paragraphs (3-5 sentences, with 100 words), each one having one idea or communicative purpose.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Krug (2014); Mill (2005); Newman Lior (2013); Redish (2012)
	Chunk the text if it is longer than two screen lengths.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Krug (2014); Nielsen and Loranger (2006); Redish (2012)
	Make each page self-contained.	McAlpine (2001)
	Include the most important information in the first two sentences.	Nielsen and Loranger (2006)
	Use tables and graphics to present repetitive or numeric information.	Bly (2002)
	Use bulleted and numbered lists if a paragraph has four or more elements.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Krug (2014); McAlpine (2001); Nielsen and Loranger (2006); Redish (2012);
	Use a hierarchy of unique, descriptive and concise headings and sub-headings (max 60 characters).	Bly (2002); Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Krug (2014); Mill (2005); Redish (2012)
	Use meaningful links to structure the text. Mark them by underscoring and using a different font colour.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); McAlpine (2001); Mill (2005); Redish (2012)
Typographic aspects	Use bold for emphasis.	Fenton and Kiefer Lee (2014); Krug (2014); Nielsen and Loranger (2006); Redish (2012)

	Avoid underlining for emphasis.	McAlpine (2001); Nielsen 2000
	Avoid using all caps for emphasis.	Nielsen and Loranger (2006)
	Use sans-serif fonts designed for screen reading, e.g. Verdana, Georgia, New York and Trebuchet.	Nielsen (2000)
	Use a 10 or 12 font size.	Nielsen and Loranger (2006)
	Do not use more than four colours as a whole. Black on white is the most legible combination, followed by blue on white.	Nielsen and Loranger (2006)
	Pay attention to intercultural differences in typography.	Jiménez-Crespo (2008)
Iconic-visual aspects	Only use images whenever they complement the communicative purpose of the webpage. Do not replace textual elements with images.	Jeney (2007)
	In case there is text embedded in the images, include it in the content of the "alt" html attribute.	Nielsen and Loranger (2006)
	Use clear, concise descriptions for any image or icon, especially if they serve as a navigation link.	McAlpine (2001); Tercedor and Jiménez-Crespo (2008)

Table 2.2. Recommendations for web writing derived from the literature

First of all, guidelines generally recommend the use of short, simple and common words. More precisely, Krug (2014) suggests that web authors should employ words with which their target audience are familiar: this implies having a good understanding of the intended audience, as well as their needs and expectations. Similarly, Nielsen and Loranger (2006) argue that technical jargon should be avoided, but talking down to readers is not recommended either. Technical terms may — and should — be used when addressing a specialist audience who is already familiar with the subject.

As far as syntax is concerned, web authors are usually advised to use a simple syntax and simple verb structures. Sentences should be concise and to the point, as short, simple sentences are thought to be easier to read. The use of active sentences is especially recommended to make the text easier to process (Bly, 2002).

Many style guides recommend the use of an informal, colloquial style. Users should be addressed directly with "a friendly, lively, individual tone", and web authors should talk "with one person at a time" (McAlpine, 2001: 37). Style guides invite authors to *talk* to the single user, rather than *sell*, as the use of an informative style is more effective. However, an informal style may not be appropriate for certain web

pages depending on the text genre (e.g. legal pages may require a more formal and impersonal tone).

Reading online is usually connected with the concept of scannability. What online users do is scanning the text in order to find relevant information quickly without having to read everything from the beginning to the end. This process should be facilitated by filtering information into short chunks and providing users with visual cues through structuring and formatting, e.g. by using tables, lists, headings, links and keywords in bold. Nielsen (2000: 124) calls them "microcontent", and suggests to use them to condense a "macrocontent" in a very short form, offering readers a gist or an abstract of what they will find in the rest of the contents. Users benefit from these contents in order to decide whether to continue reading the whole page or not.

Typographic conventions are also central, as they facilitate usability and may improve screen reading. A usable website seems to be one that allows users to do something without too much effort and too much thinking (Krug, 2014). A user should be able to figure out how to use and move around a website without thinking about how to do that: for instance, users do not want to stop and wonder whether something is a link or not, as this should be extremely clear.

Finally, most of the literature on web writing pays great attention to iconic-visual aspects, as messages are increasingly conveyed through the use of images. The latter are coded in the HTML language with the `img tag` (image tag). An `img tag` can include several attributes which represent the image metadata, such as source file (`src`), the alternative text (`alt`), and size (`width` and `height`). The alternative text attribute should include a short description of the represented image which allows search engines to index pictures. It also helps visually impaired people access multimedia contents through screen readers.

The reviewed guidelines provide a rather prescriptive approach to writing web-based texts, which is founded on the idea of writing for a specific intended audience, i.e. online users. A selection of these guidelines has been adapted to create a descriptive framework to analyse web-based texts according to general standards that may allow to discriminate texts which have been written to appeal to online readers. Web writing theories have informed one of the analyses carried out for this thesis (cf. Section 3.4.3.1), aimed at investigating whether the examined texts display features which are

thought to help online users enjoy reading from a screen. A note is in order here: this research does not aim to acknowledge or assess the validity or the appropriateness of web writing guidelines — which may be simplistic and not suitable for meeting the needs of a multicultural audience — but it aims to understand to what extent museum online texts display features that are consistent with these guidelines, and thus whether the latter seem to have affected text production.

2.3.3 Readability: writing to facilitate reading

Research on readability has long sought to investigate what makes different types of texts easy to read. Readability is considered as a reader-oriented approach, since the focus is on the reader's effort in reading a text. This section does not aim to provide a comprehensive, in-depth review of readability studies, but rather to offer a general overview of how readability has been investigated.

A number of researchers have attempted to measure reading difficulty, the first one among them probably being Thorndike (1921), who focuses on vocabulary and assumes that the more frequent a word is used, the more familiar it is, and thus the use of familiar words in a text makes it more readable. Scholars have also developed readability formulas to assign texts a level of difficulty by using criteria related to either word complexity or sentence complexity, e.g. the number of affixes (Flesch, 1948), unfamiliar words and average sentence length (Dale & Chall, 1948), as well as the number of polysyllabic words combined with average sentence length (Gunning, 1968). Another important contribution is the creation of the cloze procedure (Taylor, 1953), which consists in deleting random parts of a text and assessing the extent to which readers are able to guess the deleted words. Finally, the Coh-Metrix (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse, & Cai, 2004) must be remembered, which is a computational tool created to formulate and test hypotheses about readability based on text cohesion.

Although the classic readability formulas have been widely used to assess readability of texts of a variety of genres, e.g. online texts providing health information (Jayaratne, Anderson, & Zwahlen, 2014; Mcinnes & Haglund, 2011; Ownby, 2005), they have also received criticisms. Bailin and Grafstein (2016) bring together the main theories and studies on readability, spanning from the early research on readability formulas to more recent discussions on the subject. They define readability as "the degree to which it is easy or difficult to understand what is being communicated

through written texts" (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 177). The two scholars criticise readability formulas and problematise how difficulty is calculated, the variables used and "their inability to provide writers with useful guidance in producing more readable texts" (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 10). According to them, all readability formulas have focused on quantifiable properties of texts related to vocabulary and syntactic difficulty, which may be problematic: the underlying assumption seems to be that all the occurrences of a specific feature, e.g. polysyllabic words, "contribute equally to difficulty or, at the very least, on average contribute an equal amount of difficulty", but the problem is that "counts of formal properties do not translate into units of reading difficulty" (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 53).

Bailin and Grafstein do not propose a formula, but examine "the properties of texts and their contexts in order to identify factors that affect comprehensibility and ease of reading" (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 63). They discuss issues of syntax, vocabulary and coherence to stress that several different factors may contribute to increase or undermine readability. As far as syntax is concerned, Bailin and Grafstein claim that a long sentence is not necessarily a complex sentence, and syntactically complex sentences may or may not result in less readable texts: specific syntactic constructions (e.g. self-embedded structures) and syntactically ambiguous sentences may increase text difficulty. In terms of vocabulary, the use of word lists by researchers investigating readability is based on the assumption that a list of the most frequently used words among all speakers of a language may exist, which implies great homogeneity; yet different speakers will consider the same words as familiar or not according to other factors, such as regional dialect, ethnic and socioeconomic group and educational background. Finally, coherence, which is based on "the interaction of text with background knowledge and assumptions of the readers" (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 132), also plays an important role, involving different factors: for instance, genre conventions seem to be important, as "the degree to which the genre conventions assumed by the reader match those genre conventions that the writer follows" may have an impact on readability (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 149).

In general, Bailin and Grafstein suggest that each reader approaches a text with their own background knowledge (cf. Section 2.3.4), which results in different levels of text difficulty for different readers. Cultural factors (cf. Section 2.4.4) may also be involved in the perception of text difficulty. Therefore, text readability cannot be

measured exclusively in terms of formal features, but calls for a more holistic framework which considers "the kinds of gaps that exist between the non-textual information that a text requires and the non-textual information that a reader actually brings to a text" (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016: 180). Although readability formulas alone cannot provide insights on text difficulty, Bailin and Grafstein claim that they may be cautiously used to identify areas of vocabulary and syntax which might be problematic to readers within a particular population. Ultimately, understanding what makes texts easier to read may allow to know how to write texts which are more effective to a specific readership.

2.3.4 Popularisation: writing for dissemination

The intended audience of a text may be conceptualised in terms of background knowledge, broadly distinguishing a specialised, expert audience and a lay, non-expert audience. The focus of this section is on the latter, i.e. readers who are not familiar with the subject discussed in the text or more generally with the field to which the subject belongs. This is particularly important for museums, as they are committed to engage with both specialists and laypeople (cf. Section 2.2.3).

As a text has to accommodate to the needs of a specific intended audience, different texts are written for audiences with varying degrees of familiarity or expertise with a certain domain: specialised texts tend to be written for expert readers, while non-specialised, popularised texts are supposed to be written for a wider, more general audience. However, discriminating between specialised and non-specialised texts is not unproblematic (Delavigne, 2003; Myers, 2003): according to the intended audience and the expected level of familiarity, a text may be positioned along a continuum, with different degrees of specialised and popularised texts.

Popularisation has been defined by Calsamiglia & Van Dijk (2004: 370) as

"a vast class of various types of communicative events or genres that involve the transformation of specialized knowledge into 'everyday' or 'lay' knowledge, as well as a recontextualization of scientific discourse."

Calsamiglia and van Dijk (2004) analyse popularisation discourse in the Spanish press and focus on textual structures and strategies such as denominations, explanations and the description of new objects. According to them, popularisation is a social process which may take different forms, but whose general objective is to disseminate

specialised knowledge through a lay version. The scholars' contribution is fundamental as they claim that popularisation does not only involve a reformulation of content, but also "a recontextualisation of scientific knowledge and discourse that is originally produced in specialized contexts to which the lay public has limited access", thus contributing to the creation of new knowledge (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004: 371).

It has been stressed that popularised texts are not "primarily characterised by specific textual structures, but rather by the properties of the communicative context", i.e. participants, their roles, their purposes and knowledge (Calsamiglia & Van Dijk, 2004: 371). Nonetheless, specialised texts seem to display more terminology (Cabré, 2010), while popularised texts tend to use fewer, sporadic disciplinary terms and replicate general language use, in order to be understandable to a lay audience and "extend the reader's knowledge" (Gotti, 2014: 17). For this reason, terminological density has been identified as a possible parameter to measure the degree of specialisation of texts (Ferraresi, 2019). Since terminology plays such an important role in this context, several studies, such as Kwary (2011) and Marín (2016), have also proposed and assessed methods for identifying technical vocabulary in texts.

Museum websites may contain pages that have popularised texts, especially those referring to the collections or to specific items within a collection: these texts may either be the replicas of academic, specialised texts written by curators for an audience of peers, or rather they may be popularised texts addressed to non-expert readers in order to promote the collections and foster understanding for a wider audience. As already mentioned, this distinction is not clear-cut, as boundaries between specialised and popularised texts seem to be rather blurred. Nevertheless, popularisation strategies on museum websites have not received much attention yet.

Samson (2012) adopts a corpus-driven approach to investigate the use of semantic sequences on three different types of museum web pages, i.e. "Descriptions", "Collections" and "Exhibitions". Samson claims that marketisation in museums, as well as the need for more interaction with visitors, have resulted in an effort for engaging in a promotional and popularised communication in order to disseminate knowledge beyond museums, which have long been considered as "communities that produce, and to a certain extent seem to own, cultural knowledge" (Samson, 2012: 4). According to Samson, academic texts include "elements of formality" which contribute to create a distance from the reader (Samson, 2012: 5). On the contrary, popularised texts "interact

with the reader informally", thus establishing a more symmetrical power relationship between writer (i.e. the museum) and reader (Samson, 2012: 5). Furthermore, Samson acknowledges that descriptive and promotional discourse (cf. Section 2.3.1) blend together on museum web pages: texts on museum websites thus seem to have "informative, descriptive and evaluative functions [which] overlap and intertwine" (Samson, 2012: 18).

Disseminating specialised knowledge seems to be particularly relevant to university museums as centres of academic research (cf. Section 2.2.6). In this context, Gesché-Koning (2014: 96) defines popularisation as

> "the will to share with the broadest audience and for its benefit, one's knowledge and
> mainly enthusiasm in a field, for a better awareness and understanding of key scientific,
> cultural, social, technological and economic issues".

The scholar stresses the need for identifying for whom a text is written, which information needs to be explained and how to present it in a language that may be understandable to a varied audience. Gesché-Koning (2014: 98) advocates for adopting "basic rules used by journalism", which share similarities with web writing guidelines (cf. Section 2.3.2.2):

> "using clear language, making things understandable, the structure clear and interesting,
> encouraging curiousness, considering the person addressed at his/her level without
> underestimating him/her and using appropriate pictures".

However, she further adds that museums need to understand what can be expressed through either text or images and via which channel to spread the information, e.g. an article, a didactic panel, a page on the website or a post on social media.

Although it has been pointed out that museum websites may include popularised texts, popularisation was not deemed particularly relevant for the purposes of this thesis, as a minority of the analysed texts can actually be considered as popularised texts. Popularisation has relatively been taken into account in relation to web writing theories (cf. Section 2.3.2), with which it shares common features, e.g. the need for writing in such a way that can be suitable and understandable to a broad, heterogeneous audience.

2.3.5   Interim summing up

This section has presented different linguistic approaches to communication which are focused on the reader. All of these approaches are based on the idea that any text is addressed to an intended reader, who may be defined in different ways, e.g. in terms of writer-reader relationship, medium used, reading effort and background knowledge.

Section 2.3.1 has described different approaches to the study of the writer-reader relationship as construed in a text by looking at evaluative language. Evaluation has been identified as an important parameter to study the extent to which a text is reader-oriented. Among the different approaches reviewed, Hyland's model of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005a, 2008) has been found to be particularly relevant for the purposes of this thesis in order to investigate the interactions between writer and reader. Furthermore, it has been stressed that evaluation seems to be particularly relevant on museum websites, which are aimed at online promotion.

Section 2.3.2 has explored web writing theories, spanning from the intrinsic characteristics of web-based texts and online reading (Section 2.3.2.1) to general guidelines for web writing which are aimed at writing to facilitate online users reading from a screen (Section 2.3.2.2). A selection of these guidelines have been adopted to build a descriptive framework to analyse texts which are supposed to serve an online audience: by acknowledging the limitations of these guidelines, this research does not aim to confirm or deny their validity, but rather to adopt them to investigate the extent to which museum online texts display web writing features, and thus whether such texts seem to have been written specifically for an online audience.

Section 2.3.3 has focused on readability studies, which have addressed the issue of measuring how readable a text is by identifying what elements make it more or less easy to read. The section has described the development of readability formulas, as well as new debates in this field which point to the controversial nature of assessing readability only through formal textual features.

Finally, Section 2.3.4 has underlined the importance of popularisation, which is based on the idea of writing for disseminating scientific, academic knowledge to a wider, lay audience. The intended audience of a text has been conceptualised in terms of background knowledge, distinguishing between specialised texts, written for an expert audience, and popularised texts, written for non-specialists. It has been noted that

although museum websites may include popularised texts, especially when seeking to promote the collections to a wider public, popularisation has only partially informed this research, as this type of discourse does not seem to be crucial in the analysed texts.

We now move on to consider the phenomenon of English as an international language and the communication aimed at a culturally diverse audience.

2.4 A multicultural perspective on communication

This section considers different cases where communication involves different cultures and languages. Three different frameworks are presented: first, the use of English as a lingua franca among people with different first languages (Section 2.4.1) and the translation into English for an international audience (Section 2.4.2); second, website translation into English as an international language (Section 2.4.3); finally, intercultural communication and cultural factors affecting it (Section 2.4.4).

2.4.1 English for a multicultural/global audience

It is widely acknowledged that in the last few decades English has spread worldwide and is now spoken all around the globe. The development of communication technologies has facilitated the global exchange of information, fostering the need for a common language (Dröschel, 2011). English has prevailed as the international "lingua franca", used by native and non-native speakers in interactions among members of different sociolinguistic communities. The number of people speaking English has increased dramatically, with non-native speakers outnumbering native speakers (Dewey, 2007). The increasing importance of English as a means for intercultural communication has led to greater attention to the emergence of an international, global language (Crystal, 2012). In addition, non-native varieties have multiplied alongside native ones, generating a growing diversification of English.

Differences between existing varieties of English have long been studied, with scholars struggling against the difficulty of categorising them. This section delves into the "recognised" varieties of English. It does not expect to be comprehensive, but it is meant as a brief, systematic overview of the literature around this issue, ultimately aiming to shed light on which variety best fits in the process under examination, i.e. the creation of museum website contents for a culturally diverse audience.

The most influential model for the classification of native and non-native varieties of English has long been Kachru's (Kachru, 1992: 38) three-circle model, which includes three concentric circles: the "Inner Circle", the "Outer Circle" and the "Expanding Circle". The first one consists of the countries where English is spoken as a native language, and includes varieties which are considered to be "norm-providing". In the Outer Circle are those countries which were colonised by countries belonging to the Inner Circle: here, English is spoken as part of a multilingual repertoire and it has developed and institutionalised in a peculiar form, so these varieties may be considered as "norm-developing". Finally, in the Expanding Circle English is learnt and spoken, but it does not have institutional purposes: thus, these varieties are "norm-dependent", as they depend on the standards established by the Inner Circle (Dröschel, 2011: 30).

Dröschel (2011: 37) refines Kachru's model by proposing the following categorisation:

- ENL[7] countries, where English is a native language for most speakers (e.g. UK and Australia);
- ESL countries, where English is a second language and performs institutional functions but it is not used as an internal lingua franca (e.g. Bangladesh and Toga);
- ESL-ELF countries, i.e. multilingual countries where English is also used as an internal lingua franca (e.g. India and Nigeria);
- EFL countries, where English is considered as a foreign language and has no institutional function (e.g. most of European countries and China);
- EFL-ELF countries, i.e. multilingual countries where English is a foreign language but it is also employed as an internal lingua franca (e.g. Switzerland).

The spread of English as an international lingua franca, used across different communities as a means of global communication, needs to be distinguished from the adoption of English by various local communities as a second language or a foreign language, which functions as an internal lingua franca (Dröschel, 2011: 52).

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[7] ENL stands for English as a native language; ESL is English as a second language; ELF refers to English as a lingua franca; finally, EFL is English as a foreign language.

Several terms are used to refer to an international variety of English which is not related to any country in particular, but which could be rather considered as a common, global variety of English. "International English" (IE), "English as an International Language" (EIL), "English as a World Language", and "Global English" appear to be interchangeable terms and are not descriptive of the different functions performed by English in different sociolinguistic contexts (Dröschel, 2011: 34). Here we will refer to this "variety" of ELF as an umbrella term which represents "the multifarious functions English has acquired around the globe" (Dröschel, 2011: 51).

ELF acts like a chameleon, complying with different purposes and being adapted according to different contexts of use, spanning from informal conversations to academic writing (House, 2013). The definition of the international status of English is a controversial issue. Anderman and Rogers (2005: 2-4) claim that this "global English" is evolving into a "hybrid", "homogenised" language, and that it is hard to find a "commonly accepted definition of standard international English".

Misunderstandings exist between the notions of ELF and World Englishes. According to some scholars, "World Englishes" (WE) is an umbrella term for all varieties of English existing in the world, but in fact it usually refers to "new Englishes", i.e. institutionalised ESL varieties (Pakir, 2009: 225), which may correspond to Kachru's Outer Circle. Historically, WE research has preceded ELF research, even though both are consequences of the globalisation process started in the late twentieth century (Schneider, 2016). Schneider (2016: 110) explains that WEs are conceptualised as (usually national) "varieties", i.e. reasonably stable systems associated with specific speech communities, whereas ELF is conventionally not seen as a stable linguistic system and it is not related to a specific linguistic community, but rather to a "community of practice" (Seidlhofer, 2013: 87). Research on both WE and ELF has sought recognition for the newly emerging varieties, acknowledging the concept of language change and emphasising the centrality of the discourse strategies of bilingual and multilingual people (Pakir, 2009). Nonetheless, in the WE paradigm, features of "new Englishes" have often been legitimised and codified, while the ELF approach considers language as a functional tool and thus assigns more importance to intercultural and cross-linguistic communication skills, e.g. how to accommodate to one's interlocutors. WEs are not considered relevant for this thesis, as they refer to local varieties of English, and not to one international variety or language.

According to Dröschel (2011: 40) ELF is "an additionally acquired form of English even for native speakers" of English: ELF is a contact language, representing an independent system without its own native speakers. In investigating the relationships between languages and cultures through the lens of intercultural communication, Baker (2009) claims that "there is no culture of ELF", as cultural references and practices are negotiated in each single communication act; yet, "language can never be culturally neutral", inasmuch as each participant has specific communicative behaviours according to their own cultural system (Baker, 2009: 588).

Seidlhofer (2013) examines the phenomenon of the spread of English as the dominant international lingua franca, claiming the need to reconsider conventional ways of thinking about English in general. According to her, since ELF is taken over and employed by non-native speakers on a global scale, assumptions that English native speakers are the arbiters of its proper use may be debatable (Seidlhofer, 2013). Seidlhofer argues that ELF should be considered as an adaptable and creative use of language in its own right and not as a deviant version of the native language (NL), showing that features which do not adhere to NL norms are functionally motivated by the dynamics of communicative interaction. A shift "from correctness to appropriateness" is stressed (Seidlhofer, 2013: 14): ELF norms are negotiated ad hoc depending on the specific participants' repertoires and purposes (Seidlhofer, 2013). In a similar vein, Hülmbauer (2007: 5) claims that there does not seem to be a "one-to-one correlation of lexicogrammatical correctness and communicative effectiveness" in ELF communication.

Communicative effectiveness and appropriateness seem to be the foundations of ELF communication: in order to effectively communicate, ELF speakers need to reach out to their intended interlocutors and accommodate their language use to them. Jenkins (2011) argues that native English speakers, especially those who are monolingual, seem to be less effective in international communication than non-native speakers, as the former are more likely to have problems with using code-switching, accommodation strategies and a flexible approach to language use, probably due to the influence of native English standards. As a consequence, competent non-native speakers of English may be more comprehensible than native speakers in certain situations, as "they can be better at adjusting their language for people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds" (Phillipson, 2003: 167).

Since ELF lacks prescriptive norms, its identification as a stable variety of English is debatable, as already mentioned. The great variability and intrinsic flexibility of ELF imply that it is difficult to consider it as a fixed code and draw a consistent classification of fully ascertained formal features (House, 2013). ELF includes both linguistic forms that it shares with English as a native language (ENL) and forms that differ from it, which usually come from the contact between ELF speakers' first language and their English, e.g. uncountable nouns in ENL used as countable in ELF (e.g. "informations") and zero marking of the 3rd person singular -*s* in the present tense (e.g. "she think") (Jenkins, 2009). Most of the studies conducted on ELF features in terms of lexico-grammar, morphology and pragmatics are concerned with spoken interactions, as variation is more likely to be evident in such situations rather than in written speech, which usually is a more controlled form of communication and also tends to be more resistant to change. More recently, research has been conducted on computer-mediated communication, e.g. on blogs and social media (Seargeant & Tagg, 2011; Vettorel & Franceschi, 2016).

Academic ELF has been the subject of a number of studies, focusing on either academic speech (Mauranen, Hynninen, & Ranta, 2010) or writing (Jenkins, 2011). In particular, ELF usage on university institutional websites has started to gain attention (Bernardini, Ferraresi, & Gaspari, 2010; Dalan, 2018; Ferraresi & Bernardini, 2015; Venuti & Nasti, 2015), since the degree of multilingualism on such websites is increasing, as is the use of English as a secondary language (Callahan & Herring, 2012). For instance, Bernardini et al. (2010: 28-9) investigate institutional academic English by constructing a corpus of websites of native (British and Irish) and non-native varieties (Italian). They suggest that Italian university websites show "lighter use of set phrases assisting navigation and positively evaluating themselves", as well as "a dispreference for personal style and for the more indirect stance expressions", which makes such institutions more distant than the ones based in English-speaking countries. Palumbo (2015: 246) compares web-based texts in English published by European, British, US and Canadian universities and examines the European ELF texts as "examples of hybrids". The underlying assumption of his study is that texts translated into or drafted in English for an international audience share common features with spoken interactions in ELF among non-native speakers, where the priority is given to communicative effectiveness; in addition, he claims that whether the texts in English are written or translated by native or non-native speakers is not relevant (Palumbo, 2015: 250).

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However, results show "a certain homogeneity" between the analysed native and non-native texts, suggesting that the difference between these university web-based texts was less conspicuous than that observed in studies focusing on spoken ELF (Palumbo, 2015: 259).

Research has also focused on features of ELF employed in other types of websites, e.g. corporate websites (Poppi, 2013), as an increasing number of companies in non-English speaking countries use English for external communications, aiming to reach a broad range of international users. Poppi (2013: 409) maintains that "international communication can be enhanced by strategies of accommodation, which may take the form of code glosses, explanations, explications, piling up of information." According to her, companies willing to address international stakeholders need to commit to "an attitudinal change" by using the following communicative strategies: accommodating through rephrasing and explaining; "adopting a wider cultural perspective"; "building rapport" and reaching out to readers; providing explanations of "culturally-bound term[s]" (Poppi, 2013: 423).

Although ELF is a worldwide phenomenon, research has focused on smaller contexts to investigate the use of ELF in a more restricted environment, such as Europe. Mollin (2006: 46) explores "whether European lingua franca communication has resulted in a new, independent variety of English in Europe", i.e. "Euro-English". The corpus she built includes both a spoken component, reflecting discourse among EU politicians, officials and journalists, and a written component, representing spontaneous online writing from discussion groups and chat rooms. Mollin searched the corpus for "common lexicogrammatical and morphosyntactic features across different mother tongues which would separate the European lingua franca usage from a native-speaker standard" (Mollin, 2006: 47). However, she notes that ELF speakers tend to stick to NL norms, and the only "deviations" from the "norm" depend on mother tongue and English competence: ergo, "there were hardly any common features that united lingua franca speakers" and that could point to the emergence of a new variety (Mollin, 2006: 48). For this reason, and drawing on James (2005), Mollin proposes to consider ELF not as a variety, but as a register, which allows for heterogeneity: characteristics of ELF would be "shorter utterances, a smaller range of vocabulary generally", and the avoidance of "fixed expressions and idioms which the interlocutor is unlikely to be familiar with" (Mollin, 2006: 52). On the contrary, Hewson (2009: 115) argues that

ELF texts generally show a specific usage of the language and its grammatical structure: e.g. fewer modal verbs are used in texts written by NNSs of English. Hewson (2013: 271) also highlights some of the major issues existing in such texts, which involve "problems of syntax", "lexical choice and collocation", "specific linguistic choices", "other miscellaneous language problems", and "the presupposed cultural background".

Studies on ELF thus point to a very multifarious scenario, with great variability. The assumption that ELF is a recognisable and distinguishable form of English is not widely shared among the academic community, which makes it a complex, ideologically-bound terrain.

2.4.2   Translating into a global language

The status of English as a global language has now been recognised and seems to be undeniable. The unique and complex position of English in the global scenario requires careful consideration. Translation Studies (TS), however, have been slow in taking up the field of inquiry related to ELF (Taviano, 2013: 156): in general, the interest towards this new phenomenon paid by TS has seemed to be scarce, and its impact on the translation profession has been under-researched (ibid.). These two fields, i.e. TS and ELF research, have common interests and could thus "benefit from greater mutual knowledge" (Cook, 2012: 243).

Globalisation processes and the increasing quantity of information and data circulating benefit from the use of ELF (Taviano, 2013: 161) to facilitate international communication. Given this situation, new translation practices have emerged, both into and out of ELF (ibid.) — the former being the focus of this section. In the current context, the traditional notions of translator and directionality, texts, readership and target language may be no longer valid, as claimed by Taviano (2013: 160). Here, I briefly review some of the literature concerning these concepts in order to understand how ELF has affected these variables: Figure 2.2 shows the main coordinates within the framework of translation into ELF. This review aims to shed new light on the extent to which translation theory accommodates the composing elements of the process of translating into English for an international audience.

Translator and directionality | Texts translated into ELF | Readership | ELF as target language
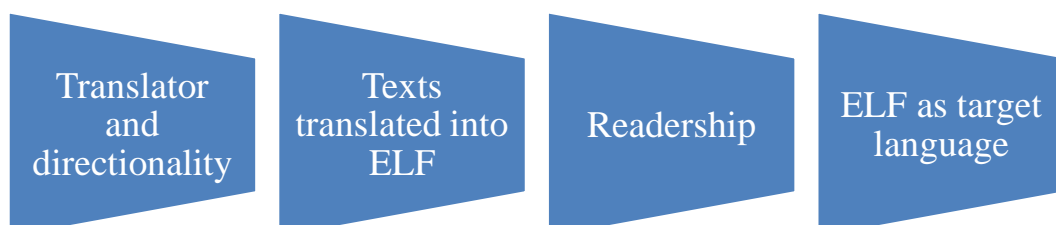
Figure 2.2. Coordinates of the framework of translation into ELF

<u>Translator and directionality</u>

Translation into ELF is done *for* an international audience — which may include native speakers (NSs) and non-native speakers (NNSs) of English — and it may be carried out *by* a translator who is a NNS of English (Hewson, 2009: 114). Even if it is carried out by a NS of English, the translator is not a NS speaker of ELF (as ELF has no proper NSs), so anyone translating into ELF might be said to be translating into a second language, or into a "contact language" (Firth, 1996: 240). Translation into ELF may thus be considered as a specific form of translation into the second language (L2 translation).

The traditional prescriptive approach in TS claimed that "translat[ing] into your language of habitual use […] is the only way you can translate naturally, accurately and with maximum effectiveness" (Newmark, 1988: 3). According to this stance, "every translator should be a native speaker of the TL [target language] and should therefore work only into his/her mother tongue" (Pokorn, 2007: 332), as translators' intuitions were supposed to be more reliable in their native language (Stewart, 2012: 8-9). As a result, L2 translation has long been stigmatised as "substandard" if compared with translation into the first language: this is shown by the names coined for this practice, underlining its inferiority, such as "service translation" (Newmark, 1988), "inverse translation" (Beeby, 1998), "reverse translation", "translation into the second language" (S. Campbell, 1998), "translation into the non-primary language" (Grosman, Kadric, Kovačič, & Snell-Hornby, 2000), "translation into a non-mother tongue (Grosman et al., 2000; Pokorn, 2005), and "translation A-B" (D. Kelly, 2003). Nonetheless, in the last few decades scholars have started problematising this view and challenging "the mother tongue principle" (D. Kelly, Nobs, Sanchez, & Way, 2006: 58), thus leading to a "diminishing marginality of the practice" (Pokorn, 2009: 190).

A strictly prescriptive approach has been abandoned in TS, but some of the concepts rooted in that tradition still seem to be adopted: e.g. terms such as "native language", "native speaker", "mother tongue" and "foreign speaker" seem to be widely used and accepted. Nonetheless, the distinction between NS and NNS cannot be tested rigorously; ergo, it seems complicated to distinguish reliably between the two without being partial (Pokorn, 2005: 1). A huge body of work has been devoted to underlining

differences between native and non-native production of texts (e.g. see Cuskley et al., 2015; Gayle & Shimaoka, 2017; Leńko-Szymańska, 2008; Mirahayuni, 2002; Rabinovich, Nisioi, Ordan, & Wintner, 2016). However, Pokorn (2007: 331) argues that it is not possible to draw general conclusions, e.g. claiming that all speakers born in a particular linguistic community are competent speakers of that language. Besides, Pavlović claims that "the idealized notion of 'native competence'" cannot represent today's multicultural and multilingual societies (Pavlović, 2007: 80). Therefore, common terms such as "native language" and "mother tongue" may be controversial.

An increasing number of scholars have maintained that L2 translation is a growing practice in real-world scenarios, and as such it needs to be recognised and better researched (House, 2013; Pokorn, 2005; Stewart, 2013; Taviano, 2013): for instance, Adab (2005: 239) claims that "translation into a second language can be done, it is being done, it should be done to the best of the translator's ability". In her study on L2 translation, Pokorn (2005: 106) argues that translator's mother tongue does not seem to influence translation quality, while the latter seem to be affected by other factors — among them is the level of L2 proficiency (Pokorn, Blake, Reindl, & Pisanski Peterlin, 2019). Similarly, Pavlović (2007: 153) identifies elements that have an impact on translation accuracy, clarifying that directionality is only *one* of several variables involved in the process. In addition, Pedersen (2000: 109) stresses that "interference is not a one-way street": interference from the first language (L1) may occur when translating into L2, but the same applies in the other direction, as interference from L2 is also frequent in translations into L1.

Most of the studies conducted on L2 translation have focused on translation from several languages into English, highlighting the fundamental role the latter plays in this context. In particular, when translating for an international audience, a translator needs to have a diverse range of skills. Hewson (2013) points to the difference between linguistic and translational competence, the latter also including the ability of understanding "the characteristics of the potential readership" (Hewson, 2013: 260). Furthermore, not only should the translator have a good knowledge of English and expertise in the translation field, but most importantly he/she needs to be competent in ELF communication. The spread of a globalised form of English has affected the professional practice of translation, transforming the role performed by translators working into and out of English (Taviano, 2010: 62): today translators may be required

to produce texts (by drafting or editing) aimed at an international audience, and thus make texts accessible to that audience (Taviano, 2010: 89). This implies that the translator is expected to mediate potential discrepancies, by acknowledging the usefulness of operating within codified boundaries, being open to linguistic diversity and accommodating the needs of the target readership (Stewart, 2013: 233). However, the "native-speaker paradigm" still seems to be present in the translation field: a study conducted by Pisanski Peterlin (2013: 208) on trainee translators' attitudes towards academic ELF shows "a preference for native-speaker standards in academic discourse", pointing to "a lack of awareness of the need to adapt a text for an international audience".

Texts

According to House (2013: 279), there has been a large increase in the production of ELF texts. In the translation context, an ELF text may be either the source text for a translation from ELF into another language, or the result of a translation conducted into ELF (Hewson, 2009: 111). For the purpose of this study, only the latter case is taken into account. It is fundamental, however, to underline that unequivocally determining whether a text is indeed an ELF text is not an easy task (Hewson, 2013: 263). It is not always possible to know how the text was produced, e.g. whether it was drafted in English, re-written on the basis of a draft in another language, or translated into ELF, by a translator working out of the native language (Hewson, 2009: 117). Furthermore, researchers have taken contrasting positions concerning the existence of specific features characterising ELF texts (cf. Section 2.4.1).

A different perspective on texts in this context is provided by Taviano (2013), who discusses the status of texts translated into ELF within the receiving culture and suggests the notion of "hybrid texts" as a theoretical definition, describing the example of EU documents. According to her, hybrid texts are "the product of negotiations between different cultures and languages, resulting from overlapping rhetorical and discourse norms, created by and addressed to a supranational community" (Taviano, 2013: 160). Hybrid forms of writing also seem to be reflected in translation, and thus in this context the traditional dichotomy between source text/language and target text/language may be irrelevant (Taviano, 2013: 160).

Readership

As already stated, the target readership of a translation into ELF is transnational, and may comprise NSs and NNSs of English. As a consequence, there may be no specific target culture to refer to (Stewart, 2013: 219): the audience portrayed may appear to be highly heterogeneous and blurred (Stewart, 2013: 233; Taviano, 2013: 163), especially when communication is intended for international consumption, e.g. tourist websites. However, Stewart (2013: 220) and Adab (2005: 233) note that "international" does not always mean "heterogeneous", especially if one is addressing a readership who is expected to be familiar with a specific domain or subject matter.

Audience heterogeneity may concern linguistic competence, spanning from a highly proficient reader to one who has more difficulties in understanding English (Stewart, 2013: 225). Both "linguistic and encyclopaedic skills will vary radically", with the consequence that levels of understanding of a text may be significantly different from reader to reader (ibid.).

A text may be read and interpreted in several different ways by different readers coming from different socio-cultural backgrounds (Hewson, 2009: 119) (cf. Section 2.4.4 for a discussion on cultural factors affecting communication). For instance, there may be a huge difference between the way NSs and NNSs of English react to expressions or structures which they feel are not completely "correct" or "appropriate": sometimes "linguistic oddities" may be welcome positively for their "exotic flavour", but other times they may be felt as irritating, or even considered as a "sloppy service" from the translator (Stewart, 2013: 227), thus undermining the reliability and respectability of the latter.

Texts cannot be culturally-adapted or locally-tailored, but on the contrary they must be able to get to a broad, diverse audience, and thus be "acceptable to all addressees" (Adab, 2005: 235). This leads us to wondering about the language to be used in such a context.

ELF as target language

Language is an important variable in this scenario. In the translation market, English has become a "moving target" (Stewart, 2013: 217): as noted in Section 2.4.1, it is not an easy task to clearly identify this international language. ELF seems to be characterised

by strong influences of the lexis and syntax of the writer/translator's mother tongue, so few common features have been identified among different ELF texts, without leading to substantial results for codification (Hewson, 2009: 111). The basic principle underpinning ELF studies has always been that all forms of English are valid, no matter if they are linguistically acceptable or not within NS norms (Hewson, 2009: 112). This perspective has transformed English into a "Protean, multi-faceted phenomenon" (Stewart, 2013: 219), which has led to an "all things to all men" approach (ibid.). This attitude is quite controversial for more than one reason. On the one hand, texts written by ELF speakers usually "fail to comply with standard lexico-grammatical choices and conventions" which are typical of the English language, with the risk of being communicative less effective (House, 2013: 285). On the other hand, translators have to face certain translation choices, and they may not have a cue of what language or variety is most appropriate to use, and what translation strategy to adopt (Stewart, 2013: 221). Therefore, the notion of target language is highly problematic in this context (ibid.).

The main concern in the literature regarding ELF communication and translation seems to be conveying clear, unambiguous information: the purpose of this vehicular language is mainly to guarantee clarity and coherence of the message (Stewart, 2013). Hence, "cross-cultural comprehensibility" — rather than linguistic accuracy — is given complete priority (ibid.). According to this approach, adopting lexis which may only be understood by a native-speaker readership would be inappropriate, because it could be disorienting to an international audience and could provide misleading information (ibid.). Furthermore, complex syntax and ambiguous or very colloquial expressions should be avoided, privileging forms of English which are widely adopted on a global basis (ibid.). Finally, Adab (2005: 234) suggests the use of "a restricted, or controlled, form of a language", based on the principle of explicitness and on limiting "available forms of expression" in order to elude possible cases of misinterpretation. However, this is only possible if the text is addressing a readership who is well-acquainted with the specific domain related to the text. As the clarity of the message always comes first (Stewart, 2013: 220), Stewart (2013: 225) also advocates for "pragmatic explicitation", which may be especially useful in the case of texts whose main function is informative. The literature does not provide further information on the issue of which English may be used to address an international readership, but definable boundaries are needed

which could enable translators to adopt an established and well-codified target language (Stewart, 2013: 228).

Given the above, it is evident that the notion of translating into ELF is a hazy one, since one cannot define whether a text is ELF or not. Another limitation concerning the practice of ELF translation is that it continues to be regarded as a "dubious form of mediation" for several reasons (House, 2013: 287). Firstly, translation practice seems to be founded on the traditionalist native-speaker paradigm and translation into one's mother tongue still seems to be highly prioritised. As a consequence, scholars have maintained that L2 translation should always include the "backup of a trained native-speaker translator", who should at least revise the non-native translator's output (Hewson, 2013: 276). Secondly, the assumption supporting this view is that translators should stick to the expectations of native-English readers and comply with standards and norms of native varieties (House, 2013: 289): as such, translators who are not using a widely recognised and accepted variety of English may be considered as less proficient and competent both as linguistic experts and as translation specialists.

Summing up, although it is undeniable that there is an increasing demand for translations aimed at an international audience (Taviano, 2010: 82), it is hard to know whether ELF — as it has been conceptualised until now — may appropriately describe translation for an international audience. The current linguistic situation based on the expansion and spread of English all around the world calls for the conceptualisation of a "new paradigm for thinking about translation to and from English in a globalised world", which may question deep-seated assumptions (Stuart Campbell, 2005: 36).

2.4.3 Website localisation and internationalisation

Website translation has traditionally been considered within the framework of the GILT process (Globalization, Internationalisation, Localisation and Translation), which consists of different phases, starting from the globalisation of a website to its translation for a specific local market (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013). The GILT framework was introduced in the early 1980s in the US context, where corporate websites started to be translated from one language, i.e. English, into a wide variety of languages, in order to export products around the world and meet the demands of many different sociolinguistic communities (Jiménez-Crespo, 2013). The term "localisation" itself

derives from the concept of "locale", which refers to a language variety: localising websites normally implies translating from one language into many and moving from a global dimension to a local one. Localised versions of a website thus aim at meeting the needs of specific local markets. For instance, the website of the British Museum in London is in English, but it also offers some contents in other languages in order to meet the need of specific linguistic communities, probably international tourists speaking the most common languages in Europe and Asia. The current homepage of the British Museum website (Figure 2.3) and the Italian version of the website (Figure 2.4) are shown below for the sake of clarity.
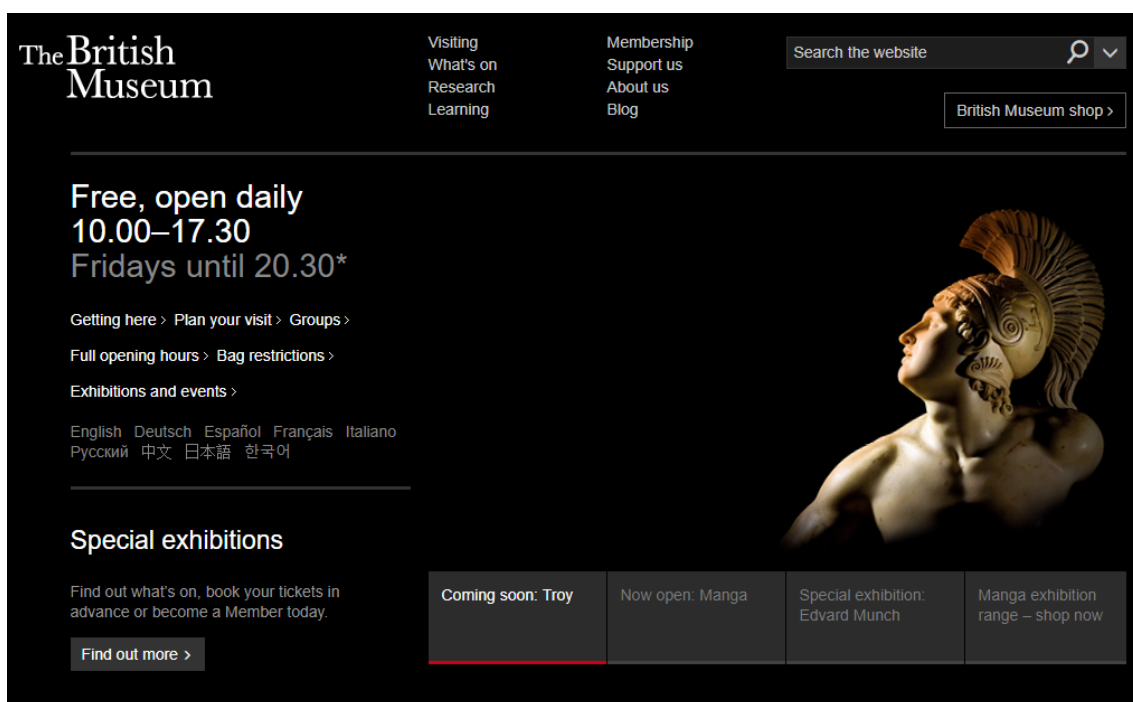
Figure 2.3. Homepage of the British Museum[8]

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[8] See the original version of the website of the British Museum: https://www.britishmuseum.org/.
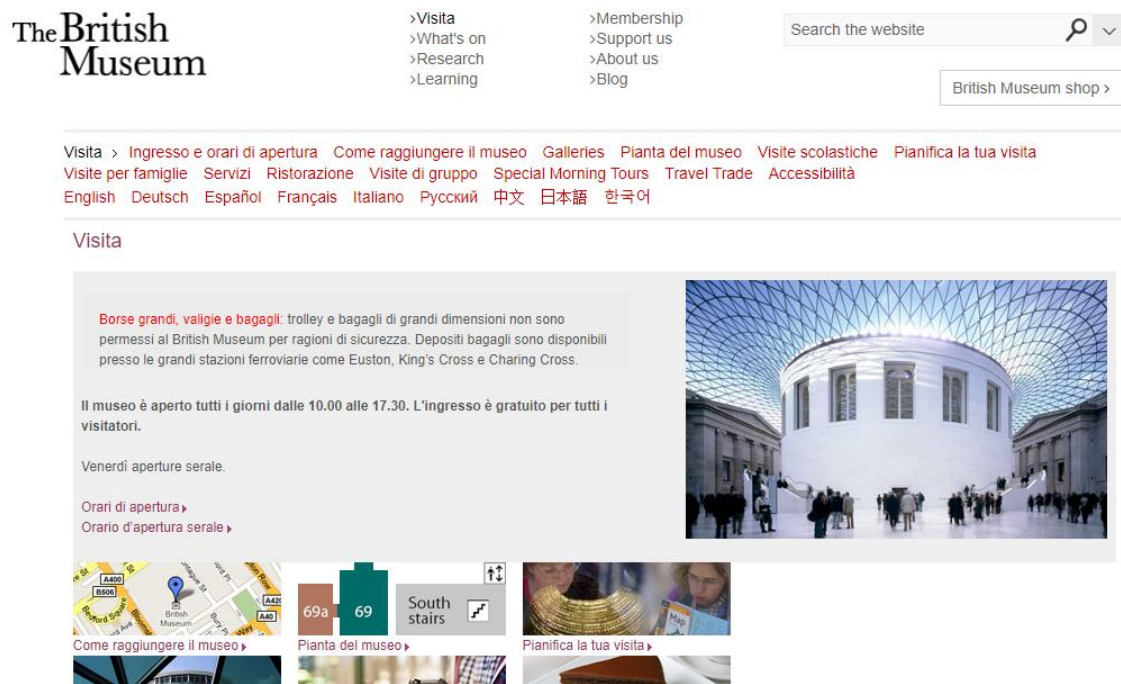
Figure 2.4. Italian version of the British Museum website[9]

However, an increasing number of websites belonging to companies or institutions based in non-English speaking countries are being translated into English in order to expand their presence on a global basis and reach a broader international audience. According to Floros and Charalambidou (2016), such websites are designed and created in countries with a "minor" presence on the international online market, so they need to be provided in a "major" language version. Although this may be rather simplistic, especially if we think of countries such as China, this perspective considers English as a "major" global language for international communication. Statistics on website localisation show that 44% of organisations which localise their website target five or fewer languages (Lionbridge, 2015): this seems to suggest that most companies prefer to offer content in few, "major" languages, instead of localising it for many different markets. For example, Figure 2.5 shows the website of the Italian Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, which includes two versions: one in Italian and one in English, the latter supposedly addressed to all international users who cannot speak Italian. Thus, a shift in directionality is observed, as local websites are increasingly "internationalised" for a global audience.

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[9] See the Italian version of the same website: https://www.britishmuseum.org/visiting.aspx?lang=it.
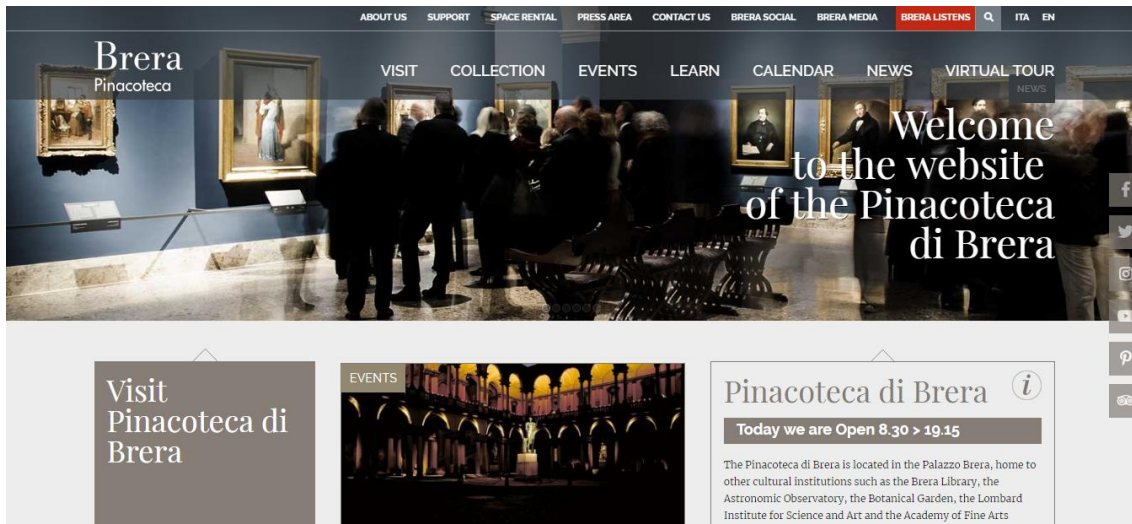
Figure 2.5. Homepage of the English version of the Pinacoteca di Brera[10]

Jiménez-Crespo (2010: 13) investigate the strategies adopted by multinational corporations in "creating an international version of a language that is spoken in different countries and cultural regions", in this case Spanish. According to the scholar, two opposite tendencies can be recognised within the localisation industry: one which assumes that well-localised texts are texts that are perceived as locally produced and another based on internationalisation strategies which aim to provide a "*neutral-language* version" (Jiménez-Crespo, 2010: 23, emphasis in the original) and hide cultural differences. Furthermore, Jiménez-Crespo (2010: 24) stresses the need of user-based studies for "empirically assess[ing] the impact of neutral Spanish sites."

The case of university websites providing a version in English for an international audience has already been mentioned (cf. Section 2.4.1). Fernández Costales (2012) examines the translation of European university websites to investigate whether they are localised for a particular market or rather globalised for an international audience: the researcher notes a tendency towards standardisation of university websites in terms of textual contents and information provided, as well as type of language used and semiotic and non-verbal elements, such as images. According to Fernández Costales, European university websites are generally not localised, since there are almost no examples of sites specifically adapted to a particular locale or market; on the contrary, the analysed websites seem to include an internationalised version, where contents are provided to a global audience.

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[10] See the English version of the website of the Pinacoteca di Brera: https://pinacotecabrera.org/en/.

Palumbo (2013) explores how Italian universities translate their websites into English. According to Palumbo (2013: 98), "the use of English for communicating with an international audience is a lingua-franca scenario" (cf. Section 2.4.1), regardless of the process for creating the texts (i.e. translation or drafting). The online materials produced by universities may perform a number of functions and reach diverse audiences: as a result of this, Palumbo claims that a combination of different approaches may coexist, but a functional approach is preferred when addressing "a loosely defined international audience"; he also suggests the use of the term "transcreation" to describe "an approach that heavily re-creates a text […] in order to adapt it to the cultural expectations of the target audience" (Palumbo, 2013: 106).

Rike (2013: 81) claims that new approaches to translation may be required, involving a shift from translation to transcreation, especially for promotional texts on corporate websites: such approaches call for a careful consideration of the "expected awareness and cultural orientation" of the intended audience. The scholar refers to a "process of recreating texts on all levels to make them appeal to people in the target culture" (Rike, 2013: 72); however, when creating a website version for an international audience there may be no single, discrete target culture to adhere to.

The claim of the present thesis is that the traditional conceptualisation of website translation based on the GILT process does not provide an appropriate theoretical framework for the practice of translating websites into English for an international audience: localisation represents the creation of contents for a specific locale, while the process mentioned above aims to offer an "internationalised" version of a local website. Yet the latter has not been given a proper definition in academia, and there still seems to be confusion around this process, which may need to be re-situated according to the audience addressed (probably culturally unspecified), the variety of English to use so as to be accessible to all potential recipients and the translation approach to adopt — i.e. whether to translate the source text, adapt it or transcreate it to produce a new target text from scratch.

Furthermore, it is thought that the problem of targeting a culturally heterogeneous audience may also apply to websites designed in countries where English is the official language: although translation is not involved in this case, issues of cultural adaptation and variety of English to use may be relevant nonetheless. Therefore, the production of contents in English for an international audience on university

museum websites will not be studied through the localisation framework. This thesis will mainly approach the issue from a monolingual perspective by looking at how university museums based in both English-speaking and non English-speaking countries create contents which may serve a broad, multicultural audience, thus focusing on audience conceptualisation and language use.

2.4.4 Intercultural communication

The object of the present thesis, i.e. university museums' online communication aimed at an international, multicultural audience, may be outlined as a form of intercultural communication, as it involves the attempt to engage people with different cultural backgrounds. This is another perspective through which the issue may be investigated, i.e. one which positions communication within a cultural framework and considers cultural factors affecting communication.

Hall (1959: 186) has been one of the most influential scholars to conceptualise intercultural communication, claiming that "culture is communication and communication is culture" and acknowledging cultural differences among participants belonging to different cultural systems. Hall (1976) proposes the framework of high-context (HC) and low-context (LC) cultures to study intercultural communication. These correspond to two different types of communication, which differ in terms of the degree of context provided within the message. HC communication takes place when most of the information is already shared by the participants as prior, background information, and thus very little is made explicit; on the other hand, LC communication is one where the message is explicitly spelled out (Hall, 1976: 91). Any communication can be HC or LC according to the level of context, which needs to be adequate to the interlocutor, i.e. sufficient but not excessive: in certain communicative situations, "low-contexting" the interlocutors may mean "talking down" to them, i.e. telling them more than what they need to know (Hall, 1976: 92). According to Hall, HC cultures "do not require, nor do they expect, much in-depth, background information", while the opposite is true for LC cultures (Hall, 1990: 6). Therefore, Hall claims that intercultural communication is effective when the degree of "contexting" needed by the interlocutor is known (Hall, 1990: 27).

Another fundamental contribution to the study of cultural differences is Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001). The scholar claims that

cultures vary along four dimensions, i.e. individualism vs. collectivism, power distance, femininity vs. masculinity and uncertainty avoidance, and later adds other two dimensions, namely long-term orientation and indulgence. Hofstede's cultural dimensions can be adopted to study communication as it is shaped by culture.

Although their research is at times criticised for being outdated, Hall's and Hofstede's theoretical frameworks have been extensively applied by other researchers from different disciplines and for a variety of purposes, such as studying website design — especially websites targeting culturally diverse users (Singh & Pereira, 2005). For instance, Würtz (2006) explores intercultural communication on websites to investigate the online strategies used by HC cultures, such as the US. Her assumption is that different cultures adopt different online communication styles, and in particular HC cultures tend to use visual communication more than LC cultures. Würtz's analysis focuses on visual communication and shows that it differs on HC and LC websites, e.g. images and animated effects tend to be more common and elaborate in HC websites. In general, the values represented by the images are consistent with the characteristic values of HC and LC cultures, especially in terms of collectivism (HC) and individualism (LC).

Lalla (2015: 201) proposes LC communicative strategies to design "a culturally inclusive online course" for international students. Starting from the difficulty of identifying the nationality of online students, Lalla (2015: 199) suggests the need for online courses to be designed with "sufficient cultural competence […] to meet the expectations of international students": the scholar draws on Hall's categories and advocates for the use of LC communication, which requires "explicit and direct language" and "includes facts, words, verbal messages, tasks, directions, and explanations" (Lalla, 2015: 200). However, Lalla does not consider that LC communication may suit students from LC cultures, but not those from HC cultures, who do not need nor expect communication to be so explicit and thus may feel overwhelmed by the information provided.

Hofstede's cultural dimensions are also applied by Callahan (2006) for studying cultural differences in the design of university websites. The scholar analyses a sample of university homepages from different countries by "examining the correlations between graphical elements and Hofstede's index values for [the] selected countries" (Callahan, 2006: 247). According to Callahan, research has mainly focused on

guidelines for the internationalisation of websites in terms of language, dates, spelling and other standards (cf. Section 2.4.3), and scarce attention has been paid to other cultural differences in relation to international interface design. Her aim is to understand whether different cultures represent themselves differently on the web or whether cultural differences do not impact web design. Results show correlations between the analysed websites and Hofstede's dimensions, but "much weaker than initially supposed" (Callahan, 2006: 247). The scholar further acknowledges that other factors may affect website design, e.g. genre and institutional guidelines, and that an observational study on the graphical elements alone does not provide information on the motivations for the web designers' choices (Callahan, 2006: 270). Finally, Callahan suggests the need for future research on usability and user's perception to understand whether "people from the countries from opposite poles of Hofstede's dimensions prefer Web sites with widely divergent designs" (Callahan, 2006: 270).

Most of the studies conducted on cultural differences on websites have focused mainly on design and interface features, i.e. visual communication and aspects connected with navigation and usability, rather than verbal communication. Hall's and Hofstede's models will not be adopted as methodological approaches in this thesis. These perspectives assume that there is a specific target culture, and may not be so relevant to the issue of addressing a culturally unspecified audience, as we cannot assume that the communication under scrutiny, i.e. the English version of European university museums' websites, is targeted to a specific culture, but rather to a multitude of different cultures.

2.4.5 Interim summing up

In this section, different frameworks have been presented which have to some extent informed this thesis. Section 2.4.1 discussed the emergence of English as an international, global language, and reported on studies on ELF. ELF is a contact language used between people of different sociolinguistic backgrounds (Schneider, 2016), where the priority is not linguistic correctness, but rather appropriateness (Seidlhofer, 2013) and communicative effectiveness (Hülmbauer, 2007). It has been noted that the definition of ELF as a stable variety of English is controversial for a number of reasons: first, ELF does not have prescriptive norms; second, it includes forms of English as a native language and forms deriving from the contact between the

speaker's first language and their English, thus making it difficult to identify common features that unite lingua franca speakers (Mollin, 2006).

Section 2.4.2 explored the issue of translating into a global language as a specific case of translation into a second language, stressing the importance of accommodating the need of the target audience and delivering clear, unequivocal information, which seems to contribute to cross-cultural comprehensibility (Stewart, 2013). However, issues concerning translation into ELF were also discussed, as the latter still seems to be regarded as a tentative form of mediation (House, 2013): as the native speaker paradigm is still strong, translators who are not using a generally accepted variety of English may be considered as less competent as language and translation experts.

Section 2.4.3 focused on website localisation, describing it as the translation of a website for one or more specific locales. It has been argued that an increasing number of websites representing companies or institutions based in non-English speaking countries are being translated into English in order to promote themselves internationally and reach a broader, multicultural audience. My claim has been that this form of website translation cannot be described as localisation, since these websites are not translated for a specific locale, but rather internationalised (Fernández Costales, 2012) to create a "neutral-language version" (Jiménez-Crespo, 2010) which is supposed to serve a broad range of users. Furthermore, a new translation process has been described, which involves the transcreation of texts to make them appeal to people in the target culture (Rike, 2013). However, it has been stressed that the problem of addressing a multicultural audience also involves monolingual contexts where English is spoken as an official language and translation is not involved, e.g. if museums want to cater for international tourists or local, multicultural groups and need to understand whether and how to adapt their language to be inclusive of both native and non-native speakers of English. This perspective will be adopted within this thesis, without focusing on translation (or localisation) processes.

Finally, Section 2.4.4 introduced the notion of intercultural communication and addressed the possibility of targeting a different culture by understanding how that culture works and adopting culturally inclusive communicative strategies. Hall's model of high and low-context cultures and Hofstede's cultural dimensions, as well as studies applying their frameworks, were reviewed in order to understand how they could inform

the present research. Nevertheless, as the communication under scrutiny is not aimed at a single target audience/locale/culture, these theories were not deemed suitable for the purposes of this thesis.

In conclusion, studies around ELF, translation into a global language, website localisation and intercultural communication have partially informed this thesis, but have not provided a methodological framework for the analysis of online contents in English produced for an international audience by university museums.

2.5   Summing up

In this chapter, I outlined the system of theoretical assumptions supporting this research, positioning the latter within a wider context and drawing on studies from different fields.

As presented in Section 2.2, the post-modern and constructivist theories within Museum Studies have advocated for a more audience-oriented approach to be adopted by museums: greater emphasis has been placed on the visitor's experience and the co-construction of meanings (Falk & Dierking, 2013; G. E. Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). Few studies, however, have specifically focused on the impact of this approach on online museum communication, addressing both visitors and non-visitors, especially from a linguistic point of view. A reader-oriented approach to investigate museum communication may reveal whether the latter has been affected by audience-oriented approaches to museology, and thus whether greater importance has been given to identifying and interacting with the audience.

In Section 2.3, I argued that any text is written for an intended reader. I claimed that the author establishes a relationship with their intended readers within a text by using certain linguistic cues, and in turn examining them allows to shed light on the representation of the intended readers and on the interaction with them (Hyland, 2008). In particular, web-based texts seem to be guided by specific standards which are based on the idea that reading a text online is different from reading it on paper: ideally, web writing guidelines are thus supposed to facilitate reading for online users (Fenton & Lee, 2014; Krug, 2014; Newman Lior, 2013; Redish, 2012). Observing the impact of these standards on web-based texts should reveal whether the latter have been written to appeal to online readers. Issues of readability and popularisation have also been discussed in relation to the idea of writing in a way which improves reading for a specific audience, especially defined in terms of background knowledge.

Section 2.4 was dedicated to the use of English as an international language and a lingua franca, especially on corporate and institutional websites: many European university websites have a version in English as a product of a strong internationalisation effort (Callahan & Herring, 2012; Ferraresi & Bernardini, 2013; Palumbo, 2013, 2015). A particularly interesting case is that of university museums, which belong in the academic environment but are separate entities from the university itself (cf. Section 2.2.6). Although the phenomenon of English used as an international language on institutional academic and museum websites is increasing, scarce attention has been paid to the use of an international language by university museums as a possible strategy to include and engage with a multicultural audience on museum websites. Finally, I suggested that the English version of websites with a "local" version and an "international" version do not only serve native speakers of English, but also non-native speakers, who may display varying degrees of proficiency of the language, as well as different communicative needs in relation to their culture. The "local" and the "international" versions may overlap in countries where English is used as an official language, such as the UK, but this does not necessarily mean those texts are meant for L1 speakers only, especially in multicultural societies. Texts written in English on museum websites may thus serve a multicultural audience, resulting in the need for prioritising cross-cultural understanding.

The next chapter introduces the research questions and the methodological foundations of this thesis.

3 Research design and methods

3.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter sets to introduce the research questions and sub-questions addressed in this thesis (Section 3.2) and describe the methods adopted to answer them: first, a survey of the English version of university museum websites (Section 3.3); second, two text analyses (Section 3.4); finally, qualitative semi-structured interviews (Section 3.5). A conclusive section (Section 3.6) summarises what has been outlined in the chapter.

3.2 Research questions and sub-questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate to what extent audience-oriented approaches are adopted by university museums in their online communication by focusing on their web pages in English. Specifically, the aims are to a) understand the extent to which university museums in Europe have committed to the use of English as an international language on their websites, and b) identify the intended readers of texts in English. In doing so, the research seeks to investigate whether recent trends in museology have affected museum online communication, and whether university museums in Europe have developed an awareness of the possible need to address readers with different cultural backgrounds and linguistic needs.

This thesis addresses the following research questions (RQs for short) and sub-questions. The first two questions focus on the texts as products, whereas the last one focuses on the writing process undertaken for the creation of those texts.

1. To what extent do university museums in Europe produce English versions of their websites?

2. Do texts on the English version of these websites reflect an audience-oriented approach to communication?

    2.1. Do these texts conform to web writing guidelines?

    2.2. What kind of relationship between author and intended reader is construed in these texts?

3. What is the intended audience for whom university museums in Europe write texts in English on their websites?

3.1. Who is involved in the writing process of these texts?

3.2. Do the people involved display awareness of the possible need to address a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous audience when writing these texts?

3.3. If evidence of such need arises, to what extent does it influence the way in which these texts are written?

In order to have a wider perspective on the topic, triangulation was in order: data collection has thus encompassed three different methods, by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches, which will be presented in the following sections.

3.3 Survey of English version websites

3.3.1 Research data and rationale

A survey of the English version of European university museum websites was carried out to assess the extent to which European university museums produce contents in English on their websites (RQ1). To the best of my knowledge, although previous research has been carried out on university websites (Callahan & Herring, 2012; Ferraresi & Bernardini, 2013, 2015), no studies have focused on the production of texts in English for museum websites, especially for university museums. For this reason, a survey of the English version of European university museum websites was conducted in order to investigate their current linguistic situation. A further aim of the survey was to create a list of websites to be used for the subsequent construction of the corpus for this research.

3.3.2 Data collection

In order to select the sample of websites to analyse, the first step of this survey was selecting a list of European university museums from the University Museums and Collections (UMAC) database. UMAC was chosen as a reliable source as it is a committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) which specifically deals with university museums and collections worldwide. The UMAC database is constantly updated with new information for each museum, including museum website, affiliated university website, subject area, institutional type, address, opening hours, contact details and a short description of the institution.

In June 2017, when the survey presented in what follows was carried out, there were around 1900 university museums in Europe according to the UMAC database. Among them, a maximum of 30 museums per country were randomly selected, for a total of 469 museums. Only 366 websites were examined over the total amount of museums selected, since the UMAC database did not have information on the websites of some of the museums. Figure 3.1 shows the countries included in the survey.
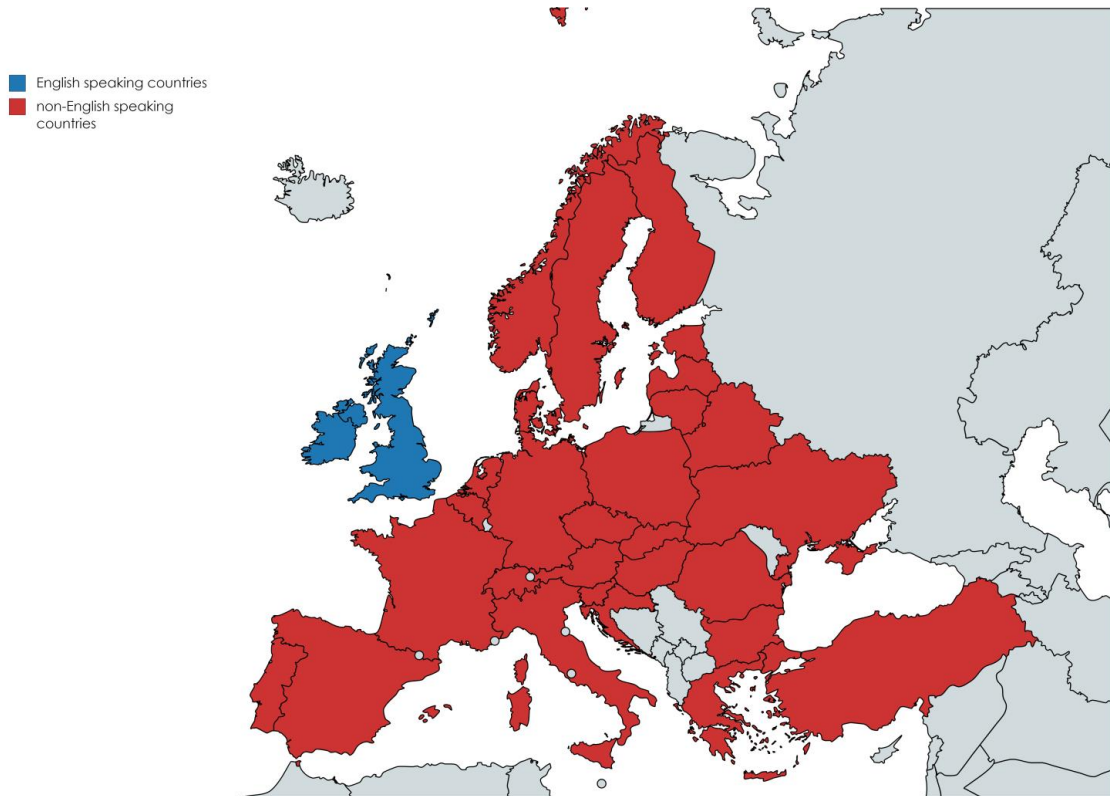
Figure 3.1. Map of the countries included in the survey

3.3.3   Data description and analysis

Each website selected was examined to check whether it offered contents in English. More specifically, I opened the homepage of each website on a web browser and checked the whole page by looking for a link labelled "English" or "EN". This can normally be found in the header of the page, as in Figure 3.2. An alternative may be the use of a UK or US flag standing for the English version of a website. The link to the English version is generally included in the header of the page, but may also be located in the footer or in other parts of the page.
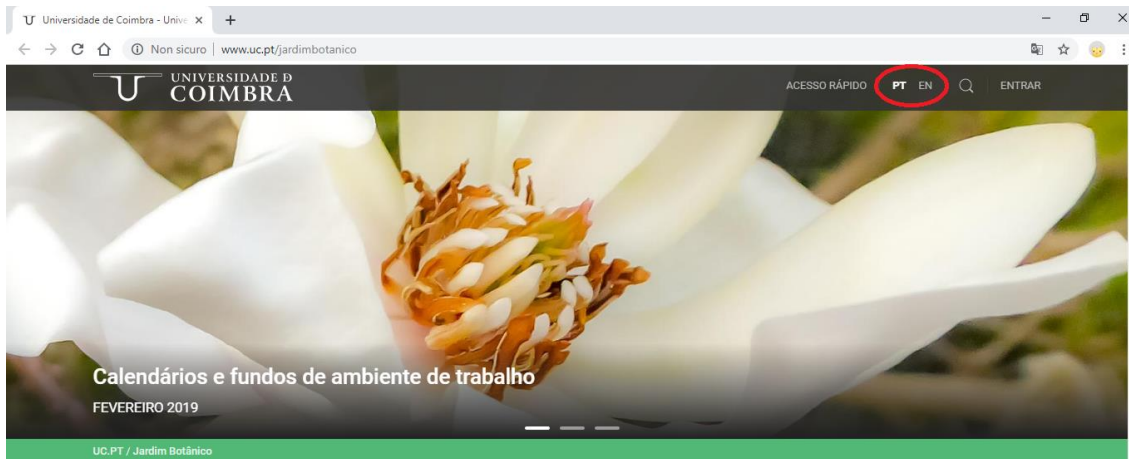
Figure 3.2. Example of link to the English version of the website[1]

3.4 Text analyses

3.4.1 Research data and rationale

Drawing on the insights provided by the survey, a corpus of texts from pages belonging to a selection of university museum websites was constructed. The corpus was designed so that three different textual genres were represented: "About", "Collection" and "Information" pages.

The examination of the texts from the corpus includes two separate textual analyses. One is aimed at understanding whether texts comply with web writing guidelines, i.e. what is generally deemed best for web writing/reading (RQ 2.1; cf. Section 2.3.2.2). The selected texts are part of web pages, and are thus read by an online audience, i.e. users navigating the web through any device. Nonetheless, it is not evident whether they have *intentionally* been written *for* an online audience, with specific needs in terms of text readability. Although this analysis cannot shed light on the intentionality issue, it can reveal whether the texts per se are actually optimised for online reading.

The second analysis focused on describing the relationship between author (institution) and intended readers of a text to observe the kind of communicative and museological approach adopted by the selected museums on their websites (RQ 2.2). By drawing on the model proposed by Hyland (2008), the analysis is aimed at highlighting the ways in which the selected museums position themselves within the texts with regard to their intended readers, thus shaping a specific institutional identity, as well as

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[1] See the English version of the museum's website: http://www.uc.pt/jardimbotanico.

establishing a dialogue and construing a relationship with the readers themselves. This analysis is based on the idea that any text is written for a specific intended audience, and that the author of a text may take a stance and create engagement with that audience by adopting specific textual features. The results reveal a specific representation of the intended readers within the texts.

The two textual analyses highlight different aspects of an audience-oriented approach to communication, i.e. how interactive, inclusive or user-friendly museums are on their website. Results of the two text analyses will be correlated to the results of the analysis of the qualitative interviews, to know whether the results of the text analysis may be seen as the product of chance or as a deliberate choice of using the textual features observed in the texts, and thus a specific approach to communication (RQ 2).

3.4.2 Data collection

3.4.2.1 Context and setting

Both text analyses focus on two different settings: one is a context where English is used as an official language, while the other one is a context where it is used as an international language. In both cases, texts in English may serve either native and non-native speakers of the language.

A short note on the reason why the two contexts have been named UK-EN and EU-EN is needed here. Other labels were considered during the corpus design, but were discarded. For instance, the classification of native vs. non-native texts was thought to be problematic because I could not assume that the authors/translators of such texts and/or their intended readers were non-native speakers of English, and also because the situation of English speakers in the world nowadays is very fluid and these categories cannot depict it properly (cf. Section 2.4.1). Therefore, a distinction based on the countries/geographical region where the museums are located was preferred.

Before moving on, a final remark is in order. Comparing texts belonging to these two different contexts is not an unproblematic task, as they are outputs of two different processes. In the former case, texts in the official language of a country (i.e. English) may be produced from scratch as a joint effort involving staff from different departments of a museum (e.g. curators, editors and web managers). In the latter case, texts originally produced in a language other than English may be the input for

producing (or translating) texts in English. The latter task, which may be performed by somebody within the museum staff or from outside, adds one more layer to the content production process. For this reason, results of the analysis of the texts (products) will be considered along with insights about the content production (process) elicited through the interviews.

3.4.2.2   Corpus design and sampling

A corpus was constructed in order to have a sample of the population under investigation, namely European university museum web pages in English. A small corpus was needed so as to be able to carry out a close text-based analysis of each sample. As the corpus was expected to be limited in size, all texts were manually collected and saved in txt format.[2]

First, in order to define what texts to include and exclude in the corpus, I referred to the research questions and defined the following categories to identify the textual population to be included in the corpus:

- type of institutions, i.e. European university museums;
- textual macro-genre, i.e. university museums' websites;
- language, i.e. English used for online communication.

Second, during the text collection phase (cf. Section 3.3) two main distinctions became apparent: the first is between museums having their own website and those having one or few pages about themselves on the associated university website; the second is between museums having one or few pages in English on their website and those offering a larger group of pages or an entire version of the website in English. In view of these considerations, other criteria were established for selecting European museums:

- only museums having a dedicated website were selected (as opposed to museums whose website was part of the university main website);
- only websites featuring more than three pages in English were selected;
- only websites featuring at least one sample of each of the three micro-genres identified were selected.

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[2] October 2018.

3 Research design and methods

In particular, the first criterion was thought to be important for at least two reasons. The object of this research is online museum communication as a product of different factors, such as museological approach, attitude towards the audience and communicative/linguistic approach. Therefore, the macro-genre identified for this study, namely university museum websites, should include only websites designed and developed as a museum effort, not as part of a more generalised university effort. The focus is not on the university, but on the museum itself as a separate entity. University museums can be identified by looking at their URL, which should not be the same as the university website's URL, and their structure: if only a couple of pages on the university website were dedicated to the museum, that museum was excluded from the selection. Figure 3.3 shows an example of a university museum web page, with the URL showing that it is part of the university website (UC Louvain).
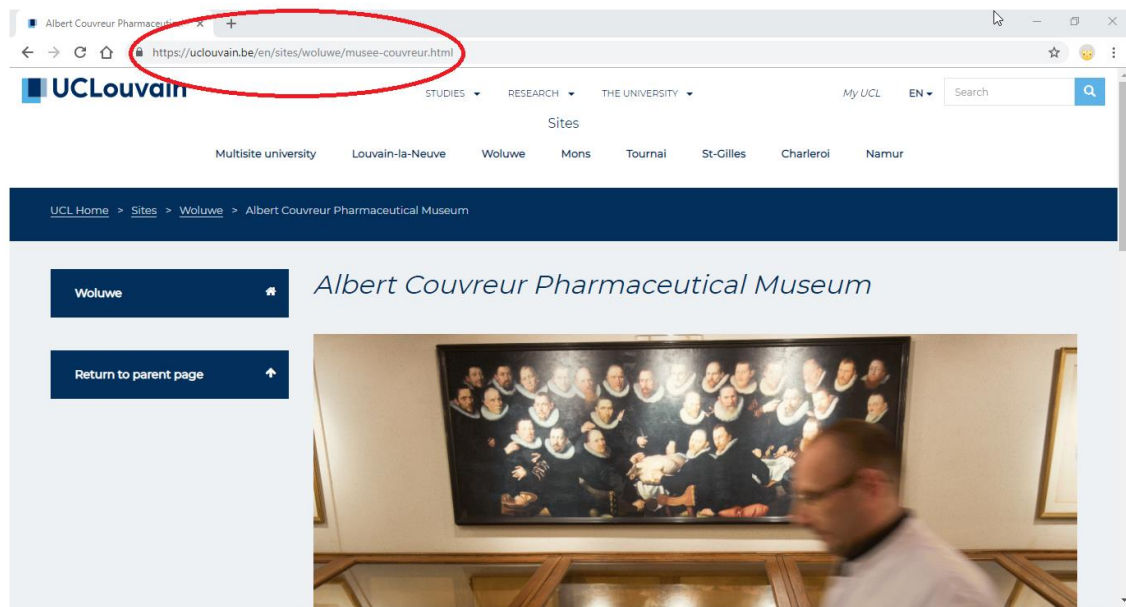
Figure 3.3. Example of a university museum website belonging to a university[3]

Figure 3.4 displays a website entirely dedicated to a group of university museums.

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[3] See the museum's website: https://uclouvain.be/en/sites/woluwe/musee-couvreur.html.
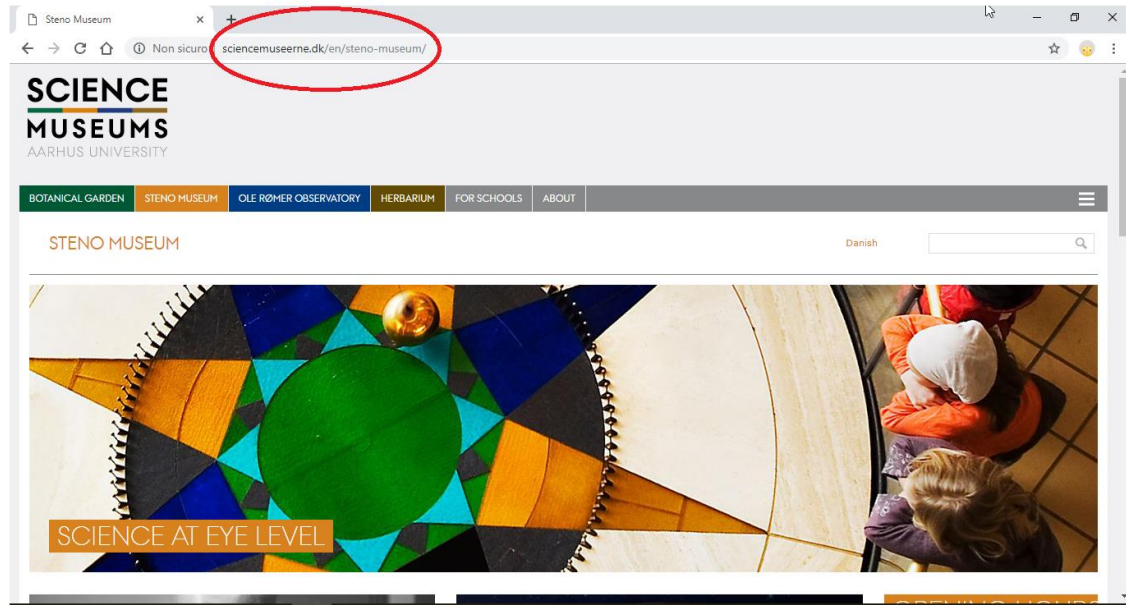
Figure 3.4. Example of a university museum website belonging to a museum[4]

Third, I organised the sample as follows. As mentioned in Section 3.4.2.1, I considered the UK as example of country where English is used as an official, first language and non-English speaking countries in Europe as examples of countries where English is used for intercultural communication. I decided to include ten museums for each group, which were randomly selected.

- Groups:

  o English used as an official language in the UK (UK-EN group);
  o English used as a language for intercultural communication in other EU countries (EU-EN group).

    As different non-English speaking countries in Europe have different official languages, I also decided to divide the EU-EN group into four different sub-groups by identifying four linguistic families that exist within the group. This distinction was meant to partially represent the diverse European scenario. However, due to the small number of museums selected for each linguistic family, no claims will be made about possible common patterns or differences among different cultural and linguistic groups in Europe.

- EU-EN linguistic families:

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[4] See the museum's website: http://sciencemuseerne.dk/en/steno-museum/.

- o Germanic languages (EU-G);
- o Romance languages (EU-R);
- o Slavic languages (EU-S);
- o Ugro-Finnic languages (EU-UF).

Furthermore, the textual macro-genre of university museums websites needed to be subdivided into specific micro-genres in order to identify single pages to include in the corpus which could be similar across different websites. Three micro-genres were identified that a) have rich textual content, b) are top level pages (i.e. they are linked from the main website menu) and c) display a mix of informative and promotional genres (Dalan, 2018).

- • Micro-genres:

  - o pages presenting the museum ("About");
  - o pages with information on the collection ("Collection");
  - o pages with practical information for the visit ("Information").

Details on the distinction among the three different micro-genres and the rationale for choosing them are offered in the following sub-section.

3.4.2.3 Defining the micro-genres

Micro-genres were identified according to the website structure and the type of content provided on the single pages. A few examples are shown below to make the distinction among the three micro-genres clear. The examples include pages which were examined during the survey of English version websites and the corpus construction but are not necessarily part of the corpus. The description of the three micro-genres does not have the pretence of being representative of all European university museums: pages belonging to the same micro-genre may vary to a certain extent according to the museum type and size, as well as to the design and structure of the website as a whole.

First, Figure 3.5 shows the screenshot of the "About" page of the Medical Museion of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. The "About us" section of the website includes a page labelled "What is Medical Museion?", which presents general information related to the museum.
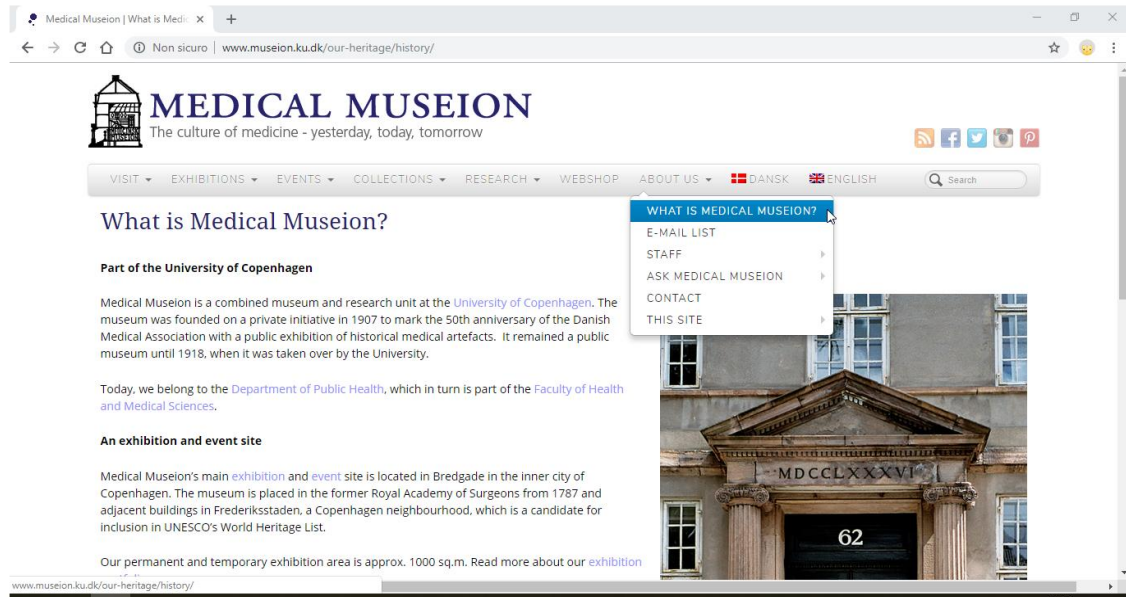
Figure 3.5. Example of museum "About" page[5]

The "About" section of museum websites — which may be labelled as "About", "About us" or in other ways referring to the museum as an institution (e.g. "About the Natural History Museum of Denmark") — generally presents the institution itself, and may include pages on a wide range of topics, including the following:

- the museum belonging to the university;
- the history of the institution;
- the building(s) where the museum is housed and its restoration;
- the museum mission and values;
- how to hire the venue for events;
- how to request loans;
- how to volunteer or work at the museum;
- staff and volunteers;
- members, sponsors, patrons, and donations;
- other museums associated with the same university;
- other partners or networks to which the museum is affiliated.

"About" pages are important as they include a representation of the institution, especially in terms of values and work carried out. Although these pages tend to be self-referential, information about specific groups of people addressed can also be found, such as organisations interested in hiring spaces for events or people who may want to

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[5] See the museum's website: http://www.museion.ku.dk/our-heritage/history/.

donate money to the museum. For instance, an "About" page describing opportunities for volunteering may be used by museums to address different communities and new audiences, including people who are not usual visitors; because of this, it may be revealing of the type of audience museums try to reach. "About" pages are also quite promotional, in that they seek to promote the museum and invite readers to discover more on the website or on-site. These features are typical of "About" pages in general, and may also be found on other types of websites, e.g. corporate and university websites (Bano & Shakir, 2015; Bolaños-Medina, 2005; Caiazzo, 2011; Casañ Pitarch, 2015).

Second, "Collection" pages on museum websites can be recognised quite intuitively. First-level pages related to the collections normally provide general information about the cultural heritage preserved at the museum and its collections. Second-level pages of this type may display specific collections or departments. They may also provide information about exhibitions and other resources related to the collections, such as special archives and libraries. Pages positioned at the third or at further levels in the website hierarchical structure may contain a database with interpretive texts which provide details about one or more specific items belonging to the collections.

Figure 3.6 is an example of first-level "Collection" page from the website of the Manchester Museum, UK. The page shows a short body text providing a general presentation of the collections of the museum. As shown by the hierarchy of pages on the left, this page links to many different second-level pages, each one introducing a specific collection or department.
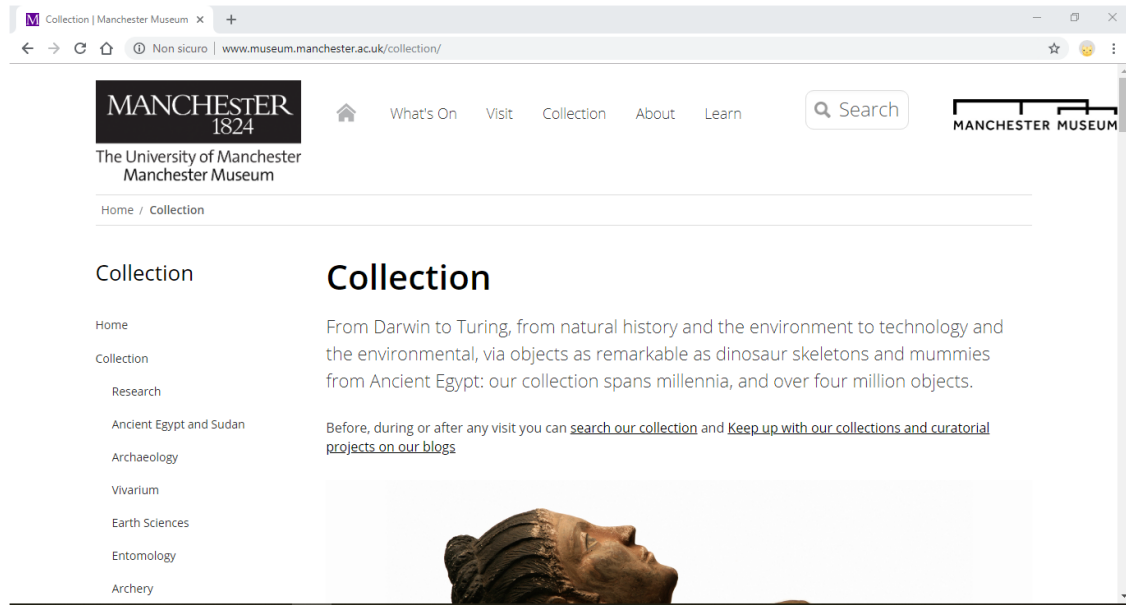
Figure 3.6. Example of the Manchester Museum's "Collection" first-level page[6]

An example of second-level "Collection" page from Manchester Museum's website is provided in Figure 3.7. Here, a specific collection, namely the Vivarium, is described in more detail.
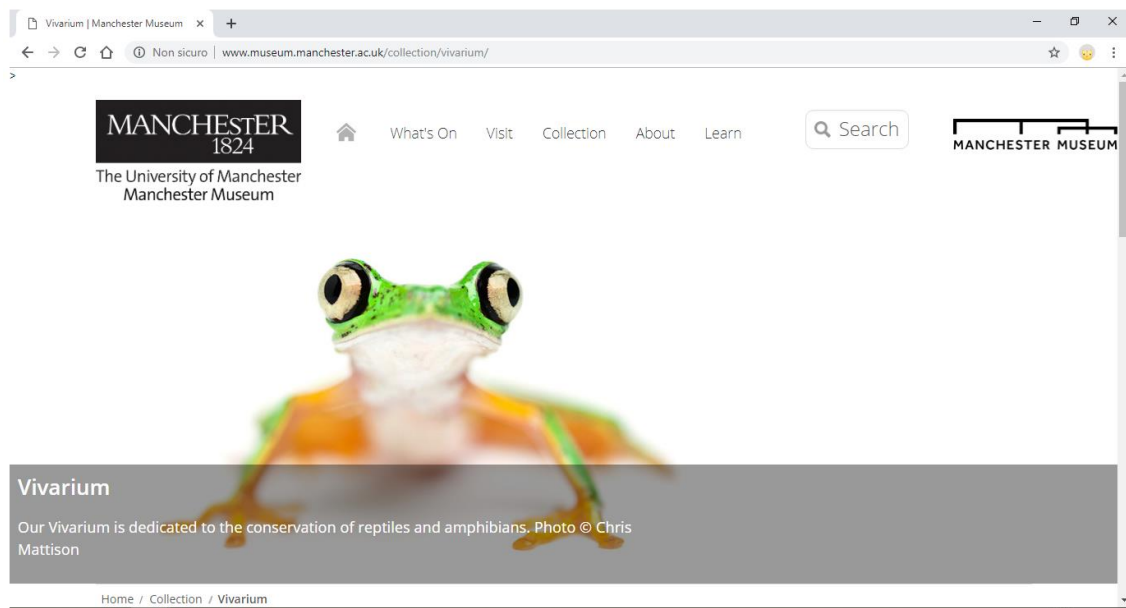
Figure 3.7. Example of the Manchester Museum's "Collection" second-level page[7]

Figure 3.8 displays the screenshot of a page describing an item from the collection of The Museum of English Rural Life in Reading, UK. The focus of this page is object-specific, as all the page is devoted to provide information related to the item, which usually comes from catalogues and documents about the collections.

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[6] See the museum's website: http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/collection/.
[7] See the museum's website: http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/collection/vivarium/.
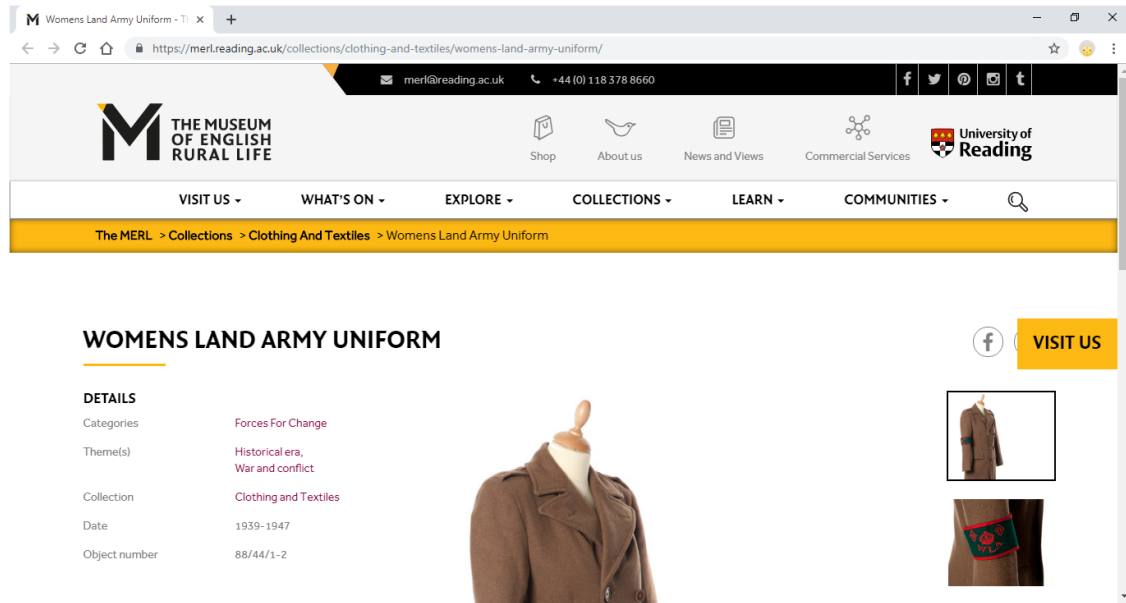
Figure 3.8. Example of the Museum of English Rural Life's "Collection" third-level page[8]

In general terms, "Collection" pages fulfil both an informative function, offering details on the collections, and a promotional function, trying to encourage readers to discover the collections, either online or at the museum. Therefore, they may be addressed both at the general reader/user/visitor who may want to learn more about a topic, and academics carrying out research in the fields related to the museum collections and thus looking for technical details. In addition, references to readers on these pages may reveal whose heritage is collected at the museum, and thus which community may feel represented by those collections (Watson, 2007).

Finally, the "Information" micro-genre includes all the pages providing practical information aimed at the physical visit to the museum. The following is a list of the most common pieces of information which can be found on these pages:

- opening hours;
- how to get to the museum and where to park;
- admission tickets, prices and bookings;
- guided, self-led and other types of tours;
- visits for groups, families and schools;
- museum accessibility;

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[8] See the museum's website: https://merl.reading.ac.uk/collections/clothing-and-textiles/womens-land-army-uniform/.

- photography policy and other rules of conduct;

- facilities offered, such as cloakrooms, shops, cafés and restaurants.

Figure 3.9 shows a typical "Information" page, providing maps and indications for getting to the museum. This type of page is mainly meant for people who may want to visit the museum and thus need to find out practical information before the visit.
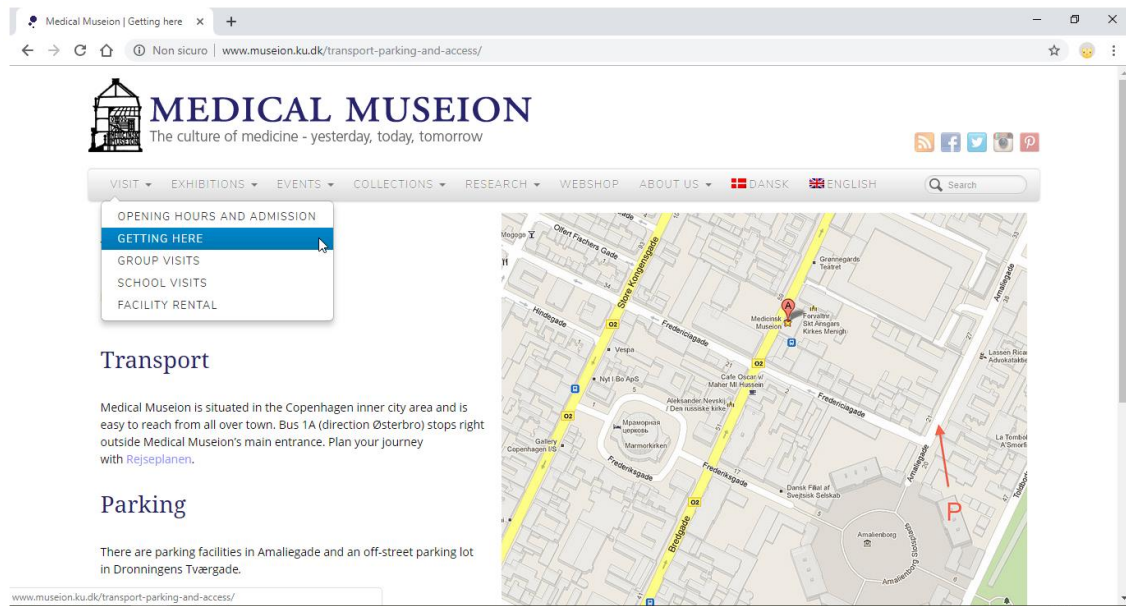
Figure 3.9. Example of the Medical Museion's "Information" page (2)[9]

Finally, Figure 3.10 is an example of a more specific "Information" page about organised tours for school groups. This kind of page is addressed to a specific, rather than general, audience, namely schools and teachers.

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[9] See the museum's website: http://www.museion.ku.dk/opening-hours/.

Figure 3.10. Example of the Medical Museion's "Information" page (3)[10]

"Information" pages were chosen as one of the micro-genres of the corpus as they are mainly informative pages providing details for the visit. As shown by the last example (Figure 3.10), which includes a reference to a specific group of people addressed on the page, "Information" pages are very important for this study as they may include many explicit references to the intended readers, such as families, groups and visitors with disabilities. All these categories represent people who may want to visit the museum and need specific information.

Hence, the three different micro-genres described were chosen so that the corpus for this research could include pages performing different functions and potentially aiming at different types of readers. This selection of micro-genres is not supposed to be representative of all the main genres included on museum websites, but to offer insights on the intended audience of university museum websites. Other micro-genres could have been included in the corpus, such as the homepage. Although homepages may be interesting, they are usually poor in textual content if we consider only the body text. Also, texts on homepages are likely to vary more often, as they usually need to display information on current or future events and activities organised by museums.

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[10] See the museum's website: http://www.museion.ku.dk/visit-medical-museion/school-visits/.

3.4.2.4   Corpus composition

The data for this study consists of texts collected from the selected European university museum websites: 20 museums were selected for this research, as shown in Table 3.1. As mentioned in Section 3.4.2.2, ten museums were chosen for each group (UK-EN/EU-EN).

Group	Language family	Country	Number of museums
UK-EN	--	UK	10
EU-EN	EU-G	Austria	1
		Denmark	1
		Sweden	1
	EU-R	Italy	1
		Portugal	1
		Spain	1
	EU-S	Croatia	1
		Czech Republic	1
		Poland	1
	EU-UF	Finland	1

Table 3.1. Museums represented in the corpus

Figure 3.11 represents the countries included in the corpus divided into two groups standing for the two different varieties of English identified, namely the UK-EN group and the EU-EN group.
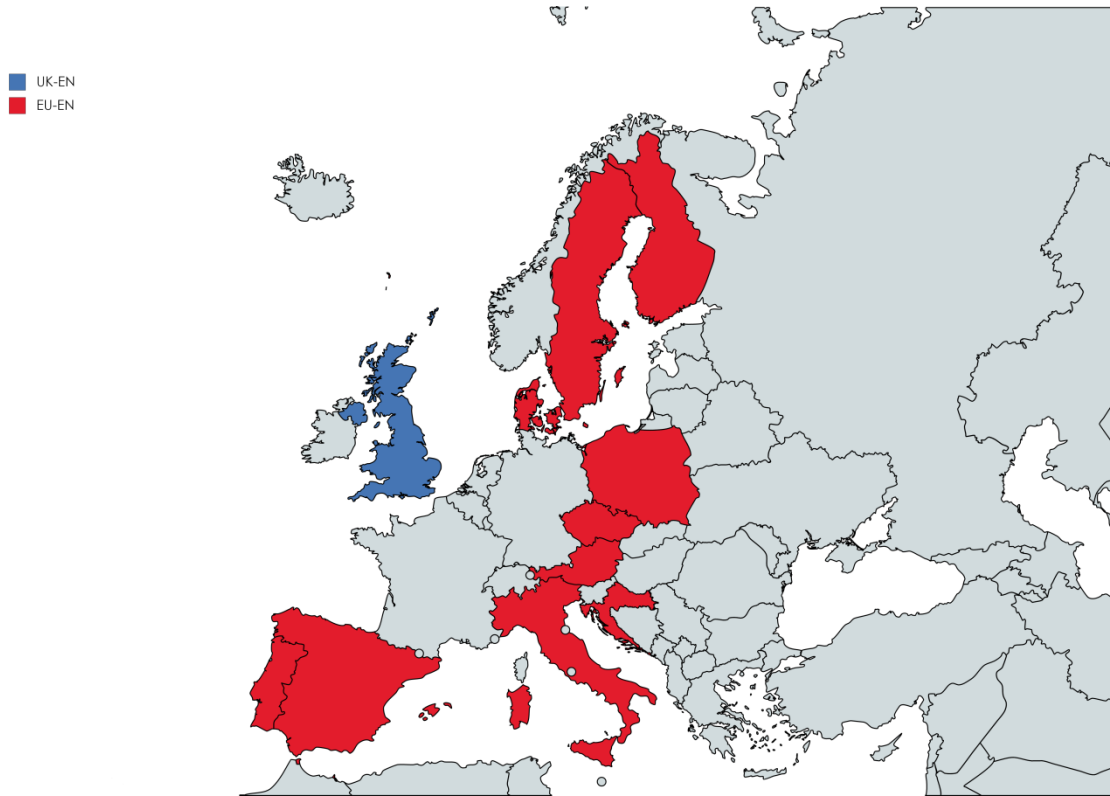
Figure 3.11. Map of UK-EN (blue) and EU-EN (red)

Table 3.2 provides general statistics of the corpus, divided into the two groups identified.

	UK	EU	Total
No. of tokens	26766	24704	51470
No. of texts	88	72	160
No. of museum websites	10	10	20
No. of countries	1	10	11

Table 3.2. Corpus statistics by English language variety (UK-EN and EU-EN)

Three museums per language family were randomly selected, each one from a different country. The only exception was the group of Ugro-Finnic languages, which only includes Finnish and Hungarian in Europe: only one museum was considered for this group, as it is much smaller than the others. Hence, the four EU-EN linguistic families include:

- 3 Germanic museums (EU-G): Danish, German, Swedish;
- 3 Romance museums (EU-R): Italian, Portuguese, Spanish;
- 3 Slavic museums (EU-S): Czech, Croatian, Polish;
- 1 Ugro-Finnic museum (EU-UF): Finnish.

Figure 3.12 provides a map of the linguistic families belonging to the EU-EN group.
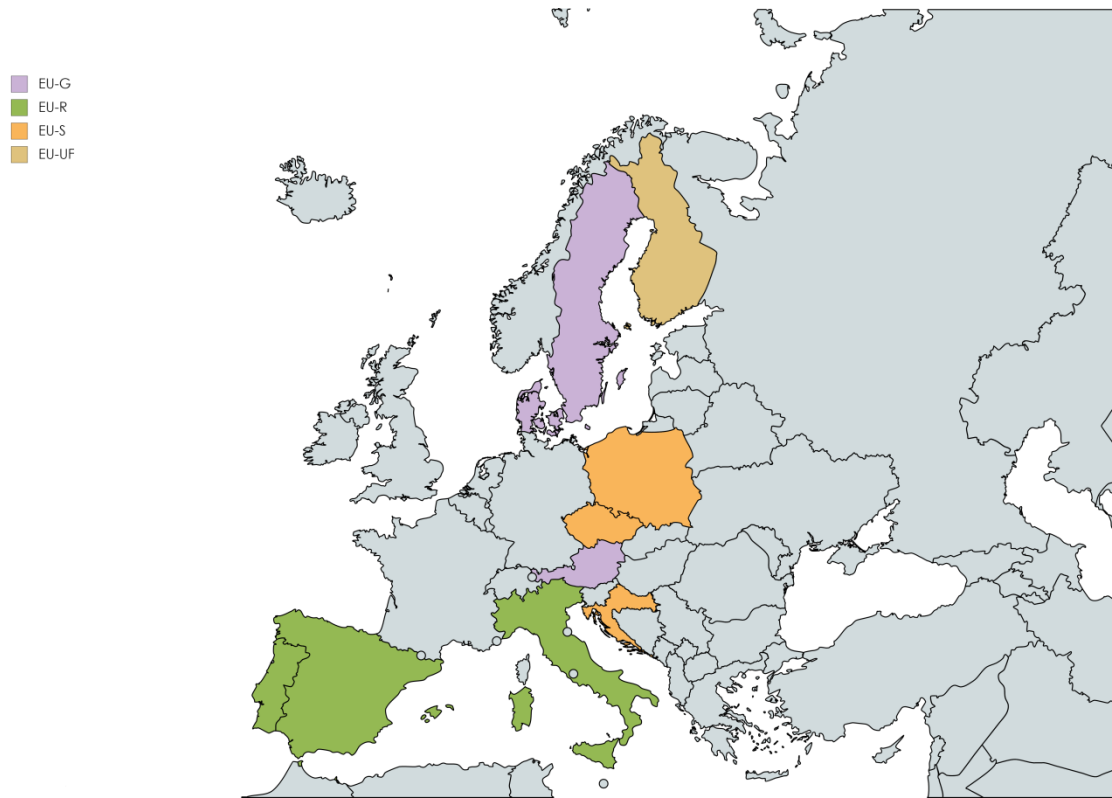
Figure 3.12. Map of EU-EN linguistic families

Corpus statistics for the different linguistic families and for each country involved are included in Table 3.3.

Language family	Country	Number of texts	Number of tokens
EU-G	Austria	9	1515
	Denmark	9	2330
	Sweden	9	2151
EU-R	Italy	7	1331
	Portugal	9	3642
	Spain	4	703
EU-S	Croatia	9	8383
	Czech Republic	3	1753
	Poland	4	1497
EU-UF	Finland	9	1399

Table 3.3. Corpus statistics for EU-EN language families and countries

As far as the micro-genres are concerned, a minimum of one page and a maximum of three pages per micro-genre were selected on each website, starting from first-level pages. Only pages with substantial amount of running text were chosen. Pages which only included links or images were excluded. Figure 3.13 is an example of page which was discarded.
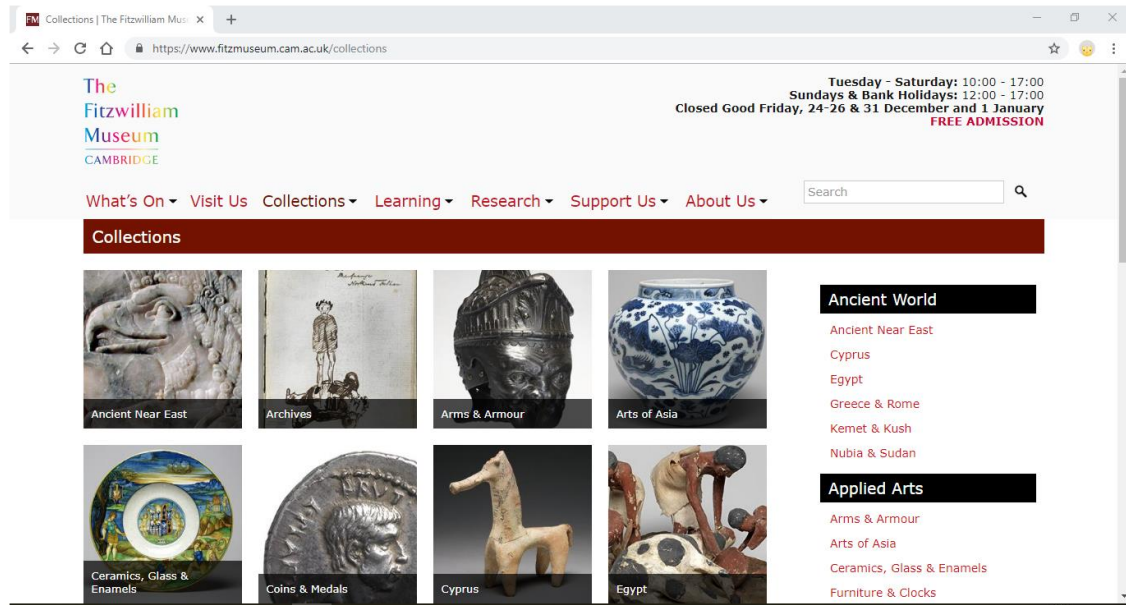
Figure 3.13. Example of excluded page[11]

Corpus statistics per genre can be found in Table 3.4, providing details about the two main groups (UK-EN and EU-EN) and the linguistic families within the EU-EN group.

Corpus		About		Collection		Information		All genres	
Group	Sub-group	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens	Texts	Tokens
UK-EN (ALL)	--	28	8389	30	8637	30	9740	88	26766
--	EU-G	9	2292	9	2316	9	1388	27	5996
--	EU-R	7	2398	7	2771	6	507	20	5676
--	EU-S	6	3665	5	6311	5	1657	16	11633
--	EU-UF	3	759	3	324	3	316	9	1399
EU-EN (ALL)	--	25	9114	24	11722	23	3868	72	24704
ALL UK/EU	--	53	17503	54	20359	53	13608	160	51470

Table 3.4. Corpus details per genre

Although the corpus does not aim at being representative of the diverse situation of university museums in Europe, I decided to make sure that it included a mix of different types of museums dealing with a variety of disciplines. Table 3.5 and Table 3.6 show the complete list of EU-EN and UK-EN selected university museums.

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[11] See the museum's website: https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/collections.

Code	Country	Museum	University	Type
EUF_FI	Finland	Helsinki University Museum	University of Helsinki	Science & art
EUG_AT	Austria	Josephinum	Medizinische Universität Wien	Medicine
EUG_DK	Denmark	Natural History Museum	University of Copenhagen	Natural History
EUG_SE	Sweden	Museum of Sketches	Lunds universitet	Art
EUR_IT	Italy	Museum of Human Anatomy	University of Turin	Anatomy
EUR_PT	Portugal	MUSLAN	University of Beira Interior	Industry
EUR_ES	Spain	Geology Museum Valentí Masachs de Manresa	Escola Universitària Politècnica de Manresa	Geology
EUS_HR	Croatia	Botanical Garden	University of Zagreb	Botany
EUS_CZ	Czech Republic	Hrdlicka Museum of Man	Charles University	Anthropology
EUS_PL	Poland	Museum of the University of Warsaw	Uniwersytet Warszawski	Mixed

Table 3.5. List of EU-EN museums in the corpus

Code	Museum	University	Type
UK_CB1	Kettle's Yard	University of Cambridge	Art
UK_CB2	Museum of Zoology	University of Cambridge	Zoology
UK_CB3	Whipple Museum of the History of Science	University of Cambridge	Science
UK_CB4	The Fitzwilliam Museum	University of Cambridge	Art
UK_GL1	The Hunterian	University of Glasgow	Mixed
UK_MA1	Manchester Museum	University of Manchester	Science
UK_MA2	The Whitworth	University of Manchester	Art
UK_ON1	Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology	University of Oxford	Art & archaeology
UK_ON2	Pitt Rivers Museum	University of Oxford	Archaeology
UK_RG1	The Museum of English Rural Life	University of Reading	Agriculture

Table 3.6. List of UK-EN museums in the corpus

3.4.3   Data description and analysis

3.4.3.1   Web writing analysis

In order to examine web writing practices and see to what extent the general guidelines described in the literature (cf. Section 2.3.2.2) are adopted by the museums, it was necessary to select a list of web writing guidelines and operationalise them in terms of textual features.

Only a selection of web writing guidelines were included, specifically those which could be easily converted into identifiable textual features. The intention was to focus on a few specific examples of web writing guidelines and suggest a small number of features. Some web writing guidelines were excluded as they were considered too abstract and vague, and thus they could not be straightforwardly transformed into specific features to be found in the texts.

For instance, most publications on web writing (Fenton & Lee, 2014; McAlpine, 2001; Newman Lior, 2013; Nielsen & Loranger, 2006; Redish, 2012) advocate the use of simple, common terms that are easy to understand. Nevertheless, the distinction between simple and complex terms is not clear-cut, and identifying simple, common terms in a text is not a straightforward, impartial process. Vocabulary studies have focused on the latter and used word lists (e.g. West's General Service List). Nevertheless, as discussed in Section 2.3.3 the use of word lists has been criticised as problematic (Bailin & Grafstein, 2016). Furthermore, these studies considered words which are common in exchanges among native speakers, usually without considering language use by non-native speakers. Finally, it is not easy to determine "simple" terms in English for people with a variety of linguistic backgrounds: terms which may be "simple" to people speaking a Latin language may not be equally "simple" to people speaking a Germanic language.

Another example is the suggestion of including the most important information in the first two sentences of a web page. However, identifying the most important information on a page may not be a straightforward process, and may depend on several factors, such as the reader's own expectations and needs, which may influence what he/she considers as important information. Therefore, this type of guidelines were not considered appropriate to be used for this analysis.

Once the web writing guidelines to include in the analysis had been chosen, they were converted into textual features to be spotted in the texts. Table 3.7 shows the selected textual features and the guidelines they were extrapolated from. Some of the features identified were connected both to web writing guidelines and to the museum literature on text interpretation and museum communication for designing exhibitions: the table reports on areas of overlap between the two fields. The textual features identified may be divided into two categories, which seek to cover two different aspects underpinning web writing guidelines. The first four features, namely headings, words in

bold, links and lists, are related to text structuring and page layout, whereas the last three features are concerned with text length and syntactical elements.

Category	Web writing feature	Web writing literature	Museum studies literature
Text structure and layout	Headings	Use a hierarchy of headings and sub-headings (Bly, 2002; Fenton & Lee, 2014; Krug, 2014; Mill, 2005; Redish, 2012)	"Use subheads to help the visitors skim texts" (P. M. McManus, 1991: 44)
	Words in bold	Use bold for emphasis (Fenton & Lee, 2014; Krug, 2014; Nielsen & Loranger, 2006; Redish, 2012)	--
	Links within the body text	Use meaningful links to structure the text. Mark them by underscoring and using a different font colour (Fenton & Lee, 2014; McAlpine, 2001; Mill, 2005; Redish, 2012)	--
	Bulleted/numbered lists	Use bulleted and numbered lists if a paragraph has four or more elements (Fenton & Lee, 2014; Krug, 2014; McAlpine, 2001; Nielsen & Loranger, 2006; Redish, 2012)	--
Text length and syntax	Short paragraphs (max 100 words)	Divide the information into short paragraphs, each one having one idea or communicative purpose (Fenton & Lee, 2014; Krug, 2014; Mill, 2005; Newman Lior, 2013; Redish, 2012)	"Break the text" and "do not overwrite" (P. M. McManus, 1991: 44); "keep it short" (Ambrose & Paine, 2006: 90)
	Short sentences (max 25 words)	Use a simple syntax: prefer sentences that are simple, short, and complete (Mill, 2005; Yunker, 2003)	
	Active verbs	Use the active voice (Bly, 2002; Fenton & Lee, 2014; Jeney, 2007; McAlpine, 2001; Redish, 2012)	"Text […] written in active voice […] is more likely to be read." (D. Bartlett, 2014: 34)

Table 3.7. Analytical framework including selected web writing features

Each web page was surveyed to look for the set of web writing textual features. First, the layout-related features were observed on each page. Data related to these features were coded as binary variables: texts with at least one instance of each feature were considered as conforming to that specific web writing standard. Data were thus collected on the number of pages displaying or not one or more headings, words in bold, links and lists. The underpinning rationale for this operationalisation is that a text is not considered more readable if the author uses *many* headings, words in bold, links and lists, but if these features are used in the first place. In other words, the frequency of each of these features on a page was not accounted for improving readability, and thus was not considered in this study. For instance, a text full of words in bold is not necessarily more readable, because everything is emphasised and nothing stands out.

According to web writing guidelines, bold should rather be used to highlight important keywords in the text (cf. Section 2.3.2.2). Headings, links and lists also need to be used in a meaningful way, not just frequently.

This part of the analysis was completed on a browser (Chrome) in order to look for these features in the HTML language by using Chrome "Inspect" element. Headings are structured in a hierarchy which may comprise many different levels, as shown in Figure 3.14.

```
<h1>Level 1 heading</h1>

<h2>Level 2 heading</h2>

<h3>Level 3 heading</h3>
```

Figure 3.14. Levels of headings

During the analysis, headings were recognised (and distinguished from words in bold font) by looking at the HTML code of pages. However, the number of levels of headings was not recorded: following the same logic discussed earlier, a text rich in levels of headings is not necessarily more readable than a text with only one-level headings. Similarly, words in bold within the body text were identified by looking for the tags shown in Figure 3.15.

```
<b>Text</b>

<em>Text</em>

<strong>Text</strong>
```

Figure 3.15. Examples of tags for words in bold

Links and lists could be identified more intuitively by scanning the page. No further data was recorded for these features, e.g. whether lists were bulleted or numbered or whether links were broken or working.

Illustrative examples of the layout-related features are provided for the sake of clarity. Figure 3.16 is an example of headings, words in bold and links from an "Information" page on the website of the Pitt River Museum in Oxford, UK.
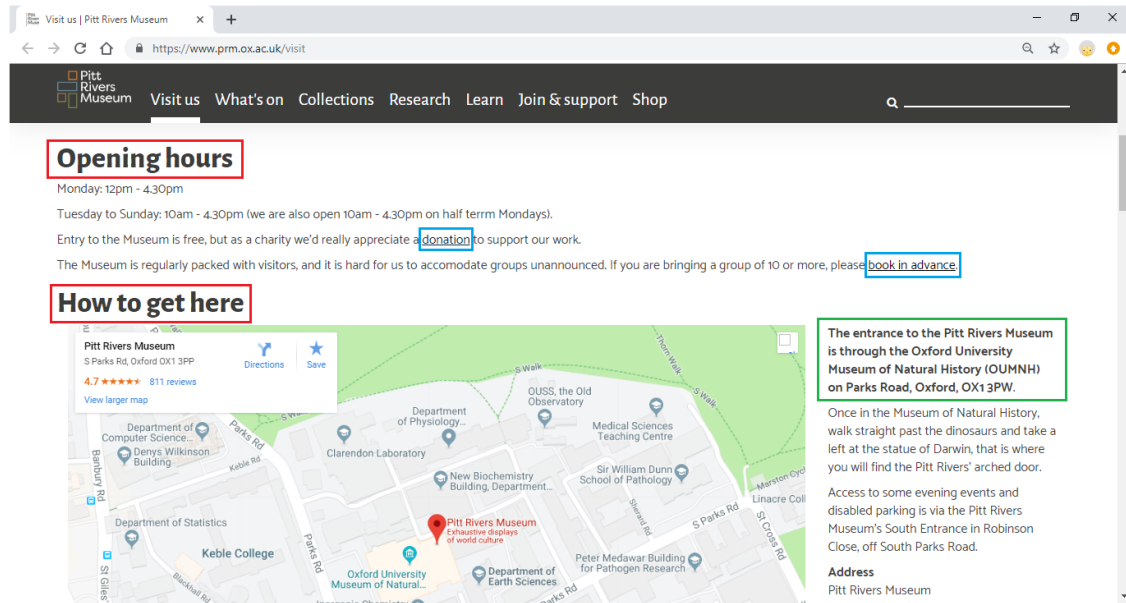
Figure 3.16. Example of headings (red), words in bold (green) and links (blue)[12]

Figure 3.17 is an example of list from an "Information" page on the website of the Helsinki University Museum in Finland.
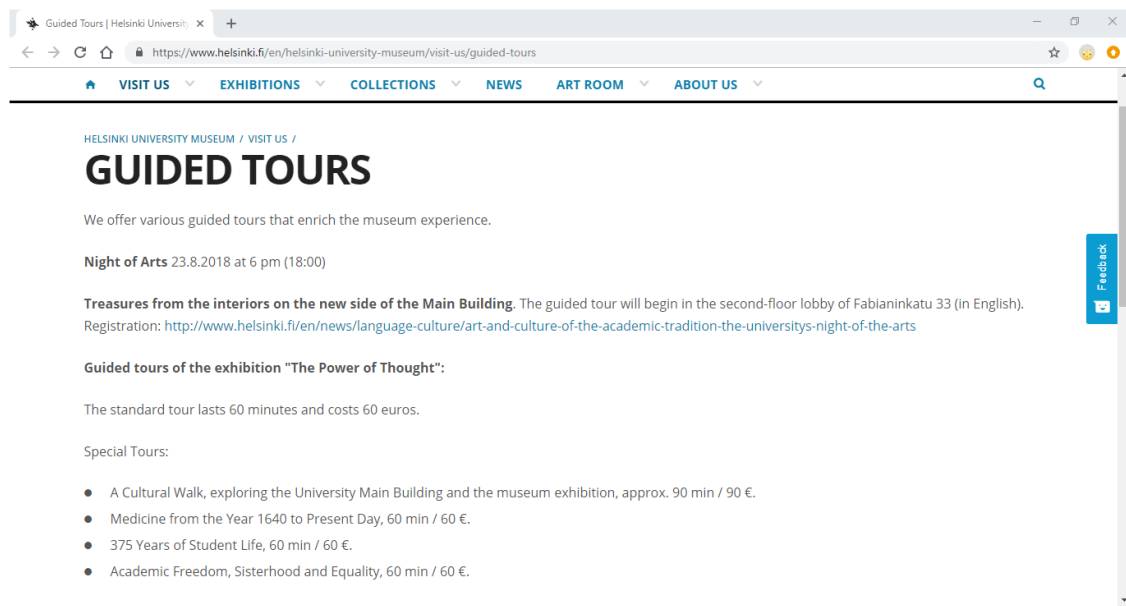
Figure 3.17. Example of list[13]

Unlike textual features, syntactic features were coded as numeric variables. Paragraph and sentence length were checked by using the word count function of the text editor Notepad++.[14] For paragraph length, 100 words were considered to be a reasonable, conservative threshold: paragraphs with 100 words or less were counted as ideal-length

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[12] See the museum's website: https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/visit.
[13] See the museum's website: https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-university-museum/visit-us/guided-tours.
[14] Notepad++ v6.1.8. See: https://notepad-plus-plus.org/.

paragraphs, while the others were counted as long paragraphs. This threshold was established by conforming to the related literature. Jiménez-Crespo (2011: 5), e.g., suggests that "for English, a paragraph should have from 3 to 5 sentences […] with 100 words at most." A sentence was considered to be ideal-length if including 25 words or less, following Mill's suggestion to "keep sentences to about 15–25 words in length" (2005: 3). The same instruction is reported by Jiménez-Crespo (2011: 3), whereas Redish suggests an even stricter threshold, i.e. "try to keep your sentences to about 10 to 20 words" (2012: 212).

Finally, active verbs in the texts were checked by using #LancsBox,[15] an open-source corpus toolbox provided by Lancaster University. The software supports "smart searches" for grammatical categories, e.g. "VERBS" to obtain the frequency of verbs in each text of the corpus (Figure 3.18) and "PASSIVES" to get the frequency of passive verbs (Figure 3.19).

Figure 3.18. #LancsBox window showing all verbs from the UK-EN corpus

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Figure 3.19. #LancsBox window showing only passive verbs from the UK-EN corpus

3.4.3.2 Stance and engagement analysis

The analysis, aiming to examine how museums as cultural institutions talk about themselves and their intended readers within the texts, largely adopts the model of interaction proposed by Hyland (2008). Hyland's model is based on the concept of persuasion, which "involves writers making evaluations about their audience and their own relationship to this audience" (Hyland, 2008: 4). This was considered a fundamental concept underpinning this analysis. Another major advantage of using this framework is that it has been successfully adopted by several researchers to analyse diverse textual genres, from academic texts (Li & Wharton, 2012; Zarei & Mansouri, 2011) to promotional tourist web pages (Suau-Jiménez, 2016).

This method was considered the most appropriate in order to elicit information from the texts themselves about what Hyland defines as the two "broad interactional macro-functions", i.e. stance and engagement (Hyland, 2008: 6): the former broadly refers to the space that the authors create for themselves within a text, while the latter includes the space given to the intended readers. Figure 3.20 shows the structure of this model and its components.
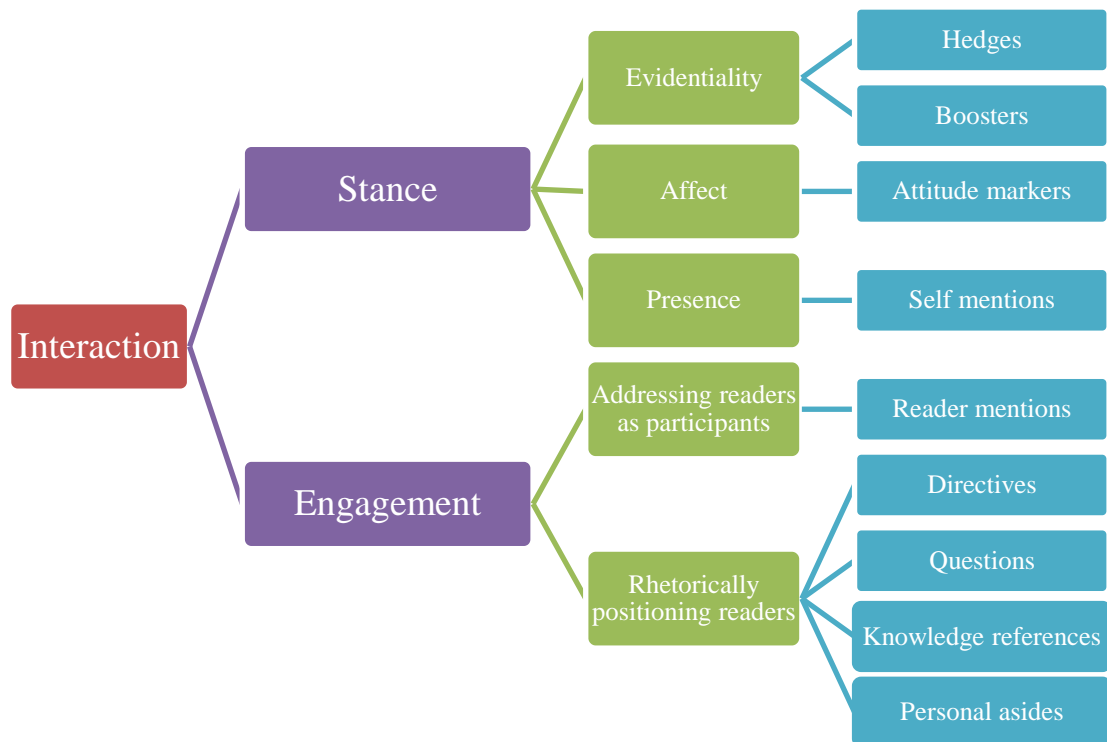
Figure 3.20. Model of interactional macro-functions (adapted from Hyland, 2008)

Stance is a writer-oriented function, as it represents "the writer's textual 'voice' or community recognised personality" (Hyland, 2008: 5). It refers to the textual means used by writers to present themselves and express their opinions and attitudes in relation to what it is being said. Engagement includes the reader-oriented features, i.e. all the rhetorical devices used by writers in order to acknowledge the presence of their readers, involve them as discourse participants and guide them in the interpretation of the text, as well as invite them to perform certain actions. As Hyland points out, "stance and engagement are two sides of the same coin and [...] there are overlaps between them" (2008: 6): on the one hand, writers need to "manage their own performance of self", while on the other they aim to "establish the presence of their readers in the discourse" (2001: 550).

The analytical framework was set up by adapting Hyland's model (2008). All the stance features from the model were included in the analytical framework for this research, as shown in Figure 3.21.
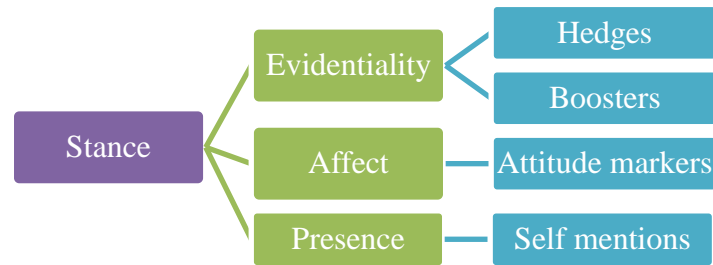
Figure 3.21. Stance categories and features adopted

Features belonging to the evidentiality category convey "the writer's commitment to the reliability of the propositions" (Hyland, 2008: 7). Evidentiality features may be hedges, used to "withhold complete commitment to a proposition", and boosters, used by writers to "express certainty in what they say and to mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with readers" (Hyland, 2008: 7). While boosters invite the reader to share the same opinion as the author, hedges — which are typical of academic writing (Hyland, 1995, 1996, 2005b) — leave a space for readers to agree or not with the position of the author, after evaluating the credibility of the propositions. The following are two examples of hedges taken from the corpus described in Section 3.4.2.2: the first one is based on the use of an adverb, while the second employs the modal verb "may". Both of them convey tentativeness in relation to what it is said:

- "the house has been preserved *virtually* unchanged" (UK_CB1_CO2);
- "different annuals *may* change every year" (EUS_HR_CO1).

Below, examples of boosters show the use of adverbs like "highly" or "very" to underline conviction and give emphasis to the proposition:

- "*highly* selective point of view" (UK_CB4_AB1);
- "a *very* limited level" (EUG_DK_CO2).

Affect involves "attitudes towards what is said" (Hyland, 2008: 7), thus including attitude markers, which are used to express "affective, rather than epistemic, attitudes to propositions" (Hyland, 2008: 8). Attitude markers are commonly used in persuasive texts to influence readers' perception and opinion about something. Examples include both an adjective and a series of nouns expressing a positive attitude to what is presented:

- "*remarkable* collection" (UK_CB1_AB1);

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- "the *singularity*, the *authenticity* and the *exemplariness* of the testimonies" (EUR_PT_AB1).

Finally, the category of presence refers to "the extent to which the writer chooses to project him or herself into the text" by "presenting a discoursal self" through the use of self-mentions (Hyland, 2008: 7-8). Apart from the first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives ("we", "us", "our(s)"), it was also important to include other items referring to the author, and thus the museum (e.g. "The Helsinki University Museum" or "The Museum of the University of Warsaw"). Including an explicit reference to the author within the text is not a random choice, but is rather a way to shape a particular institutional identity and image, as well as convey "personal authority" (Hyland, 2001: 551). For instance, while the phrase "Scotland's oldest museum" (UK_GL1_AB2) depicts the image of a well-known, important institution, the use of "we" in the sentence "we invite everyone on a journey to explore the wonders of science and nature" (EUG_DK_AB3) makes the text sound more personal and human, as if members of the staff were directly talking to the reader, not as an institution but as individuals. Here are a few more examples of self-mentions:

- "*we* regret any inconvenience" (UK_CB4_IN1);
- "please continue to give *us* feedback" (UK_CB1_IN3);
- "*The museum* has a disabled access" (EUG_SE_IN1).

On the other hand, engagement features were subdivided into two categories, as shown in Figure 3.22.

Figure 3.22. Engagement categories and features adopted

The former refers to the need of engaging readers as addressees in order to meet their "expectations of inclusion" (Hyland, 2001: 555). This is performed in the text by using inclusive first-person ("we", "us", "our(s)") and second-person ("you", "your(s)") pronouns and possessive adjectives, but also other "items referring to readers" (Hyland, 2001: 553). The choice of either device has peculiar implications. Personal pronouns

refer to a generally unspecified person or group of people: "you" may be used to directly engage the reader in the conversation, while "we" is usually meant to create a sense of community and belonging. Explicit references to a specific group of addressees portray the author's conceptualisation of the text potential readers. Examples of reader mentions can be found below:

- "*you* can donate by clicking here" (UK_CB1_AB2);
- "the museum's collections are a physical archive of the changes in *our* nature and environment" (EUG_DK_CO2);
- "By the end of visiting hours *all visitors* are asked to leave the Garden." (EUS_HR_IN1).

The latter category of engagement features involves pulling "readers into the discourse at critical points, predicting possible objections and guiding them to particular interpretations" (Hyland, 2008: 9). By using these features, the writer "anticipates a reader's response and […] incorporates the active role of an addressee" in the text (Hyland, 2001: 551). Realisations of this type of engagement depends on the use of directives and questions.

Directives are defined by Hyland as "utterances which instruct the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the writer" (2002: 215-6). A directive may express the obligation or prohibition for the reader to do something. According to Hyland, directives include imperatives, modal verbs of obligation addressed to the reader, or "a predicative adjective expressing the writer's judgement of necessity/importance controlling a complement *to-* clause" (2002: 216). Adjectives introducing a complement *that-* clause were also included in this category. I refer to Biber (1999: 495) for the classification of obligation modals ("must", "ought", "should", "have to", "need to"). Only modals referring to actions that the reader should carry out were included.

Hyland himself recognises that "these devices may convey different degrees of emphasis, [but] they all carry the authority of the writer in specifying how the reader should participate in the text or perform some action outside it" (2002: 217). For this reason, utterances expressing requests, invitations and offers were also included among directives as lighter forms of the discoursal realisation of the writer's authority. An example for each grammatical type of directive is offered:

- imperative: "*Discover* more about the Whitworth" (UK_MA2_AB1);
- modal verb: "Groups with more than 10 persons *have to* announce" (EUG_AT_IN1);
- complement *to-* clause: "*It is NECESSARY to*: accompany the children" (EUS_HR_IN2);
- complement *that-* clause: "*it is essential that* you plan your visit in advance" (UK_CB1_IN2).

Hyland (2002: 217-8) further classifies directives into three categories according to the type of activity they invite readers to perform. The same classification was adopted for this analysis:

- textual acts, inviting readers to read a text, such as "*Read more* about the museum's history" (EUG_SE_AB1);
- physical acts, inviting to carry out actions in the real world, such as "*we request that you* do not use a flash or tripod" (UK_CB2_IN1);
- cognitive acts, guiding readers on how to interpret what is said, such as "*please note* that we are closed" (UK_CB2_IN1).

Finally, questions are a strategy used to encourage curiosity and engage readers directly in the discourse. Hyland distinguishes between real and rhetorical questions, the latter being those "presenting an opinion as an interrogative" (2008: 11). A different classification, however, was thought to better represent the reality of the corpus used for this research, as the distinction between real and rhetorical question was not clear-cut and could leave ambiguity in most of the cases. Questions were thus divided into informative and interactive. Informative questions are those that are meant to provide readers with information, either directly in the question ("Did you know that Hrdlicka developed a method of making face masks, so an artist could finish them?" in EUS_CZ_CO1) or right after the question ("Who was the architect? Jamie Fobert Architects, Meet the Architect here" in UK_CB1_AB2). Informative questions are a strategy to catch the reader's attention and direct it to specific issues by introducing them. On the other hand, interactive questions are those concerned with creating a real dialogue with readers by addressing them as persons ("Are you a visitor with special or additional needs, or are a carer of a visitor with additional needs?" in UK_ON2_IN1)

and inviting them to perform an action, as if they were covert directives ("Thinking of bringing or coming as part of a group to the gallery?" in UK_MA2_IN2).

Two of the features related to the engagement function of Hyland's model were not included in the analytical framework, i.e. personal asides and appeals to shared knowledge. According to Hyland, asides are used in academic writing for "briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment on what has been said" (2008: 10). While reading all the texts to familiarise with them before starting the analysis, asides were not found in any text, so they were not considered to be a typical feature of the genre of museum websites. On the other hand, references to shared knowledge are used for "asking readers to recognise something as familiar or accepted" (Hyland, 2008: 10). Hyland himself, however, points out that "the notion of what can be reliably considered shared is clearly problematic" (2001: 566), as the extent of "sharedness" varies depending on the readers. Analysing it would call for a profound and critical understanding of the cultural contexts where the texts from the corpus were produced. Also, the category as it is described by Hyland seems to be quite vague, and shows overlaps with other categories of the framework, such as attitude markers: for instance, declaring that something is "obvious" implies that the concept is shared among a community of people, but it also displays a certain stance and attitude of the author towards the concept itself. In addition, the features that realise shared knowledge assumptions are not always easily identifiable in a text, as assumptions may be implicit and thus "invisible": this means that investigating shared knowledge would require a much deeper (and potentially more subjective) analysis, which could be the object of further research in the future.

Table 3.8 summarises the stance and engagement features that were included in the analytical framework. The analysis was carried out by reading each text in the corpus and annotating single instances of stance and engagement features.

Stance features	Engagement features
Hedges	Reader mentions
Boosters	Directives
Attitude markers	Questions
Self-mentions	

Table 3.8. List of stance and engagement features included in the analysis

A remark is in order to clarify how the analysis was carried out. An inductive approach underpinned this analysis. More specifically, realisations of stance and engagement functions, i.e. the features to be observed in the texts, were not previously determined as elements belonging to specific grammatical categories. For instance, when reading a text the basic aim was not to look for specific grammatical structures representing hedges, but to look for hedges, no matter what structure they were made of. The thought behind this practice was that a lexical or grammatical form does not necessarily serve a stance or engagement function per se: only by looking at the context it is possible to determine whether they are actually stance or engagement features. This is one of the reasons why an automatic analysis was not carried out, but a close textual and linguistic analysis was preferred. As Biber claims (1999: 969):

> "[…] purely lexical expressions of stance depend on the context and shared background for their interpretation. There is nothing in the grammatical structure of these expressions to show that they mark stance: they are simple declarative structures that give the appearance of presenting stanceless 'facts'. Stance is in a sense embedded in these structures, dependent on the addressee's ability to recognize the use of value-laden words."

The analysis was thus based on the researcher's ability to recognise the use of "value-laden words", no matter what structures were used to convey stance or engagement. Even when a list of provisional grammatical categories was provided for that feature, as in the case of directives, instances of directives constructed through other grammatical categories were included. This was meant to provide a better understanding of how stance and engagement are conveyed on museum websites — a textual genre which is very different from the genres analysed by Hyland and which has never been studied from this point of view before.

In keeping up with recent developments in linguistics, an attempt was made at measuring statistical significance of the results of the comparisons of each feature from both the web writing analysis and the stance and engagement analysis between the two groups (UK-EN and EU-EN). Inferential statistics is used to make inferences based on a research sample by testing hypotheses involving one or more variables and "separat[ing] random/accidental from systematic/meaningful variation" (Gries, 2013: 316). For each textual feature observed, basic inferential statistical tests were carried out

in the form of chi-square test by using R;[16] when statistical significance was observed, effect size was calculated by adopting Cramer's V as coefficient of correlation to determine strength of association.

3.5 Qualitative interviews

3.5.1 Introduction

Interviews are a method used in qualitative research for collecting data from a limited number of people selected as research participants. This method is used in a variety of academic disciplines, especially in the social sciences (e.g. sociology, anthropology, psychology and education), as well as cultural studies and linguistics. Interviews are based on a dialogue between two subjects, i.e. the interviewer and the participant, where the interviewer may coincide with the researcher, as is the case with this research. In this thesis the term "participant" will be used to refer to the people selected to participate in the interviews. As interviews aim to support people in actively reconstructing and sharing their experiences, "participant" was felt as conveying "the sense of active involvement", as well as "the sense of equity that we try to build in our interviewing relationships" (Seidman, 1998: 14).

Interviews can be adopted to examine the story behind a participant's experiences or to get insights on specific themes. According to Mason (2018: 62-3), this method — which is "interactive in nature and relatively informal" — is based on the constructivist idea that "knowledge is situated and contextual", and that "data and knowledge are constructed through dialogic (and other) interaction during the interview", which is a "co-production" involving both the interviewer and the participant. The main scope of qualitative interviews is thus "the construction or reconstruction of knowledge more than the excavation of it". Similarly, Kvale (1996: 11) highlights the "constructive nature of the knowledge created through the interaction of the partners in the interview conversation": the scholar conceptualises the interview as "inter view", i.e. "an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme" (Kvale, 1996: 14).

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[16] R Core Team (2013). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria. See: http://www.R-project.org/.

Qualitative interviews make it possible to examine "people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions", as well as "their perceptions", which are considered to be "meaningful properties of the social reality" under investigation (Mason, 2018: 63). The purpose of interviewing is not just to get answers to specific questions: interviews provide participants with the possibility of "telling stories" about their experiences and specific themes involved, which can be considered as a "meaning-making process" (Seidman, 1998: 7). Interviews allow the researcher to gather detailed information about the research questions and have direct control over the process, e.g. by asking participants to clarify certain issues if needed. They are a more qualitative method than questionnaires, which makes it possible for the interviewer to have a direct communicative exchange, and thus ask follow-up questions.

Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured depending on the flexibility involved in the process (Mason, 2018: 62). Structured interviews are similar to surveys in that they include preset, standardised questions and only a fixed range of answers is possible. At the other end of the continuum are unstructured interviews, which are more similar to conversations, where the interviewer lets the participant speak freely without prompts. Semi-structured interviews make use of a flexible guide with a set of questions in order to ensure that the same areas are methodically covered during each interview; nonetheless, they still allow a certain degree of freedom and adaptability in gathering the information from the participants, as the interviewer can adapt questions or add follow-up questions during each interview.

I drew on a number of different approaches to qualitative research interviews. The aim was to adopt a method which could be appropriate in order to address the research questions (cf. Section 3.5.2). Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013) was adopted as a method for the analysis of the data (cf. Section 3.5.4.2). Furthermore, a few insights were adopted from Grounded Theory, which is a famous approach theorised by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and commonly used to generate and analyse data from qualitative research interviews. This approach aims to generate theory from the data itself. However, as claimed by Braun and Clarke (2013), complying with all the procedures of this practice is challenging and only possible in large research projects. Therefore, Grounded Theory was not fully adopted as the approach for this research; rather, hints from this practice loosely informed the way in which the interviewing process was conducted.

The following steps, which will be presented in the following sub-sections, were involved in the interviewing process:

- designing the interviews, i.e. planning them, selecting participants and preparing an interview guide;
- interviewing the participants, i.e. conducting the interviews;
- transcribing interviews recordings, i.e. preparing the collected material for analysis;
- analysing the interviews transcriptions, i.e. deciding on the purpose, nature and methods of analysis that are appropriate;
- reporting, i.e. discussing the results of the study.

3.5.2 Research data and rationale

In this study, individual qualitative interviews with staff from a subset of museums were carried out with the purpose of taking an in-depth look at the processes underpinning the creation of web contents in English. The interviews were used to gather participants' direct experiences of working at the selected museums, and were centred around a number of main themes:

- the intended audience for online texts written in English (RQ 3);
- the writing process and the people involved (RQ 3.1);
- the awareness of the potential need to address a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous audience (RQ 3.2);
- the impact of this awareness on the texts themselves (RQ 3.3).

A number of university museums in Europe provide an English version of their website, as will be shown in the presentation of the results of the survey (cf. Section 4.2). These web pages in English may be read by a culturally and linguistically diverse audience as they have the power to address people who speak English with different levels of proficiency. The issue that this research aimed to address is whether the act of writing those texts is informed by a specific intended readership, i.e. readers with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

The main objective was thus to identify the intended readers of web texts in English produced by university museums as conceptualised by the texts producers themselves. For this reason, interviews were conducted with the people who I thought

could be responsible or to some extent involved in the process of writing texts, assessing whether the participants were actually involved and/or who was involved, as well as exploring whether these individuals display linguistic and cultural awareness of the museum audiences and of the possible need to address multicultural readers. If evidence of such need arose, the interviews investigated its possible impact on the way in which texts on the corresponding websites were written.

The question and sub-questions outlined above call for qualitative research for a number of reasons. Very little prior research existed about this specific topic; interviews thus suited the need of the present thesis, as this method supports the investigation of new areas of research. Another central motivation for carrying out qualitative interviews with staff working in university museums was that they allowed me to collect information that was not otherwise available, i.e. rich, complex data related to the processes behind the creation of the selected web texts.

The interviews offered the possibility to explore the participants' perspective on different issues related to the production of web texts in English: for instance, their representation of the intended audience for those web pages and how this might have affected the creation of those texts, as well as the participants' perception of the writing process and of the texts themselves in terms of language use, main aims and contextualisation within the website as a whole. The interviews were thus considered as an appropriate method in order to understand the extent to which staff from university museums in Europe providing texts in English on their website are aware of the intended audience that the museums try to reach through those texts, and whether this audience includes readers with a range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds (i.e. both L1 and L2 readers).

3.5.3   Data collection

3.5.3.1   Context and setting

As it will be remembered from the contextualisation of the text analyses (Section 3.4.2.1), this research investigates two different contexts: one is a context where English is used as an official language (UK-EN), while the other one is a context where it is used as an international language (EU-EN). The latter is a more diverse, heterogeneous scenario, where different settings are included, all characterised by the fact that a) English is used as a L2/FL in most countries and b) texts in English are supposed to

serve people coming from different cultural settings and whose L1 may or may not be English. The two different contexts described above are characterised by two different types of writing process, as discussed in Section 3.4.2.1: in the EU-EN context the content production process includes one more filter than in the UK-EN context. For this reason, differences in the design of the interviews in the two contexts will be highlighted where relevant and the results of the analysis of the UK-EN and the EU-EN interviews will be discussed separately.

Two museums — both located in Manchester — were selected among the list of university museums within the UK-EN group, while four museums were chosen among the EU-EN group, one for each linguistic family included in the research (cf. Section 3.4.2.1). In selecting the EU-EN museums, it was not assumed that, because one museum of a particular linguistic family was selected, this could somehow represent all museums belonging to that family (Mason, 2018: 135): in other words, selecting one museum per linguistic family within the EU-EN group was not meant to create a sampling which could be representative of all the museums belonging to the four different families, but as a selection which could to some extent reflect the diversity of the four museums, with respect to the official language of the country in which each one of them was based.

Table 3.9 provides an overview of all the selected museums. All the interviews took place in the time period comprised between April 18th and December 18th, 2018. The UK-EN interviews were carried out first. Insights from the fieldwork in the UK later fed into the design and implementation of the EU-EN interviews.

Group	Museum	University	Country
UK-EN	Manchester Museum	University of Manchester	UK
UK-EN	Whitworth	University of Manchester	UK
EU-G	Natural History Museum	University of Copenhagen	Denmark
EU-R	Museum of Human Anatomy	University of Turin	Italy
EU-S	Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Science	University of Zagreb	Croatia
EU-UF	Helsinki University Museum	University of Helsinki	Finland

Table 3.9. List of the selected museums for the interviews

Manchester was chosen as the location for the two UK-EN museums for practical reasons, as I was there for a study period (January-May 2018), which helped in recruiting participants for the interviews. Furthermore, Manchester was deemed suitable

as it is a very multicultural city, and a high level of multilingualism was considered as a possible factor which may lead to higher sensitivity of museum staff towards different cultures and languages. According to the statistics provided by the Census 2011,[17] if we exclude London and all its neighbourhoods — as museums in London cannot be considered representative of British museums, especially due to the high volume of tourism — Manchester was among the first ten cities in the UK:

- with the highest number of people considering English as a second language;
- with the highest percentage of immigration;
- with the highest number of black, Asian and minority ethnic people (BAME).

Immigrants to Manchester come from a variety of different countries, as a result of migrations that have occurred since the second half of the nineteenth century, but the South Asian community is particularly large. Although a multicultural setting does not necessarily lead to a stronger institutional attention to the needs of people with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the two university museums located in Manchester, i.e. the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth Gallery, seem to display a strong interest in engaging different cultural and linguistic communities, as it appears from the strategic plans and annual reports published by the two museums. I examined these documents to see whether they mention a local or international multicultural audience, and thus investigate their approach to audience engagement: this was done bearing in mind that even though they want to target this audience, they might not be aware of the fact that they can do it using textual devices.

According to the Strategic Plan for the years 2015-2018[18] (4), the Manchester Museum "attracts a greater percentage of BME visitors than the overall Greater Manchester population", which is defined as "a great success story". In addition, in the Annual Review 2015-2016 the museum describes activities and events organised "as part of [their] targeted audience development work with the South Asian Community", which is one of the largest community in Manchester (MM Annual Review 2015-2016: 28). One of the aims of the museum is "to increase mutual understanding between cultures today, by placing them in a rounded context" (MM Strategic Plan for the years

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[17] See the Census 2011 data on the website of the Office for National Statistics: https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata.
[18] See the Strategic Plan and the Annual Review on the museum website: https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/about/reportsandpolicies/.

2015-2018: 6) and hosting international curators (MM Annual Review 2015-2016: 45). Besides, the museum has helped young professionals by "providing a place of welcome and orientation for new arrivals, be they from the UK or abroad" (MM Annual Review 2015-2016: 15). Finally, the museum has advocated for cultural tourism and planned to "transform the city's reputation as a centre of cultural and creative excellence and a national/international cultural tourism destination" (MM Strategic Plan for the years 2015-2018: 11).

Along the same lines, in the Strategic Plan for the years 2012-2015[19] (5), the Whitworth claims that they aspire to engage with "diverse audiences that reflect [their] city and region". In particular, the Annual Performance Review published in 2017 (7) lists a "strong social and civic purpose" as one of the gallery's strengths, since one of its priorities is "increasing engagement with particular communities" (8), for instance through the work they have done with South Asia. According to the Annual Review 2017, "15% of visitors are from BME backgrounds which matches the diversity of Greater Manchester" (14). Finally, "the gallery has developed an ESOL programme called "English Corner", "which draws on the gallery's exhibitions to develop language skills" for people whose L1 is not English, ran in partnership with the Manchester Museum and Manchester Art Gallery (17). Therefore, the Whitworth appears to be interested in engaging with new, different "audiences from Manchester and beyond" (9), also embracing the opportunity for "cultural tourism" (7).

Both the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth show a strong focus on local, diverse audiences, as they want to be museums for students but also for the local community: in particular, the "English Corner" may suggest that to some extent there might be awareness of cultural and linguistic barriers. These documents seem to suggest that at an institutional level there is to certain extent a recognition of local, multicultural audiences, but the documents do not mention the communicative approach adopted: although the two museums may want to engage with different cultural communities, this does not mean that the latter are part of the intended audience of their external communication.

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[19] See the Strategic Plan and the Annual Performance Review on the gallery website: http://www.whitworth.manchester.ac.uk/about/policydocuments/.

3.5.3.2   Selecting participants

Participants were identified by carrying out "purposive sampling" (Silverman, 1997) — also known as selective sampling: this practice, in contrast with "randomized sampling" or "equal-probability sampling" (Wengraf, 2001: 97), involves the selection of a sample by the researcher on the basis of their own judgement. It is a non-probability sampling which may be used when a limited population — generally experts or people with direct experience on the phenomenon under investigation — can serve as sources for primary data. Maxwell (2013: 149) defines this process as "purposeful selection", where participants are intentionally selected to elicit information that is particularly relevant, and which cannot be obtained from other people. The main goals of purposeful selection are "achieving representativeness" and "adequately captur[ing] the heterogeneity in the population" (Maxwell, 2013: 151).

Attention was paid to identifying members of the staff of the museums selected who may be to some extent involved in the process of writing texts in English for the website. In the case of the UK-EN museums, staff from different teams could be involved to certain degrees. On the contrary, for the EU-EN museums it cannot be assumed that the people involved in writing the texts in the local language(s) were necessarily involved in writing the English texts. People from outside the institution may well be recruited by the museum to write/translate texts in English. However, the intention was to speak only to museum staff, who were supposed to be more directly involved in decision making and more familiar with the museum values, especially in terms of audience engagement and communication. Therefore, no interviews were carried out with external consultants. Finally, while looking for information about museum staff, it appeared quite clearly that the UK-EN museums had a much larger and more heterogeneous staff than the EU-EN museums. Hence, for the EU-EN interviews the choice of participants was generally more limited. These assumptions fed into the selection of the interview participants.

For the UK-EN museums, I needed participants from different teams of Manchester Museum and the Whitworth to get insights from people at different levels of the organisations working in a variety of roles and potentially having different perspectives on audiences and communication: for instance, members from the Visitor Team and from Learning and Engagement are expected to have a stronger focus on the visitors, while curators may be more focused on research and interpretation. I also

wanted to understand how different teams are involved in the process of writing texts for the website, as well as get to know their perception of this process. Therefore, I contacted people from Marketing and Communications, Learning and Engagement, Curators and the Visitor Team in order to explain them the main aims of my research and what I needed to investigate, and arranged the interviews with those who were willing to participating. I got in touch with 15 people and arranged interviews with nine of them. I carried out all the UK-EN interviews in person, apart from one which was carried out via Skype.

Table 3.10 shows further details on each participant, such as institution where they work, the team to which they belong, their age group and gender, as well as the date and modality of the interview. The acronyms used to indicate the UK-EN participants refer to the belonging institution, as follows:

- "MM" stands for Manchester Museum;
- "WG" stands for Whitworth Gallery;
- "MW" refers to a participant working at both the Museum and the Whitworth.

The UK-EN participants are identified by the team to which they belong, rather than their specific job role — for instance, "collections" rather than exact job titles such as curator of a specific collection.

Participant	Institution	Team	Age	Gender	Date	Modality
MM1	Manchester Museum	Visitor Team	25-29	Male	18/04/18	Face-to-face
MM2	Manchester Museum	Collections	30-34	Male	24/04/18	Face-to-face
MM3	Manchester Museum	Marketing & Communications	30-34	Female	02/05/18	Face-to-face
MW1	Both	Visitor Team	35-39	Male	19/04/18	Face-to-face
MW2	Both	Marketing & Communications	45-49	Male	23/04/18	Face-to-face
MW3	Both	Collections	35-39	Male	27/04/18	Face-to-face
WG1	Whitworth	Collections	40-44	Female	01/05/18	Face-to-face
WG2	Whitworth	Learning & Engagement	30-34	Male	03/05/18	Face-to-face
WG3	Whitworth	Learning & Engagement	N/A	Male	11/05/18	Call

Table 3.10. Details of the UK-EN participants selected for the interviews

In order to carry out the EU-EN interviews, I contacted staff from the four museums selected to describe my research goals and recruit one participant for each museum. Depending on the contact details found on each museum website, I either directly contacted a person involved in the content production for the website or another member of the staff who then helped me to get in touch with somebody in charge of web communication. Among the four EU-EN interviews, two were face-to-face interviews and two were carried out via Skype. All the interviews were conducted in English apart from the one in Turin, which was carried out in Italian: since this was the native language of both the researcher/interviewer and the participant, it was thought to be a facilitating condition for the development of the interview. Table 3.11 displays more information on the participants in the EU-EN group. For convenience, the acronyms referring to each participant consist of the shortened form of the name of the country where the belonging institution is based, i.e. Denmark (DK), Finland (FI), Croatia (HR) and Italy (IT).

Participant	Institution	Team	Age	Gender	Date	Modality
DK	Natural History Museum, Copenhagen	Marketing & Communications	45-49	Male	14/11/18	Face-to-face
FI	Helsinki University Museum, Helsinki	Collections	55-59	Female	29/10/18	Call
HR	Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Science, Zagreb	Collections	35-39	Male	16/10/18	Call
IT	Museum of Human Anatomy, Turin	Collections	45-49	Female	18/12/18	Face-to-face

Table 3.11. Details of the EU-EN participants selected for the interviews

I approached potential participants directly by emailing them. The details and aims of the research were explained to all the participants via email through an Information Sheet (cf. Section 3.5.3.4) and in person before starting the interview. Around ten days before each interview, I contacted the participant again in order to confirm the appointment and get information about the interview setting. In order to protect the participants' identity (cf. Section 3.5.3.4), I anonymised their names by using a different code for each of them, as shown in Table 3.10 and Table 3.11.

3.5.3.3   Preparing the interview guide

After selecting the participants, I used the "interview guide" approach (Seidman, 1998: 91) to conduct one-hour semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A). The interview guide is a document including a heading with basic information on the participant (name, institution and role), instructions for the interviewer, a list of questions and possible follow-up questions, as well as a final statement to thank the participant for participating in the interview. Two interview guides were prepared, i.e. one for the UK-EN and the other one for the EU-EN interviews: both were adapted to be used for each interview.

In the design of the interview guides, an attempt was made at balancing a "structured approach" with a "less structured approach", thus ensuring consistency among different interviews but also flexibility in data collection. When adopting semi-structured interviews — also defined as the "interview guide approach" — the researcher prepares an interview guide but during the interviews "does not rigidly adhere to it, either in terms of the precise wording of questions, or the order in which questions are asked" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 122-3). Semi-structured interviews have a varying number of questions, usually 6-12 in a set order, but "with some flexibility in the questions asked, the extent of probing, and question order" (Rowley, 2012: 262).

As suggested by Mason (2018: 69-72), I first wrote down the research questions to reflect on them and decide how I wanted to address them through the interviews. Then, I subdivided the research questions into "mini-research questions" and for each of them I jotted down ideas about how it might be possible to elicit such information in an interview situation. After a few brainstorming sessions, the mini-research questions were transformed in a long list of interview questions: these were subsequently combined, reduced, grouped into themes and organised in a hierarchical set of main questions and related follow-up questions. Each question selected had to be necessary, and the whole set of questions included in the interview guide needed to be sufficient in order to collect data whose interpretation could appropriately lead to answering the research questions (Wengraf, 2001: 74).

A note on the question generation is in order here: the mini-research questions were "theory-questions": these questions led to the generation of the final "interviewer-questions", which were the potential questions to be included in the interview guide and

asked in an interview situation (Wengraf, 2001: 62). While theory-questions drew on theories and literature around the phenomenon under scrutiny, the interviewer-questions were formulated in a language that was deemed to be potentially intelligible to the participants, by thinking about the type of participants involved in the research (i.e. museum professionals). However, the questions included in the interview guide may need to be adapted during the interview in order to conform to the participant's "idiolect" (Wengraf, 2001: 64): while following my interview guide, I was aware that I had to quickly learn the way the participant was speaking on that occasion. This was important for at least two reasons: first, using the participant's idiolect was supposed to ensure that the questions could be as much understandable to them as possible; second, it would contribute to avoid the risk of "imposing" words and constructs which did not belong to the participants. Figure 3.23 shows the overall process of generating the questions for the interviews: the first three steps were carried out while preparing the interview guide, whereas the final step occurred during each interview.

Writing down research questions → Formulating mini-research questions → Creating appropriate interview questions → Adapting questions to participants' idiolects
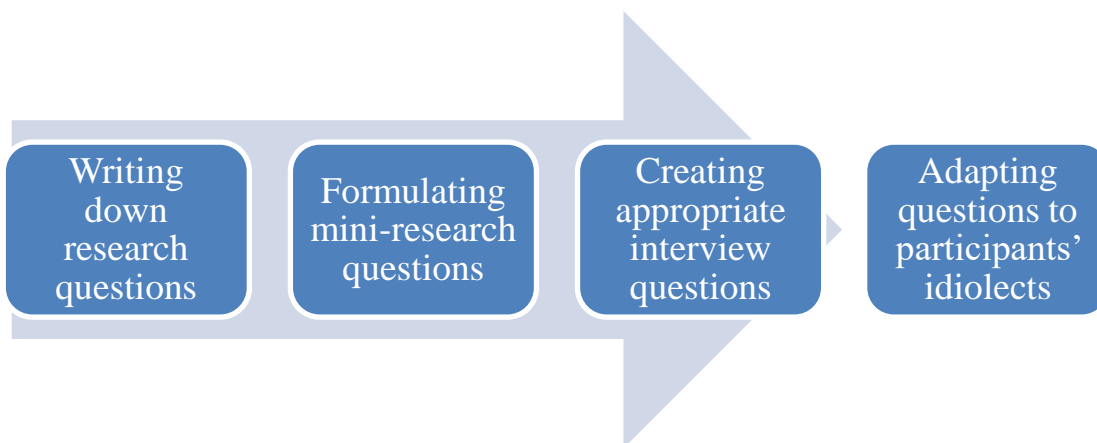
Figure 3.23. Process for the creation of interview questions

The first loose structure for the two interview guides was thus created. At that point, I identified a set of core standardised questions (around 10) to be included in all the interviews (one set for the UK-EN and one set for the EU-EN interviews) to ensure the comparability of data: in doing so, I wanted to ensure that all the participants were asked those questions, which were supposed to adequately cover the main themes of the interviews and thus appropriately address the research questions. Furthermore, a couple of tailored questions were crafted specifically for each interview, in order to target case-specific issues.

Not only time was spent in wording the interview questions in an effective way in order to make them meaningful to the participants, but also in organising the

questions in a structured but flexible order by clustering them into different themes (four themes in the UK-EN guide and five themes in the EU-EN guide). The "funnel" approach was adopted, by starting with general, more indirect questions and then shifting to more specific, probing questions aimed at inviting participants to elaborate on their answers (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 131).

At the top of the interview guides I defined an opening or "warm-up" question to be used for every interview, which was the following: "Could you give me an overview of your role here?" This was meant as an "ice-breaker question" (Creswell, 2009: 183) to help participants feel relaxed and develop rapport by starting the conversation with a topic which was supposed to be familiar to the participant, i.e. their work. Also, the participant was supposed to feel free to share insights on different aspects related to their institutional role: this was thought to be potentially interesting for the analysis to be carried out later in order to observe which themes would emerge from this answer. Then, a question related to the main research topic in a broad sense followed the opening question: "Have you as a team ever discussed how you use the English language for external communication?" This question would allow to introduce the main area to be explored during the interview, i.e. communication in English.

After that, the interview guide had the set of standardised questions to be asked to every participant. Table 3.12 reports a few examples of questions divided per theme. The complete list of questions may be found in the UK-EN and EU-EN Interview Guide (see Appendix A).

Theme	Question
Website	I would like to focus on the website now. What do you think its main aims are?
Website	Who is involved in the process of writing texts for the website?
Language	Does the museum follow any web writing guidelines?
Language	What are the three most important web pages that you think capture what the museum is about?
University museum	How does being a university museum affect the language you use and the pages you publish on the website?

Table 3.12. Examples of core interview questions

Some questions were used only in the UK-EN interviews or were adapted to be used in the EU-EN interviews — especially the ones related to the intended audience. Table 3.13 outlines examples of questions used only in the UK-EN context. I also prepared specific questions for each participant depending on their role and experience.

Theme	Question
Website	What are the steps taken in writing texts for the museum website?
Language	These guidelines for exhibition texts were written a few years ago by the museum staff. They also mention "reading on-line". Are they adopted for texts on the website as well?
Language	For exhibitions, you have both printed and online material. What are the steps taken to create them?
Audience	How do you imagine and categorise the audience for whom you write texts on the website?
Audience	How do you think of language when you think of your online audience?
Audience	How do you try to engage with a multicultural audience on the website?
Audience	Do you think that the website has specific web pages addressing multicultural audiences?

Table 3.13. Examples of core interview questions used only in UK-EN interviews

Some of the questions from the UK-EN interviews were adapted to be used in the EU-EN interviews, while new questions were written from scratch for the EU-EN context, for instance questions related to the English version of the website. Table 3.14 shows example of such questions.

Theme	Question
English contents	I would like to focus on the English version of the website now. Who was involved in the process of writing texts in English for the website?
English contents	What were the steps taken in creating the English version of the website?
English contents	Have you looked at any other museum websites with contents in English? (from where?)
English contents	Do you also offer other materials in English, e.g. onsite exhibition contents such as panels, brochures, etc?
Audience	How do you imagine and categorise the audience for whom you write texts in English on the website?
Audience	Do you use web analytics to understand who visits the website?

Table 3.14. Examples of core interview questions used only in EU-EN interviews

A few follow-up questions were also asked during the interviews. Some of them were planned in advance as potential questions to be asked in order to explore some issues in depth, while others were "improvised" questions (Wengraf, 2001: 5). These were used if any interesting point was raised of which I had not thought before: according to Wengraf (2001: 5),

> "prepared questions are designed to be sufficiently open that the subsequent questions
> of the interviewer cannot be planned in advance but must be improvised in a careful and
> theorized way".

These questions were consciously asked on the basis of the participant's role within the institution and according to what had already been said during the interview,

with the hope that they could shed more light on the subject. While follow-up questions in the UK-EN context focused on issues such as language use, multicultural audiences and cross-cultural understanding, follow-up questions in the EU-EN interviews sought to investigate key aspects such as the process of writing or translating texts in English, the expertise and linguistic background of the people involved in such process and the definition of the intended readers for the English version of the website, both in terms of native language and in terms of typology of users (e.g. international tourists, international students, people who have moved to the country or online users in general). Improvisation was fundamental during all the interviews, requiring not only preparation before the session and creativity during the session, but also more time dedicated to the analysis and interpretation of the data collected (Wengraf, 2001).

Moreover, participants from the UK-EN group were asked a core question on the languages they spoke, to understand whether multilingual people were involved in the process of writing texts on the website: "Do you speak other languages apart from English?". It was assumed that multilingual people might have a different sensitivity to linguistic issues, as well as to people speaking English as a non-native language. This was not thought to be relevant for the EU-EN group, where the fact that participants were non-native speakers of English, and thus speakers of other languages as well, was known information.

At the end of each interview, a final question was included to offer the participants the possibility to add anything else they thought could be related to this research without any specific input from myself. This type of question can be important as may "trigger really useful unanticipated data" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 128). The participant was also asked to fill in a very short questionnaire with a few personal demographic details, namely age group, gender and educational background. Finally, I told them that I would be glad to share the results of this research with them, and that they could send me any written comment if they thought of any points they would like to make after the end of the interview. I also asked them for permission to contact them in case material came up in the transcript which was not clear, and I thanked them for the time and energy they put in the interview. The interviews lasted around an hour, depending on both the time constraints set by the participant or by the belonging institution and the length of the responses.

When I started the interviewing process, I slightly reviewed the interview guides after the first few interviews in order to be sure I was collecting the data that was necessary to address the research questions. In fact, a qualitative interview guide is not completely fixed at the beginning of data generation: "questions might be reworked, or removed, or new questions added to the guide during this review" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 134). However, the standardised questions were never removed or deeply changed, so as to ensure comparability between different interviews.

3.5.3.4 Conforming to ethical norms

Research ethics refers to a set of norms regulating the way in which any research involving some form of interaction between the researcher and other humans is designed and conducted. These norms fundamentally aim to ensure the respect of the participants' dignity, rights and safety during the whole research process. The adoption of qualitative interviews as a method for generating data raises a number of general ethical issues, as it entails a direct interaction with the participants. It was thus fundamental to take ethical questions into consideration from the design to the report of the research.

I conformed to the ethical standards of the University of Manchester. This was considered to be appropriate as part of fieldwork was carried out in Manchester: hence, the staff from the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth (i.e. the UK-EN museums) were supposed to be to some extent already familiar with this approach to ethics. Also, standards of British universities ensuring research is conducted ethically are usually quite strict, so they were considered to be appropriate and considerate enough for all the interviews carried out during this research. An ethical approval from a research ethic committee is not in order if the research involves interviews with participants on subjects "deemed to be within their professional competence",[20] provided the following criteria are met:

- the data collected must be anonymous;
- the data cannot be considered sensitive or confidential;
- the subjects of the research are not supposed to upset or disturb participants;

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[20] See the page on ethical approval on the university website: https://www.manchester.ac.uk/research/environment/governance/ethics/approval/.

- the themes covered within the interview must be limited to the professional competence of the participants.

Bearing in mind the purpose and design of this research, no ethical approval was considered to be necessary in this case, as participants were museum professionals, and thus experts in the field investigated in this research. The procedure ensuring the research was conducted ethically involved the use of an Information Sheet aimed at providing participants with details about the research and the purpose of the interviews, as well as an informed consent form as a record showing they understand the research and agree to take part. All participants were provided with these documents in English, apart from the Italian museum, with whom the only language used during the whole process was Italian. Both documents were written in a form that was supposed to be understandable to all participants — for instance, specialised terminology related to the field of this research was kept to a minimum.

The Information Sheet (see Appendix B) adopted included the following:

- a short introduction about the subject and aims of the research;
- a statement explicitly explaining the scope of the interview, as well as describing why the potential participant has been chosen and what is being asked to them;
- a section on data collection, including recording, transcription and analysis;
- the steps taken to ensure confidentiality;
- a section outlining the rights of the participants, explicitly stating that participation is voluntary and anybody is free to refuse to participate without any consequence;
- a section which makes explicit that the participant will not be paid to participate;
- information on the duration of the interview;
- a section about how the researcher will disseminate the results of the research;
- contact information of the researcher and her academic supervisors.

The Information Sheet was sent to the participants via email before the interview session. This was supposed to ensure that participants were prepared to the interviews in which they were involved and that they had information about the way interview recordings and data collection were managed. It was also aimed at making everything explicit — especially the fact that participation was totally voluntary — so that participants did not feel forced to participate.

An additional document was the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix C), which all the participants were asked to read and sign. The consent form of the University of Manchester was used for this research. The form allowed me to:

- get the permission from participants to record the interviews and use the data generated through them;
- get the permission to publish or reproduce the data and the analysis;
- inform participants about data anonymisation.

Both the participants and the researcher signed the consent form on the day of the interview before starting. Before getting their consent, I made sure that participants understood what it meant. I provided them with a copy of the signed consent form and kept one for my research files.

However, these were not the only measures taken in order to conform to ethical norms. As it will be remembered from Section 3.5.3.2, the participants' names were anonymised in the interview transcripts and in all documents which may refer to them in order to protect their identity.

3.5.3.5   Carrying out the interviews

An interview has been defined as "a conversation that has a structure and a purpose" (Kvale, 1996: 6). However, this conversation is not "the reciprocal interaction of two equal partners": the interviewer definitely occupies a power position, in that they create the situation for the interview, introduce the topics, and guide the path which the conversation is going to follow through the questions made (Kvale, 1996: 126). When carrying out qualitative interviews, one of the key mission of the interviewer is creating a nice atmosphere so that the conversation can smoothly develop. As suggested by Mason (2018: 73), during an interview "the social task is to orchestrate an interaction which moves easily and painlessly between topics and questions", and this depends on the interviewer's skills.

I started each interview by introducing myself and presenting my research, as well as the format of the interview. I explained the participant why I chose their university museum for my research. I informed them on the duration of the interview, and I asked them for permission to record the interview, after they signed the informed consent form.

I tried to stick to the interview guide as much as possible, by constantly keeping an eye on it in order not to miss core questions. However, "question wording and order are contextual, and responsive to the participant's developing account" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 123): for this reason, I sometimes changed the order of the questions so that they could follow from what the participant was saying — for example by asking to elaborate, clarify or provide more details about something which had just been mentioned (Seidman, 1998: 81). When the participant mentioned something which was not quite clear, I asked for clarification when they had stopped talking.

Different techniques were adopted in order to facilitate the participant's contribution and improve research reliability by trying to reduce bias in asking questions. This was particularly important in this research, as the interviewer coincided with the researcher — and might thus introduce bias. I tried to take a fairly passive role by giving the participants time to think about the questions asked and share their thoughts. In general, "leading questions" were avoided as they may influence the direction of the response by focusing the participants' attention on certain issues (Seidman, 1998: 84). Open-ended questions were preferred, in order to "build upon and explore (…) participants' responses to those questions" without prompting them to provide a specific answer (Seidman, 1998: 15). Also, I paid attention to the categories and terms used in the questions during the interview, such as "native speaker" or "web writing", which were all assumed to be constructions. I asked one question at a time in order to reduce possible misunderstanding and avoid focusing the attention on more than one issue simultaneously.

Since more than one participant seemed not completely at ease talking about linguistic categories and asked me for support (e.g. "I'm not quite sure what the right word is", WG1; "I assume would be something about which words you use, I mean, help me here", DK), I tried to show interest in what the participant was saying and always avoided to look judgemental. As museum professionals, the participants were not supposed to be experts in linguistics or language-related studies, and thus I realised during the interview that they may not feel comfortable speaking about the museum linguistic practices. Therefore, every time I felt it was needed, I made explicit that there were "no right or wrong answers" to my questions (Braun & Clarke, 2013), as I was interested in their insights and impressions about their experiences.

I took a few notes during the interviews to keep track of the sequence of topics which emerged, note down something which needed clarification and record the exact words used by the participant. The latter is of paramount importance in order to "return to words and phrases that serve as "markers" of something" (Seidman, 1998: 86) This allowed me to focus on what the participant was saying without interrupting them or break the silence they needed in order to formulate their thoughts, so that I could "internalize what participants say" (Seidman, 1998: 78). Besides, this helped me to keep track of interesting subjects and of the keywords the participant used to refer to these (cf. Section 3.5.3.3), so that I could go back to some of them at a later point during the interview and ask the participant to elaborate on those subjects. I was also aware that I needed to pay attention to the whole interviewing process, including time management, subjects that still had to be covered and "the participant's energy level" (Seidman, 1998: 79).

Right after the end of every interview, I made some quick "field-notes" about the session in the form of "free-flow writing" (Wengraf, 2001: 142). This debriefing was useful to "[re-order] the material in a free-associative flow" and "[make] connections within and outside the interview itself" (Wengraf, 2001: 144). Field-notes provided further valuable material for the following analysis of the transcripts. As it was the first time I carried out research interviews, the first interviews which took place for this study were very instructive. The field-notes, as well as the recordings, provided me with precious information on my performance as an interviewer, which then fed into the next interviews. During the time period when the interviews were carried out, I noticed I was becoming more accomplished in the practicalities of interviewing.

At the end of the interview process, I focused the attention on managing the data collected: I filed the participant information forms, made sure the signed consent forms were scanned and saved in a safe place, as well as labelled and saved the recordings of the interviews in double copy on two different devices to preserve them and be sure to keep a copy of them in a safe place. Furthermore, I sent a short summary with the main points covered during the interview to those participants who had shown interest in it.

3.5.4 Data description and analysis

3.5.4.1 Transcribing the data

I first listened to the recordings before the transcriptions, and took notes of the "flood of memories and thoughts" while my mind could "think fast and widely about the material and the event" of the interview itself (Wengraf, 2001: 209). These notes were the preliminary "analytic memo[s]", which later fed into the proper stage of data analysis. The purpose of writing memos arouses the researcher's reflexivity on the data, as well as its collection and interpretation (Saldaña, 2013: 42). Then, I started transcribing the interviews recordings.

Transcription is a fundamental step which enables the audio files of recorded interviews to be transformed into written text to be analysed. According to the extensive literature on qualitative research, transcription is considered to be "a selective process reflecting theoretical goals and definitions" (Ochs, 1979: 44). Here, the term "selective process" does imply the definition of the theoretical assumptions underpinning the research and the choice of a transcription system, as transcription is not just "the mechanical selection and application of notation symbols" (Davidson, 2009: 38). When transcribing recordings, researchers continuously make choices about what to write down, what they have observed and heard, and what they think that means (Mason, 2018: 77). It is not possible to record all features of talk and interaction, so researchers need to select what to write down all the time, with or without noticing it. The researcher's position and judgments will necessarily affect the result of this process (Niemants, 2012: 165).

According to Davidson (2009: 37-8), transcription is thus a representational process that covers "what is represented in the transcript", but also

> "who is representing whom, in what ways, for what purpose, and with what outcome; and how analysts position themselves and their participants in their representations of form, content, and action".

While positivist paradigms assume that transcripts are transparent, objective written representation of the recordings, interpretivist perspectives consider transcripts to be "theoretical constructions" and transcription to be a "representational and interpretive process" (Lapadat, 2000: 208). The latter position is normally embraced in qualitative research, which considers transcripts as "processed" data (Wengraf, 2001:

7): a transcript is not a "facsimile" but rather a "representation" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 239).

Transcribing implies choosing "how — and what — we translate from speech and sounds into written text, making transcription a theoretically influenced practice" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 238). Bucholtz (2000) considered transcription as a continuum of practices with two extremes. One is naturalised transcription, which prioritises the written discourse over the oral, so for instance, commas, full stops and paragraphing are incorporated to make the transcript easily readable. The other extreme for Bucholtz is denaturalised transcription, which seeks to preserve the features of oral language such as fillers ("ums", "ers", …), discourse markers ("well", "so", "anyway", "you know"), long pauses, incomplete sentences, restructuring and reformulation of sentences. The former approach was used for the present research, as the priority was given to the readability of transcripts: punctuation was thus included to make transcripts more easily intelligible.

A notation system (Table 3.15) was used during the transcription process "to clearly and consistently translate spoken language into written language" in a way that could be as thorough and systematic as possible (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 240). Some of the conventions used for the transcription were loosely based on techniques for orthographic transcriptions. The following are the conventions for transcription set out before starting the process. I did not record sounds, prosodic features and other features of oral discourse such as people emphasising specific words, laughing or clearing throat, as they were not considered as significant features to the present analysis. Transcription was carried out in order to produce an appropriate output for the analysis: as thematic analysis (cf. Section 3.5.4.2) has different needs than conversation, discourse or narrative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 17), a thorough 'verbatim' account was considered to be sufficient to preserve the data needed. I used oTranscribe[21] to listen to the recordings and adapt the speed so as to facilitate transcription.

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[21] See the HTML5 app: https://otranscribe.com/.

Symbol	Meaning	Example from the data
(…)	missing text	a lot easier to read left-aligned as opposed to right-aligned (…) so it's all left-aligned as well.
…	pauses/silences	being more understanding of … South Asian community in Manchester
(word?)	inaudible or incomprehensible word(s)	And our websites are quite (beholden?) to a system of the university
word-	a statement is cut off abruptly or self-interrupted	Over the past twelve years- twelve months
"word"	when the participant quotes another person	my team is gonna be asking people: "Is this … useful?"
[word]	overlapping speech	I: Yeah, [in general]. P: [Okay.]

Table 3.15. Conventions used for transcription

Although it was time-consuming, the process of transcription was not just a mechanical step to prepare data for analysis: transcription was also part of the data analysis itself, as it enabled me to get familiar with the data, involving "an interpretative act, where meanings are created" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 17).

3.5.4.2 Analysing the data

First, the UK-EN interviews were carried out, transcribed and analysed, then the same process was carried out for the EU-EN interviews. I completed the interviews and the transcription process for each group before starting the corresponding in-depth analysis. However, "interpreting is not a process researchers do only near the end of the project" (Seidman, 1998: 128).

The method of thematic analysis proposed by the two psychologists Braun and Clarke (2006, 2013) was adopted for this research to analyse the data generated through the interviews. As described by the two scholars, "thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 6) in relation to one or more research questions. According to Braun and Clarke, it may be "the most widely used qualitative method of data analysis" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 258), although the authors were the first to theorise it as a specific analytical method. One of the advantages of thematic analysis is that it is "independent of theory and epistemology" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 5), and can thus be combined with different approaches to be adopted in a variety of studies.

Thematic analysis is based on the idea that the researcher examines and codes the data collected in order to identify themes which are relevant to address the research

questions. The metaphor of "the patchwork quilt" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 335) is employed by the authors to describe this practice: the researcher uses pieces of fabric (codes) and combine them to create patterns (themes) which altogether form the patchwork quilt (analysis). The two scholars stressed that there is no such thing as "themes emerging from the data": thematic analysis is not a passive process through which the researcher identifies "something that already exists" within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 327). In other words, thematic analysis does not imply discovering "a definitive set of pre-existing themes" contained in the data, but rather actively developing themes from the coded data in order to address a specific question (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 342). This position highlights the important role played by the researcher, who selectively and thoroughly identifies themes which may be of interest and reports them to the readers.

This method, as was conceived by Braun and Clarke, involves a six-step process which guides the data analysis. However, the analytical process is not a linear one but rather iterative, as "it goes back and forth on itself" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 340). Before describing the different steps of the process, a few definitions of the terminology suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006: 5-6) are in order, i.e. data set, data item and data extract. Data set refers to the data used for the analysis. Two different data sets will be analysed, i.e. the UK-EN and the EU-EN ones. Data item stands for an individual piece of data collected, i.e. the data referring to one particular interview, while data extracts are coded chunks of data within one or more data items, which are provided in the report (cf. Section 5) along with my commentary.

In order to carry out the thematic analysis I used NVivo,[22] i.e. a software for computer aided qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS), which allowed me to identify themes and query the data. According to Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 319), using a computer programme in data coding involves a number of advantages. Firstly, it may improve the organisation of data, coding and analysis, and allows querying and searching for codes. Secondly, it increases efficiency and rigour, making the process of coding and analysis quicker. Finally, it may facilitate the visualisation of the coded data and thus the development of the analysis.

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[22] NVivo qualitative data analysis software; QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 12, 2018. See the software website: https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/home.

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The first step of this process started during the transcription of the recordings (cf. Section 3.5.4.1), where "the close attention needed to transcribe data may facilitate the close reading and interpretative skills needed to analyse the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 18). This step, which is identified by Braun and Clarke as an "immersion" in the data, is similar to what Saldaña (2013: 19) defines as pre-coding. It consists in highlighting rich or significant participant passages by making "[judgements] about what [was] significant" in the data set (Seidman, 1998: 118). The aim was to get familiar with the data collected by reading the transcripts while listening again to the recordings. I repeatedly read the data in an active way while searching for meanings: I began to mark the passages which could be interesting and write down memos on major themes, unusual issues and on my own reflections on the data. Figure 3.24 shows an example of a memo, which is called "annotation" in NVivo.
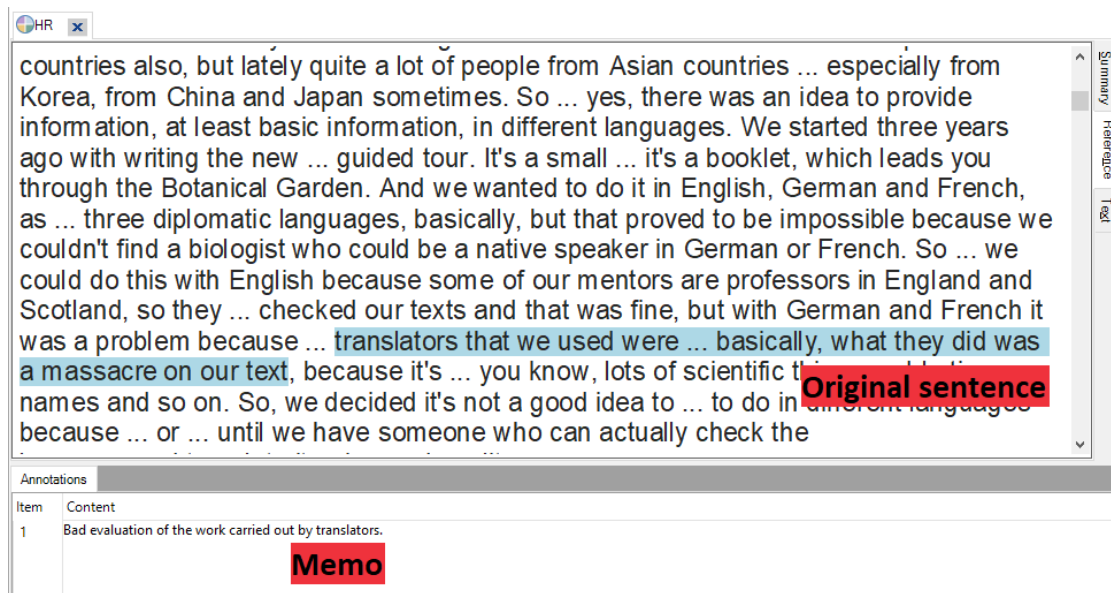
Figure 3.24. Example of a memo in NVivo

The second step consisted in starting the process of coding the whole data set by "identifying aspects of the data that relate to [the] research question" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 301). Coding is the act of "noting what is interesting, (and) labelling it" (Seidman, 1998: 125), i.e. labelling chunks of transcript (single words, groups of words, sentences, several sentences or paragraphs) with a code that captures the essence of data. Coding is "an interpretive act" (Saldaña, 2013: 4) which consists in marking a unit of text and applying a code which links chunks of data that can be considered as representative of the same phenomenon, theme, category, etc. According to Saldaña (2013: 5), coding includes two processes, i.e. "decoding" meaning from data and "encoding" a conceptual construction into the data by labelling it with a specific code. A code is a "retrieval-tag"

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attached to a unit of data, i.e. "a very condensed form of a more expanded 'theoretical memo'" (Wengraf, 2001: 227). Coding is thus a process used to group similarly coded data into categories in order to identify patterns within the data: this facilitates the retrieval of all the passages with the same code, which enables to carry out cross-case comparisons. The process of coding is an integral part of the analysis, as it is carried out to organise data into meaningful groups.

Drawing on the guidelines provided by Braun and Clarke, I systematically coded all the data that could be to some extent interesting within the data set and tried to do this "inclusively" by keeping "a little of the surrounding data if relevant", so that context was not lost (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 19). Similarly to Saldaña (2013: 100, 213), initial coding included different coding techniques, such as subcoding and simultaneous coding: subcoding implies the use of macrocodes and microcodes that function as subcodes of the first ones (e.g. "Description of the audience" as macrocode and "International audiences" as microcode), while simultaneous coding allows for overlapping codes, i.e. data extract may be marked as belonging to several different codes. I also adopted "In Vivo" coding by using the exact participant's words as the label of the code (Saldaña, 2013): for example, I used "tone of voice" as a code, which were the exact words used by some participants. For each data extract, I decided whether to apply a code which had already been used, or whether a new code was necessary (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 308). Codes generated during this step were tentative and provisional, suggesting the need for further reading and analysis: as coding progressed, I began to better understand the nature of the data, and thus to "modify existing codes to incorporate new material" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 308).

When passages were identified as important but the code to apply to them was unclear, I wrote a memo about them, as suggested by Seidman (1998: 129). Memos enabled me to write down the reasons why a passage was picked, a possible interpretation of such passage, and the codes which could potentially be applied to it. Writing memos also encouraged me to elaborate assumptions hidden behind the codes adopted and "dig into implicit, unstated, and condensed meanings" (Charmaz, 2006: 83). I continued writing spontaneous memos about the coded data throughout the entire research process.

During the coding process, I combined a deductive, "theory-driven" approach with an inductive, "data-driven" one (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 12). Coding was

inductively based on and derived from data itself, as the analysis was not shaped by existing theory. However, "analysis is always shaped to some extent by the researcher's standpoint, disciplinary background and epistemology" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 254): this means that the coding process was not exempt from the specific questions which were asked during the interviews and were still in my mind. Therefore, those questions, which were organised into themes, partially affected my understanding of the data and the initial coding. Saldaña suggests that "the act of coding requires that you wear your researcher's analytic lens", but data interpretation "depends on what type of filter covers that lens" (Saldaña, 2013: 7). Likewise, Charmaz (2006: 46-7) claims that the researcher constructs codes by actively selecting and naming data, and this is the product of the researcher's own view: thus, "no researcher is neutral" because a "specific use of language reflects views and values".

I used queries on NVivo to look for repetitions, word lists, keywords in context (KWICs) and collocations, as well as similarities and differences within the data collected (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Seidman (1998: 127) stresses the importance of identifying "the repetition of an aspect of experience that was already mentioned in other passages" by the same participant or by other participants. Possible queries included word frequency, text search, coding and matrix coding. Word frequency queries enabled me to find the most frequently occurring words, for instance to analyse the most common words used by participants from an institution in order to refer to the audience. Text search queries allowed to find all the occurrences of a word or phrase and see whether some expressions are used more frequently by specific participants. Coding queries were useful to find all content coded in the same way and collate it together, while matrix coding queries were used to find co-occurrence of themes and display this in a matrix: for instance, Figure 3.25 shows content coded "being part of the university" (with the subcodes "autonomy", "belonging", "limitations") near content coded "writing in the local language" (with the subcodes "style guide" and "brand").

Figure 3.25. Example of matrix coding query on NVivo

According to Braun and Clarke, due to the fluid, interactive way in which data is collected through qualitative interviews (in contrast with quantitative methods, such as surveys), the data generated through each interview may be quite different: as a consequence, some issues may not be discussed in every interview. It is not possible, however, to assume that an issue was not discussed necessarily because the participant did not think about it, as researchers can only interpret what they find in the data. Therefore, there is no way of determining validity on the basis of the number of participants sharing a point of view (Pyett, 2003). Furthermore, frequencies do not determine whether an issue is important for addressing research questions in qualitative research: in other words, more instances of the same issue do not necessarily imply that the latter is central for research (Buetow, 2010).

Coding normally requires the use of a code list or codebook, i.e. a scheme with all the codes with definitions, used for looking at the codes, reorganising them and examining further kinds of analytic questions. The use of a code list ensured consistency in the application of codes. Code definitions included the name of the code, a set of phrases that remind the researcher what the code is about, and other notes about the code (e.g. ideas about how it relates to other codes). The analytic process was iterative, so I continued updating the code list during the whole coding process. I was aware that each code needed to be distinct in some way, so if an overlap between two codes was found, a broader code was used to cover both ideas. Furthermore, I sought to ensure that coding was not "idiosyncratic", and thus that each code applied to more than one data item (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 309). At the end of this step, the aim was to have "a comprehensive set of codes that differentiates between different concepts, issues and

ideas in the data", which was applied consistently to the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 309). Table 3.16 shows two examples of codes directly from the code list.

Code name	Definition	Related phrases	Example
International audiences	Reference to audiences from other countries	International audience, global audience, international tourists, people from abroad, people from all over the world	And then more advanced ones [tours] … would be for … I guess our international visitors, people who know the language really well … and maybe the content would be different as well. [MM1]
Web analytics	Reference to the use of statistics on the visit to the museum website or to satellite sites (e.g. blogs)	Analytics, web analytics, Google analytics, WordPress analytics, statistics of online visits	Because what the statistics, web statistics, have told me and us is that the English website of the main website, English part of the main website, we have a lot of researchers. [DK]

Table 3.16. Examples of codes from the code list

The third step of the thematic analysis was searching for themes within the data. This basically involved "sorting the different codes into potential themes, and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 19). While the second step focused on a close-up textual analysis of each data item, this step moved from a macro lens visualisation of little bits of data to a broader picture in order to identify larger patterns across the data set. I reviewed the codes and eliminated or combined repeated codes by grouping similar codes together. I tried to visualise the relationship between codes in order to understand whether there were similarities and whether different codes may combine to create a theme: I found interconnections between different codes, as well as observed how codes related to the research questions. Some large, complex codes, such as "language use", were adopted as themes. If we consider the analysis as "a brick-built, tile-roofer house", codes are "the building blocks", i.e. "the individual bricks and tiles", while themes are "the walls and roof" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 303). A theme includes "a central organising concept, but will contain lots of different ideas or aspects related to the central organising concept" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 326). Themes are not meant to cover everything that was said in the data, but only those aspects that address the research question: developing themes from the data is a selective task which allows one to tell "a particular story about the data" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 334). As for the codes, certain themes were more prominent in certain data items than others. However, the importance of a theme did not depend on its frequency within the item or within the entire data set: a theme was prominent if it meaningfully contributed to answering the research questions (Braun &

Clarke, 2013: 333). At the end of this step, I had a list of provisional main themes and sub-themes, with data extracts which were coded in relation to them.

The fourth step consisted in reviewing the potential themes identified. Braun and Clarke define this as a "quality control" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 338). During this process, I noticed that some of the themes identified during the third step could not be considered as themes, i.e. as a "*patterned* response or meaning within the data set" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 10, emphasis in the original) — for instance because there was not enough data to support them. Other themes, which were too broad and complex, were split into separate themes. At this point, I read all the data extracts for each theme to understand whether they could be seen as a coherent pattern. I also considered "the validity of individual themes in relation to the data set", and whether the thematic map "'accurately' reflects the meanings evident in the data set as a whole" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 21).

The fifth step was the definition of the themes and the creation of their names. This phase is meant to "define and further refine the themes" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 22) in order to identify the 'story' that each theme tells, as well as "how it fits into the broader overall 'story'" about the data. A definite name for each theme was also chosen, which could convey the sense of what the theme was about.

The sixth and final step involved reporting the results of the analysis by telling the story of the data. The report (cf. Section 5) presents a small amount of data, which is the product of a "condensation" process aimed at representing the complexities of the data collected in a short, compacted version (Wengraf, 2001: 338). In reporting the results of both the UK-EN and EU-EN interviews, data extracts were used as direct, illustrative quotes to outline the themes identified and argue about possible interpretations to address the research questions. Data extracts reported as examples are supposed to capture the essence of the theme illustrated, and the whole patchwork quilt of themes aims to tell the story about the data collected in relation to the research questions. The interpretation of the data collected was not supposed to be a "mirroring short re-description" of what the participants said during the interviews, or of what could be found in the transcripts, but a process of reading, understanding and synthesising "the partial viewpoints" expressed by each participant in relation to the research questions (Wengraf, 2001: 105). As a researcher and interviewer, I worked

with the material collected, selected parts, interpreted, and analysed it, so to an extent I consider myself as "part of that process" (Seidman, 1998: 22).

3.6   Summing up

This chapter has introduced the research questions and the methodological framework of this research. The different methods adopted have been presented, namely the survey of English-version websites of European university museums and the subsequent construction of the corpus, the text analyses and the qualitative semi-structured interviews. Chapters 4 and 5 will report on the results from the analyses carried out.

4   Results of the survey and of the text analyses

4.1   Overview of the chapter

This chapter outlines the results of quantitative studies whose methods have been outlined in the previous Chapter. Section 4.2 describes the results of the survey of the English version of university museum websites. In Section 4.3, the results of the text analyses are discussed, focusing on the web writing analysis (Section 4.3.1) and stance and engagement analysis (Section 4.3.2).

4.2   Survey of English version websites

The survey was carried out with a twofold aim: first, to investigate the extent to which university museums offer an English version of their websites; second, as an exploratory study to help identify the museum websites to be included in the corpus.

A total of 469 European university museums were examined to see whether they had a website. Among them, 34 museums were based in English-speaking countries (either the UK or Ireland), and 29 of them were found to have a website. The majority of the museums surveyed, i.e. 435 university museums, were based in 29 non-English speaking countries, and 337 of them had a website. The websites of the museums based in non-English speaking countries were surveyed to obtain the number of websites having an English version, i.e. 163. Table 4.1 presents the general results of the survey. Thus, 48% of websites belonging to museums from non-English speaking countries have an English version.

Countries	No. of museums	No. of websites	No. of English version	Perc.
English speaking (2)	34	29	29	100%
Non-English speaking (29)	435	337	163	48%

Table 4.1. General results of the survey

Figure 4.1 compares the results per country obtained from the survey: data are reported as percentages, calculated as the number of museum websites in English over the total number of museum websites in a country. Countries where less than 50% of museum websites have an English version are marked in red, while the countries with 50% or more museum websites in English are marked in blue. The survey found out that 50% or more websites in over half of the countries examined (17 over 31) have an English

version. 14 countries display a lower percentage, with four countries having no English websites at all.
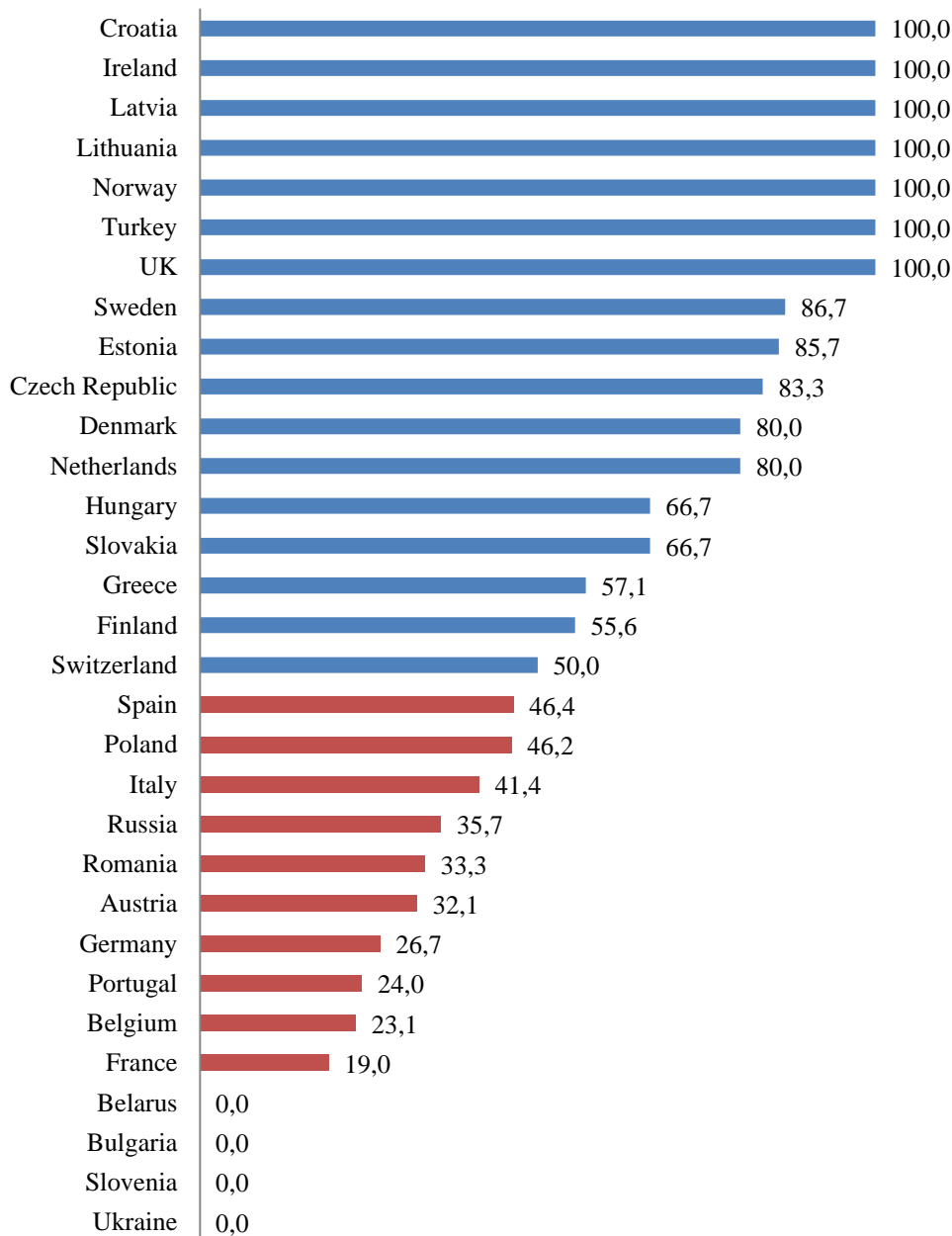
Figure 4.1. Percentages of websites with an English version per country

As for the research question addressed by this survey, i.e. the extent to which university museums in Europe produce English versions of their websites, these results seem to indicate that the situation is very heterogeneous. Almost half of the museums having a website offer contents in English. With reference to the categorisation of countries based on the linguistic families of their official languages (cf. Section 3.4.2.2), countries speaking Romance languages (e.g. France and Italy) tend to have lower percentages of university museums with an English version of their website, while countries where

Germanic (e.g. Denmark and Switzerland), Ugro-Finnic (i.e. Hungary and Finland) and other languages such as Greek and Turkish are spoken tend to have higher percentages of websites with an English version. The situation of countries speaking Balto Slavic languages is more diversified, as some of them have high percentages (e.g. Latvia), while others have low percentages (e.g. Belarus).

Of course, more data are needed to investigate the internationalisation of university museums: for instance, no information was collected on the amount and type of pages offered in the English version of each website. As already mentioned in Section 3.4.2.2, the survey also offered useful insights for the construction of the corpus used for the text analysis, as sampling was based on the list of websites with contents in English provided by the survey. However, these quantitative data still fail to shed light on how these texts are written. To this aim, in the following section an attempt will be made to describe these texts in terms of web writing and stance and engagement features to investigate the communicative approach adopted.

4.3 Text analyses

In this section, a general overview of the results from the web writing analysis and the stance and engagement analysis are presented. First, quantitative results of both text analyses are provided in Table 4.2. The frequencies represent:

- the number of texts with headings/bolded words/lists/links over the total number of texts (normalised per 100);
- the number of short paragraphs/short sentences/active verbs over the total number of paragraphs/sentences/verbs (normalised per 100);
- the number of each stance and engagement feature (i.e. hedges, boosters, etc.) over the total number of tokens (normalised per 1000).

Normalisation refers to the relative frequencies reported in the table. Statistical tests (cf. Section 3.4.3.2) were carried out over these data, but they provided inconclusive results most of the times: given the small sample size even significant results yielded small effect sizes,[1] so it was decided not to follow up on these tests.

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[1] Most of the values obtained from the chi-square test were lower than 0.05, meaning that there may be a correlation between the two variables, i.e. the frequency of the feature and the belonging to either the EU-

	UK-EN		EU-EN	
	Absolute freq.	Relative freq.	Absolute freq.	Relative freq.
Web writing features				
Headings	76	86.4	63	87.5
Words in bold	28	31.8	35	48.6
Lists	13	14.8	13	18.1
Links	65	73.9	34	47.2
Short paragraphs	665	96.1	402	88.0
Short sentences	989	77.6	640	65.5
Active verbs	2730	91.0	2053	85.4
Stance and engagement features				
Hedges	29	1.1	44	1.8
Boosters	388	14.5	280	11.3
Attitude markers	987	36.9	841	34.0
Self-mentions	940	35.1	419	17.0
Reader mentions	435	16.3	203	8.2
Directives	402	15.0	128	5.2
Questions	21	0.8	30	1.2

Table 4.2. Results from the text analysis

The results obtained from the web writing analysis and the stance and engagement analysis are commented on in more details in the following subsections by focusing on each single textual feature observed. An interim summing up is included for each section.

As will be remembered from Section 3.4.2.2, the text analyses were carried out on the corpus built for this research, which comprises texts from 20 university museums, including ten museums from the UK-EN and ten from the EU-EN group. The EU-EN texts represent museums from countries whose official languages belong to different linguistic families, thus allowing the corpus to be representative of the diverse linguistic situation in Europe. Nonetheless, I do not intend to make any claim about common or different patterns among the different EU-EN linguistic families represented in the corpus, due to the small sample size of each of them.

EN or UK-EN group. For instance, the distribution of words in bold (p=0.045), links (p=0.001), hedges (p=0.047) and boosters (p=0.001) in the texts belonging to the two groups may not be completely due to chance, while the opposite applies to headings (p=1), lists (p=0.73), attitude markers (p=0.087) and questions (p=0.159). However, the results seem to indicate that the correlation is weak, as the effect size is lower than 0.30 for all the features considered. This is not surprising, due to the small sample size. Future studies may want to consider a bigger sample of texts.

4.3.1 Web writing analysis

The question addressed by the web writing analysis is whether the texts from the corpus conform to general guidelines for web writing, which would point to a communicative approach aiming at facilitate reading for an online user. Web writing features have been divided into two groups, i.e. features related to text structuring and page layout and syntactic features. For each feature belonging to the two groups, a comparison between the UK-EN and the EU-EN group is offered, and differences among different micro-genres (i.e. "About", "Collection" and "Information" pages) are highlighted in the graphs.

4.3.1.1 Layout-related features

Layout-related features include headings, words in bold, lists and links. The graphs in this section show the percentage of texts displaying each feature over the total number of texts, for UK-EN and EU-EN websites separately.

Headings

Headings are used in most of the texts by both UK-EN (86.4%) and EU-EN (87.5%) museums, with a slightly higher percentage in EU-EN. Figure 4.2 shows that EU-EN texts display more headings in all the micro-genres, apart from "Information" pages. The "Information" micro-genre of the UK-EN group contains the highest frequency of texts with headings.
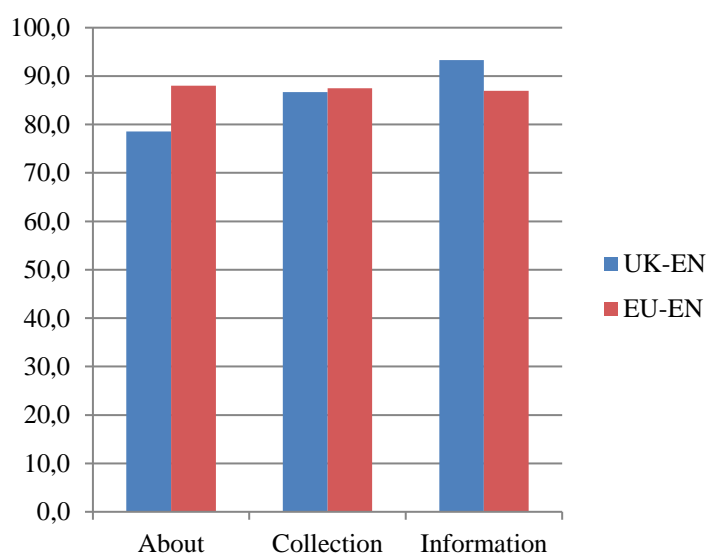
Figure 4.2. Percentage of texts displaying at least one heading

<u>Words in bold</u>

On the contrary, words in bold are not a common feature in the corpus. The EU-EN group (48.6%) is richer in words in bold than UK-EN (31.8%). The "Information" micro-genre for both groups includes more pages with words in bold, while the number of "About" and "Collection" pages having this feature is much smaller (Figure 4.3).
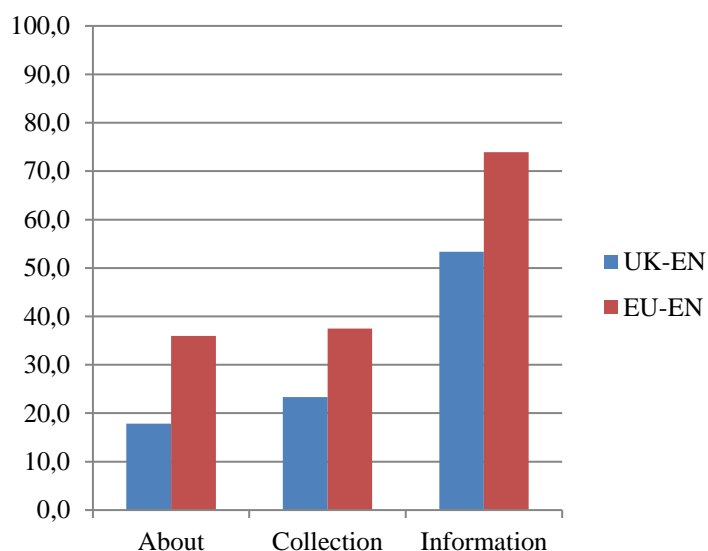
Figure 4.3. Percentage of texts displaying at least one word in bold

<u>Lists</u>

Texts including lists are not common in the corpus, but the frequency of EU-EN texts with lists (18.1%) is a little higher than that of UK-EN texts (14.8%). Like in the case of words in bold, the "Information" micro-genre is the richest in lists, while the "Collection" micro-genre contains the smallest number of pages with lists (Figure 4.4).
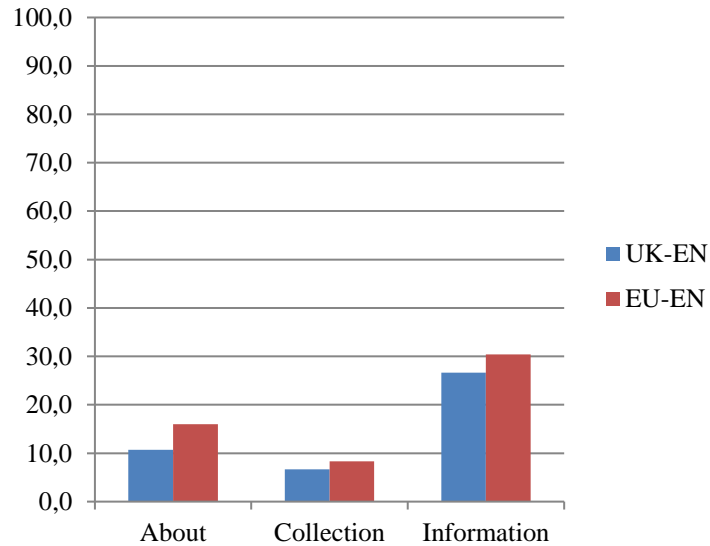
Figure 4.4. Percentage of texts displaying at least one list

Links

Finally, links are the only layout-related feature which is more common in the UK-EN group (73.9%) than in the EU-EN group (47.2%). In particular, the percentage of "Information" texts containing links is the highest among the three micro-genres (Figure 4.5).
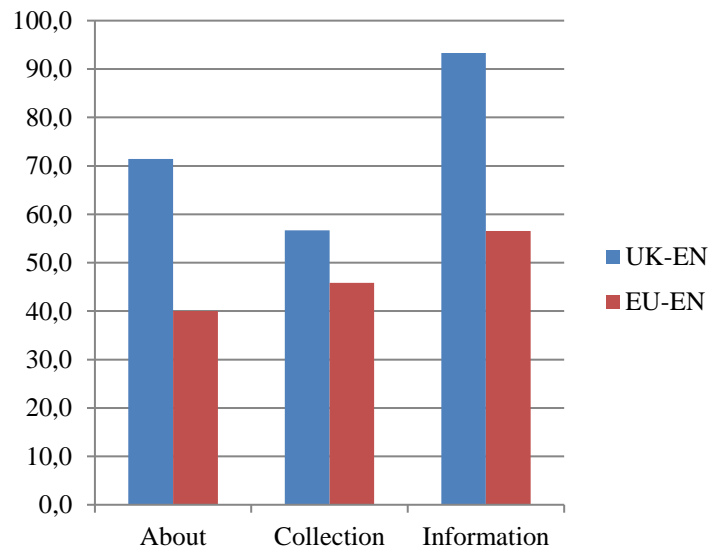
Figure 4.5. Percentage of texts displaying at least one link

This is mainly due to the fact that the EU-EN texts tend to present a variety of information intended for different groups of people on the same page, spanning on different subjects. Therefore, they do not use links directing to other pages for more details, but they need more structuring devices, such as headings, words in bold and lists, in order to organise the content of the page and facilitate reading. This is exemplified by

Figure 4.6: on this page by the Museum of the University of Warsaw, information is addressed to both individual tourists and organised groups. Interestingly, this page is marked with a "Visiting the museum" label in the page header, and is the only "Information" page that can be found in the English version of the website. Therefore, this page may be supposed to provide all the information any user may need for the visit.

Figure 4.6. Example of EU-EN "Information" page (EUS_PL_IN1)[2]

On the other hand, UK-EN pages tend to arrange information across different pages. This contributes to creating a "one page one topic" scenario, where "each page [is] self-contained, as a closed unit by itself" (McAlpine, 2001: 13), which is supposed to help readers focus on one subject at a time. This scenario implies that all pages providing

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[2] See the museum's website: http://www.muzeum.uw.edu.pl/en/zwiedzanie/.

related information have to be connected among them through the use of links, so that the reader may find interrelated information quickly and navigate easily across the pages. Not only may this explain why the UK-EN group contains more pages with links than the EU-EN group, but also why the UK-EN group includes fewer pages with on-page structuring devices. Nonetheless, structuring devices and links do not seem to be contradictory features: a highly structured page does not necessarily have few links, and vice versa. A page may be well structured and mention different types of information introduced by headings, and at the same time it may have links to each piece of information to provide further details on related pages.

This is especially true for "Information" pages. The EU-EN group displays higher percentages for all features apart from links, and the highest percentage of links in the UK-EN group is that of "Information" pages. This confirms a preference of UK-EN museum websites for splitting practical information for the visit on a larger number of web pages, according to the type of information provided and the readers addressed. An example can be seen in Figure 4.7. The page offers information related to visits for different types of groups, namely school groups, local community groups and other large groups. For each one of them, more information is provided on related pages, that are linked from the page. UK-EN museum websites thus seem to include a more complex hierarchy of pages.

Figure 4.7. Example of UK-EN "Information" page (UK_CB1_IN2)[3]

4.3.1.2   Syntactic features

Syntactic features analysed include short paragraphs, short sentences and active verbs. When referring to short paragraphs and short sentences, "short" stands for ideal-length according to web writing standards (cf. Section 3.4.3.1): short paragraphs are

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[3] See the museum's website: http://www.kettlesyard.co.uk/visit/groups/.

paragraphs with 100 or fewer words, while short sentences are sentences with 25 or fewer words. For each group (UK-EN and EU-EN), the percentages shown in the following graphs were calculated as follows and normalised per 100 texts:

- frequency of short paragraphs over total number of paragraphs in the corpus;
- frequency of short sentences over total number of sentences in the corpus;
- frequency of active verbs over total number of verbs in the corpus.

Short paragraphs

Short paragraphs tend to be very common in both groups, but more so in the UK-EN texts (96.1%) than in the EU-EN texts (88.0%). In particular, "Information" pages are the richest in short paragraphs, while "About" and "Collection" pages have a lower percentage of them (Figure 4.8).
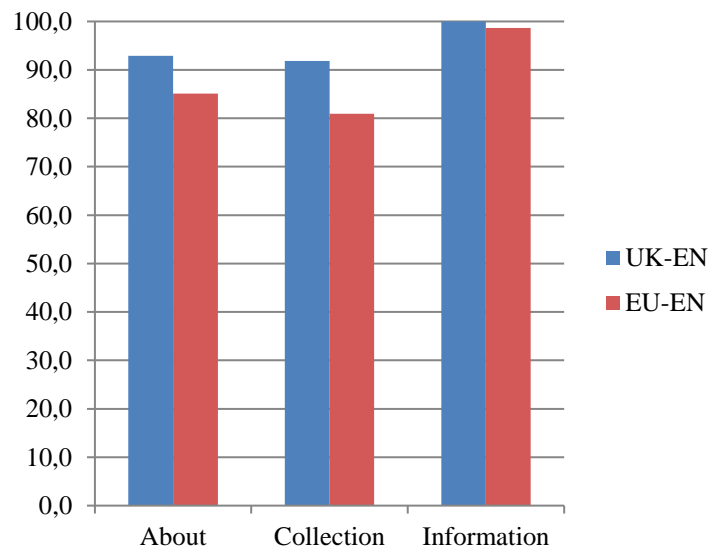
Figure 4.8. Percentage of short paragraphs

The less frequent use of short paragraphs on "About" and "Collection" pages is mainly due to the fact that these pages may feature narrative sections on the history of the museum and the collections, which tend to be longer than other types of content, as shown in Figure 4.9.
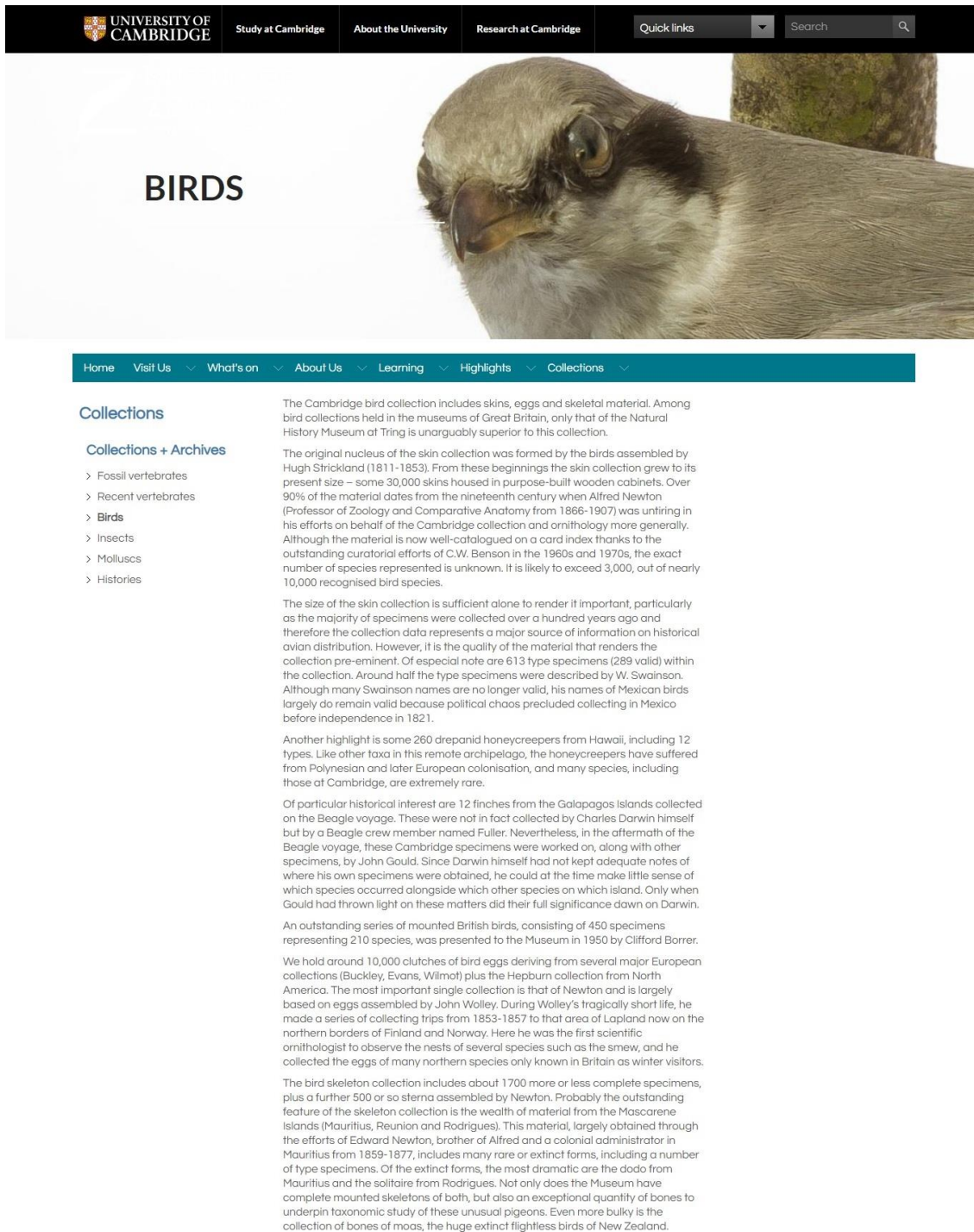
Figure 4.9. Example of "Collection" page (UK_CB2_CO3)[4]

The screenshot of an "Information" page from the same website is provided to highlight the difference in length of the paragraphs (Figure 4.10).

[4] See the museum's website: https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/birds.

Figure 4.10. Example of "Information" page (UK_CB2_IN3)[5]

<u>Short sentences</u>

The frequency of short sentences is higher in UK-EN (77.6%) than in EU-EN (65.5%). Here as well, "Information" pages contain more short sentences than the other micro-

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[5] See the museum's website: https://www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk/visit-us/group-visits.

genres do (Figure 4.11), due to the reasons explained in the previous section: "Information" pages need to provide short, direct and straightforward information, so short sentences are preferred over long, convoluted ones.
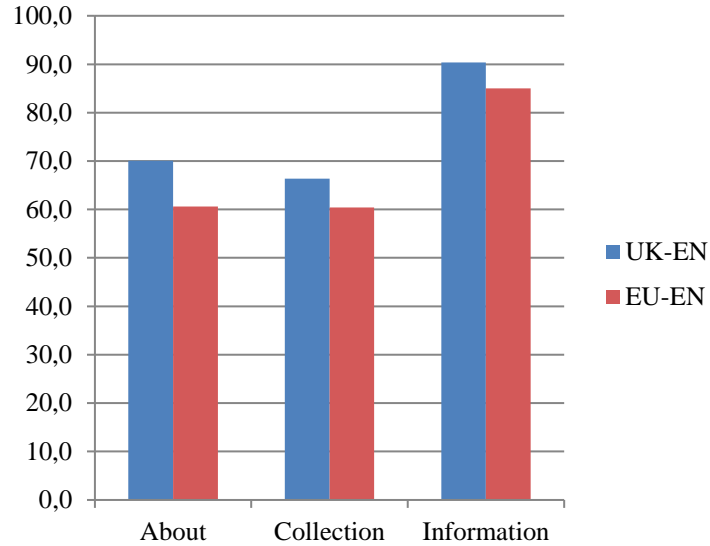
Figure 4.11. Percentage of short sentences

Active forms of verbs

Finally, active forms of verbs are the widely preferred option in the corpus as a whole, but more so in the UK-EN group (91.0%) than in the EU-EN group (85.4%). As in the case of the other features, active verbs are also more common in "Information" texts for both EU-EN and UK-EN (Figure 4.12), and for similar reasons.
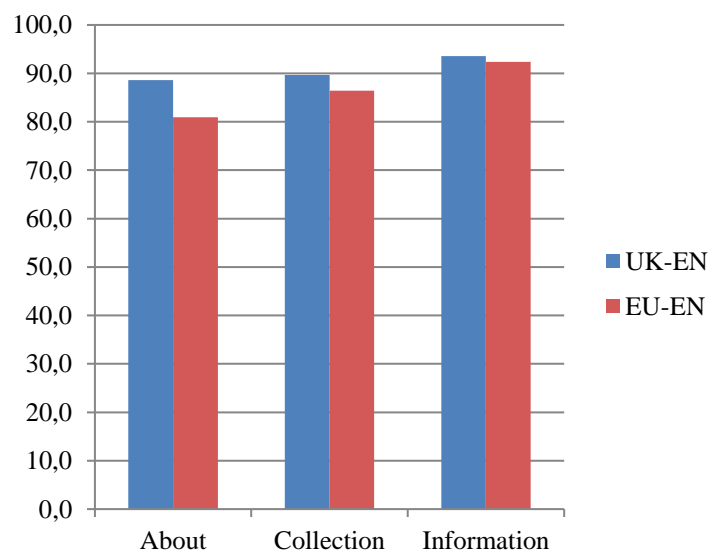
Figure 4.12. Percentage of active forms of verbs

The use of passive verbs seems to be slightly more common on "About" pages. Table 4.3 provides examples of verbs in their passive form (in bold and italic) from "About" pages of both groups, by underlining the subject of each sentence. In all of these examples, the subject is either the museum itself (represented by its name or by the first-person pronoun "we") or a part of it (namely its building, its collections or the affiliated university). The foundation of the museum, its evolution and history, its values and mission, the building and the spaces housing the collections and exhibitions, as well as the preserved heritage, are among the most common themes of "About" pages. Passive verbs are thus employed to put the museum and all its integral elements on the spotlight and emphasise their importance. This may explain why "About" texts exhibit a smaller number of active verbs.

	Example	Text
(1)	The University *was renamed* Imperial Alexander University in Finland when it was moved to Helsinki in 1828.	EUF_FI_AB2
(2)	The Josephinum *was completed* in 1785 based on drawings by the Court's architect Isidor Canevale.	EUG_AT_AB1
(3)	The Museum Site *was recognised* by the UNESCO and *integrated* in the CD-R Millenium Guide to Cultural Resources on the WEB […]	EUR_PT_AB3
(4)	At this time the Palace interior *was renovated* and *rearranged* and new brick stables, carriage house and hothouse *were constructed*.	EUS_PL_AB2
(5)	Our collections are amongst the best in the world. As well as being open for the public to enjoy, they *are used* for academic study by researchers and students worldwide.	UK_CB2_AB1
(6)	In 1997 the Museum *was awarded* a £12.5 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund […]	UK_MA1_AB2
(7)	Alongside the collection, this building *was designed* to house a chemistry laboratory and rooms for undergraduate lectures.	UK_ON1_AB2
(8)	We *were established* by academics in the Department of Agriculture in 1951 to capture and record the rapidly changing countryside following World War II.	UK_RG1_AB1

Table 4.3. Examples of passive forms of verbs on "About" pages

Interim summing up

Overall, the features related to text structuring and page layout were more common in the EU-EN group than in the UK-EN group, apart from links. Although differences between the two groups regarding the use of syntactic features are small, UK-EN museums generally adopt short paragraphs, short sentences and active verbs more than EU-EN museums do, so UK-EN texts tend to be simpler from the point of view of text length and sentence structure. Furthermore, "Information" pages appear to be the richest in all the syntactic features observed, as well as in the layout-related features.

4.3.2 Stance and engagement analysis

The presentation of results for this analysis first focuses on stance features and then on engagement features. Graphs are provided to examine the differences among the three different micro-genres in the EU-EN and UK-EN group respectively. These graphs show the frequency of each feature observed over the total number of tokens in the corpus, normalised per 1000 tokens.

4.3.2.1 Stance features

Stance features include hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions.

     <u>Hedges</u>

Hedges are not a common feature in the corpus, but there are more hedges in EU-EN texts (1.8%) than in UK-EN texts (1.1%). The hedges found in the corpus include the categories shown in Table 4.4.

Category		Example	Text
Adverbs	(9)	works that are ***perhaps*** no more than an idea	EUG_SE_CO3
	(10)	The collection contains ***approximately*** two million items	UK_CB2_AB1
Modal verbs of possibility	(11)	bad weather conditions or other technical problems ***could*** delay the opening by a week	EUS_HR_IN1
	(12)	We regret any inconvenience this ***may*** cause	UK_CB4_IN1
Verbs indicating hedging	(13)	the exhibition today is divided into four thematic units which ***are supposed to*** cover such a complex topic as human is as best as possible	EUS_CZ_AB1
	(14)	This space ***tries to*** portray the pre and proto industrialisation history	EUR_PT_CO2
Adjectives indicating hedging	(15)	We apologize for the ***occasional*** noise from machines or chain-saws	EUS_HR_CO2
	(16)	this presupposition does not mean that goods overcoming these chronological limits cannot be part of an ***eventual*** incorporation[6]	EUR_PT_CO1
Phrases indicating hedging	(17)	***As far as we know***, the only other bodies to take on a similar role were Italian universities	EUG_AT_AB3
	(18)	The bird skeleton collection includes about 1700 ***more or less*** complete specimens	UK_CB2_CO3

Table 4.4. Categories and examples of hedges

The EU-EN group displays more hedges on the "Collection" pages, while the UK-EN group includes more on the "Information" pages (Figure 4.13). Examples are provided from both "Collection" and "Information" to shed light on different uses of hedges. "About" pages show a similar use of hedges if compared to "Collection" pages, even though more limited.

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[6] "Eventual" is probably a calque from Portuguese, as it seems to be used to express a "potential" — rather than "ultimate" — event, thus showing a deviation from native language norms.
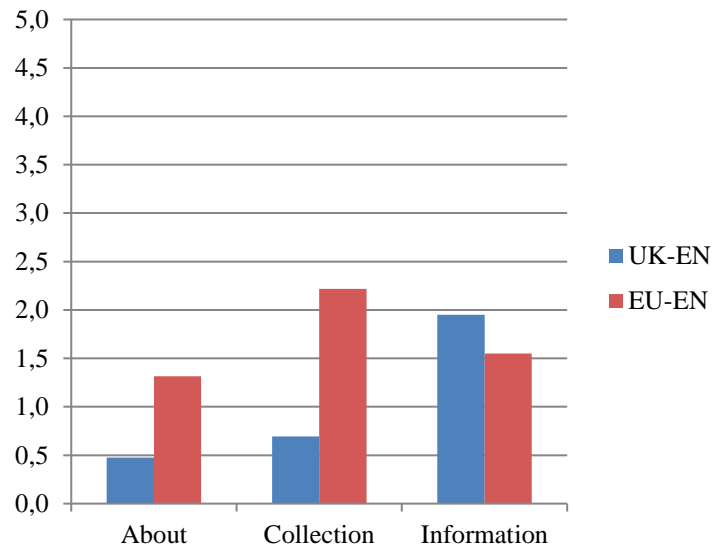
Figure 4.13. Percentage of hedges

EU-EN "Collection" pages are richer in hedges than UK-EN "Collection" pages. Although hedges may be found in a number of textual genres, they are a typical device in academic writing (Hyland, 1995, 1996, 2005b). Since "Collection" pages generally display scientific or popularised information regarding the museum collection, the higher use of hedges in these pages may imply that the EU-EN "Collection" pages tend to adopt a more academic register than UK-EN "Collection" pages. The former may be prone to presenting disciplinary information related to the collections and the research done around them in a way that reproduces the register that professionals would probably use in academic papers. Scientific credibility is constructed through strategies of hedging in order to present information cautiously without making claims that may not be solid. Although to different extents, this strategy applies to both EU-EN and UK-EN "Collection" pages. Table 4.5 shows examples of hedges adopted on EU-EN and UK-EN websites to provide tentative, "uncertain" information.

	Example	Text
(19)	Our Photographic Collections hold ***approximately*** 58 000 photographs, of which ***about*** half have been digitized.	EU_FI_CO3
(20)	The fruits of most ficuses are also edible, ***perhaps*** not for humans, but for a long list of wild animals, from insects to mammals.	EU_HR_CO1
(21)	Given the care devoted by Jim to the display of objects and artworks and to creating subtle conversations between them, since his departure the house has been preserved ***virtually*** unchanged.	UK_CB1_CO2
(22)	The bird skeleton collection includes ***about*** 1700 ***more or less*** complete specimens, plus a further 500 ***or so*** sterna assembled by Newton.	UK_CB2_CO3

Table 4.5. Examples of hedges from "Collection" pages

On the other hand, UK-EN websites display a higher percentage of hedges on "Information" pages than EU-EN websites. Hedges used on "Information" pages tend to have a different function, as shown in the examples provided in Table 4.6.

	Example	Text
(23)	A Cultural Walk, exploring the University Main Building and the museum exhibition, ***approx.*** 90 min	EUF_FI_IN2
(24)	The Garden is regularly open to public from April 1 to October 31 (bad weather conditions or other technical problems ***could*** delay the opening by a week).	EUS_HR_IN1
(25)	Please note that the House is ***not fully*** wheelchair accessible.	UK_CB1_IN3
(26)	Please note that any unbooked groups ***may*** be refused entrance	UK_CB2_IN3
(27)	In the interests of security it ***may*** be necessary to conduct bag searches.	UK_CB4_IN1
(28)	We receive a high volume of phone calls, so you ***may*** need to leave a message and we will reply.	UK_ON1_IN2

Table 4.6. Examples of hedges from "Information" pages

In examples 23, the museum seems implicitly aware that nobody can claim to know the exact length of a visit, because this mainly depends on the visitors' needs, interests and availability in terms of time. Example 25 shows the museum commitment to accessibility: the text suggests that the museum aims to be sensitive towards accessibility issues, but it is aware of not being completely accessible, so it feels the need to recognise this lack. In the remaining examples, the museums seem to warn readers (in these cases, potential visitors) about possible events (i.e. delayed opening, refused entrance, security bag searches and voicemail), so as to prepare them to "the worst case scenario". This strategy, i.e. presenting a bad or unpleasant situation that may happen, is more common in the UK-EN group than in the EU-EN group.

Boosters

Boosters are more likely to be found in the UK-EN texts (14.5%) of the corpus than in the EU-EN ones (11.3%). Boosters include the categories presented in Table 4.7.

Category		Example	Text
Comparatives and superlatives	(29)	a ***wider*** audience	EUG_AT_CO1
	(30)	one of the world's ***greatest*** numismatic collections	UK_GL1_CO1
Adjectives	(31)	***many*** international scientists	EUG_DK_AB1
Adverbs	(32)	The cards are ***especially*** suitable	EUF_FI_IN3
Determiners	(33)	a ***much*** broader story to tell	UK_MA2_AB1
Pronouns	(34)	help us do and achieve ***more***	UK_MA2_AB2
Emphatic use of "do"	(35)	we ***do*** charge for special exhibitions	UK_ON1_IN3

Table 4.7. Categories and examples of boosters

It can be seen in Figure 4.14 that "Collection" and "About" pages are richer in boosters than "Information" pages.
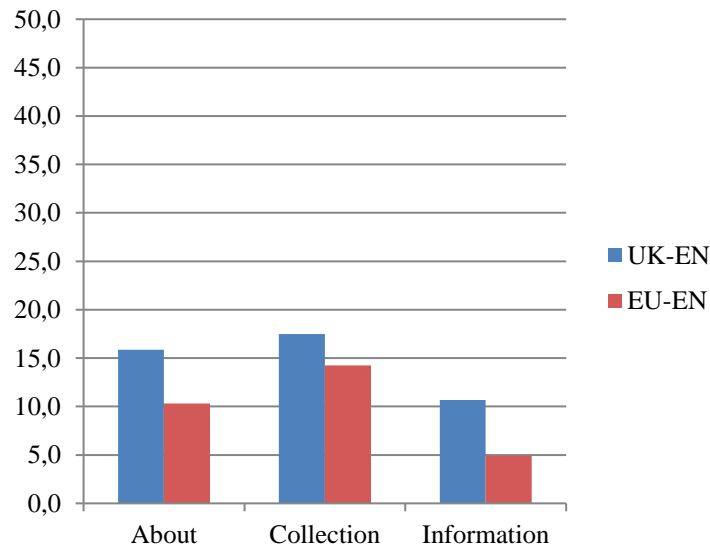
Figure 4.14. Percentage of boosters

Boosters tend to occur in clusters with attitude markers, stressing the author's attitude towards what is said, as shown in Table 4.8.

	Example	Text
(36)	***the greatest importance*** for their value	EUG_DK_CO2
(37)	one of ***the most diverse*** and ***most interesting*** plant families	EUS_HR_CO3
(38)	a ***very fine*** collection	UK_CB3_CO2
(39)	***the most wonderful*** array of ethnographic objects	UK_ON2_IN1

Table 4.8. Examples of boosters co-occurring with attitude markers

Attitude markers

Boosters and attitude markers are very important stance devices, as they contribute to construct the authors' position in the text by conveying their opinion and perspective,

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especially with regard to the collection and the museum. Attitude markers are more common in the UK-EN texts (36.9%) than in the EU-EN texts (34.0%). Attitude markers include the categories shown in Table 4.9.

Structure		Example	Text
Adjectives	(40)	one of the most ***beautiful*** neoclassical buildings in Warsaw	EUS_PL_AB2
	(41)	our ***diverse*** and ***surprising*** collection	UK_RG1_AB1
Adverbs	(42)	created ***specifically*** for the Zoological Museum	EUG_DK_IN2
	(43)	our ***strikingly*** designed Art Garden	UK_MA2_IN3
Nouns	(44)	great didactic ***interest***	EUR_ES_CO1
	(45)	a monument of the first ***importance***	UK_CB4_AB1
Phrases	(46)	***At the heart of*** the Josephinum's collections are the original stocks	EUG_AT_CO1
	(47)	a venue ***with a difference***	UK_MA1_IN1
Verbs	(48)	The museum ***hopes*** to be a useful tool	EUR_ES_AB1
	(49)	we ***prefer*** if you do not make images of human remains	UK_ON2_IN1

Table 4.9. Categories and examples of attitude markers

Table 4.10 shows the 20 most common attitude markers in the corpus, as well as in the two groups. If we look at the general list on the left referring to the corpus, the majority of the attitude markers (all except for "significance") are adjectives related to age ("new", "first", "historic", "oldest"), importance ("main", "important", "great", "major", "significant", "outstanding", "famous", "interesting"), size and variety ("large", "small", "extensive", "various") and exclusivity ("unique", "original", "particular"). Although the UK-EN and EU-EN list are similar to each other, some attitude markers from the former do not appear in the latter (i.e. "outstanding", "extensive", "particular", "significance"), and vice versa some from the EU-EN list do not appear in the UK-EN list (i.e. "interesting", "famous", "various", "oldest").

Rank.	All corpus	Freq.	UK-EN	Freq.	EU-EN	Freq.
1	new	86	new	50	new	36
2	main	49	important	28	main	29
3	important	47	major	24	small	21
4	large	31	main	20	first	19
5	small	29	large	19	important	19
6	first	28	outstanding	17	interesting	16
7	great	26	extensive	15	original	14
8	major	26	great	15	large	12
9	historic	23	significant	14	famous	11
10	unique	23	unique	14	great	11
11	original	22	historic	13	historic	10
12	significant	22	diverse	10	interest	10
13	extensive	19	accessible	9	old	10
14	outstanding	18	first	9	various	10
15	famous	16	international	9	oldest	9
16	interesting	16	particular	9	unique	9
17	particular	15	significance	9	valuable	9
18	various	15	fine	8	significant	8
19	oldest	14	original	8	special	8
20	significance	14	small	8	only	8

Table 4.10. List of the most common attitude markers in the corpus and in the two groups

The lists of most common attitude markers in UK-EN and EU-EN roughly mirror the general one, with few exceptions. Among the most common in the UK-EN texts which are not in the general list we can find the following attitude markers: "diverse", either referring to the audience or the collection; "accessible", referring to accessibility for visitors with disabilities; "international", referring to the audience, the tours, the research and the importance of the collections or the museum in general; and "fine", referring to the collections. On the other hand, frequent attitude markers in the EU-EN texts which were not in the general list are "interest", "old", "valuable", "special" and "only".

It is apparent from Figure 4.15 that attitude markers are more frequent on "About" and "Collection" pages, as was noted for boosters. Attitude markers and boosters are adopted in these micro-genres to shape the identity of the institution and describe the collections by adding a positive connotation to it.
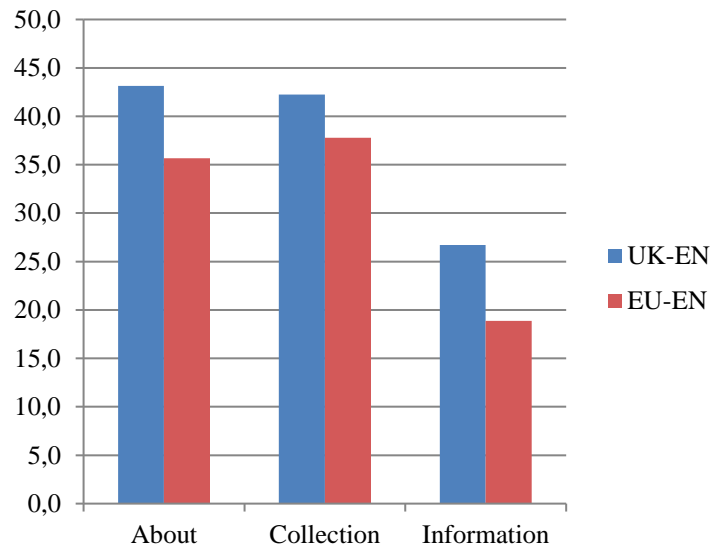
Figure 4.15. Percentage of attitude markers

Instances of attitude markers conveying a negative connotation were also found, even though these were a minority. While positive attitude markers generally refer to the collections, the occurrences illustrated in Table 4.11 show that attitude markers with a negative connotation are used with three main purposes:

- emphasising the efforts made by the museum, e.g. to show a rare collection (51), to restore it (53) or to display it in the best possible way (57);

- telling the history of the museum by recounting remarkable or "tragic" events related to it, e.g. the long journey of some of the collected items (50), the loss of financial funds (52) or the collector's short life (56);

- acknowledging possible limits of the museum and anticipating potential unpleasant events, which may not be under the control of the museum, e.g. weather conditions (77), limited parking spaces (54) or toilet facilities (58), busy visiting times (55) and the inability to welcome unannounced groups due to the amount of regular visitors (59).

In the first two cases, attitude markers are clearly used to reinforce positive connotations associated with the museum, e.g. praising the museum commitments, especially when obstacles or difficulties emerge. The third purpose seems to be connected with the idea of warning readers about possible inconveniences in order to prepare them to "the worst case scenario", as already suggested when reporting on the use of hedges.

	Example	Text
(50)	These were produced in Florence between 1784 and 1788 under the supervision of director Felice Fontana and anatomist Paolo Mascagni and eventually arrived in Vienna after a ***wearisome*** journey over the Alps.	EUG_AT_CO2
(51)	Tissue and DNA is often ***expensive, time-consuming*** and ***difficult*** to collect […]	EUG_DK_CO3
(52)	***Unfortunately***, Hrdlicka's financial funds, containing money assigned to do this, with its own building, was affected by a credit crunch.	EUS_CZ_AB1
(53)	The restoration of the 19th century exhibition pavilion was the most ***demanding*** task	EUS_HR_AB2
(54)	Arriving by car is somewhat ***difficult*** due to ***restricted*** parking spaces […]	EUS_HR_IN1
(55)	Our ***busiest*** periods are weekends, if you want to avoid queues, Tuesday – Friday are our quieter days.	UK_CB1_IN3
(56)	During Wolley's ***tragically*** short life, he made a series of collecting trips […]	UK_CB2_CO3
(57)	Often light-sensitive, globes are ***challenging*** to display, not least because it is desirable, but difficult, to see the entire surface of the globe.	UK_CB3_CO3
(58)	Please note that we have ***limited*** toilet facilities	UK_CB3_IN3
(59)	The Museum is regularly ***packed*** with visitors, and it is hard for us to accomodate groups unannounced.	UK_ON2_IN1

Table 4.11. Examples of attitude markers with negative connotation

Two different examples of attitude markers that are negatively connotated are provided. Figure 4.16 shows part of the main "About" page of the website of the Museum of Human Anatomy of the University of Turin. The text displays attitude markers such as "crowded", "lack" and "devoid", which are used to describe the display of the collection, which reproduces the original 19th century museographical style. The page does not provide any details of what is shown, which seems to reflect the 'minimalistic' approach to communication characterising the 19th century museography embraced by the museum to recreate the original environment.
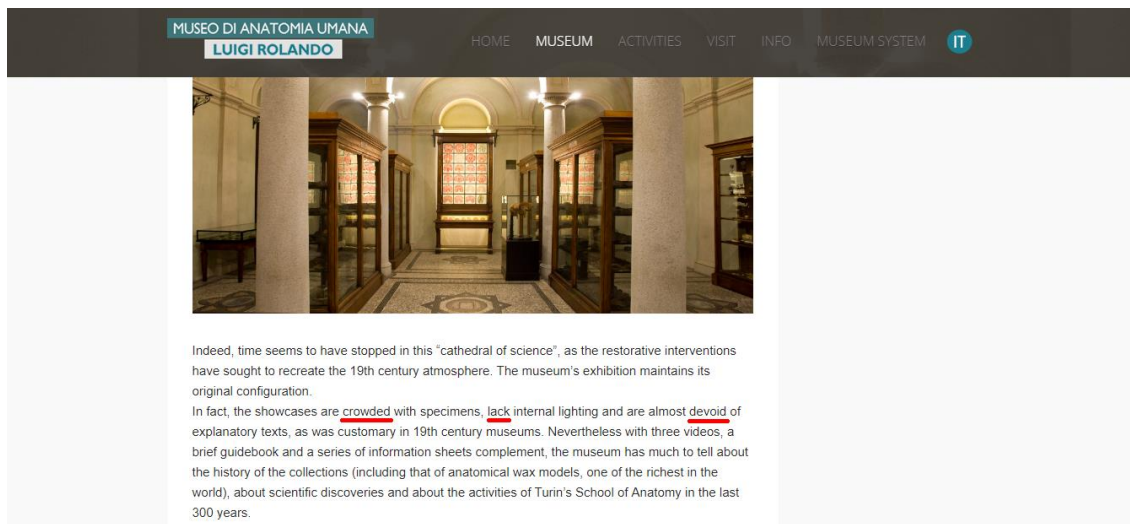
Figure 4.16. EUR_IT_AB1: "About" page of the website of the Museum of Human Anatomy of the University of Turin[7]

By contrast, Figure 4.17 shows an extract from the text of an "About" page on the website of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. The extract explains the curatorial and museographical approach adopted, which is similar to the one employed by the Italian museum, i.e. maintaining the original display. This text displays negatively connotated attitude markers, such as "crowded", "hard", "derogatory" and "hurtful", as well as "problematic". Although the use of attitude markers with a negative connotation may seem similar to that of the Museum of Human Anatomy of the University of Turin, the communicative approaches of the two museums are very different. The Italian museum describes the situation as it is by using negative terms, and does not seem to be worried about taking a stance, nor about trying to affect the reader's attitude towards the collection: the IT text only mentions the choice of maintaining the "original configuration" of the exhibition and providing additional materials for the visit. On the other hand, the Pitt Rivers Museum first mentions what the reader expects as the most common arrangement in museums to explain that their arrangement is different, thus preparing them to an unexpected event. The text describes the possibly unpleasant result of this arrangement (e.g. having original labels which are "hard to read"), the reason for this choice, the effort for providing the necessary information, as well as the awareness that the latter may be limited. It also invites readers to participate by creating their own tour through self curation. Therefore, the museum stresses that they are aware of the limitations inherent in this museographical approach and presents what it is going to do

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[7] See the museum's website: http://museoanatomia.unito.it/index.php/en/the-museum/intro.

to overcome them by creating "forums" to discuss "problematic" elements in the museum's narrative.
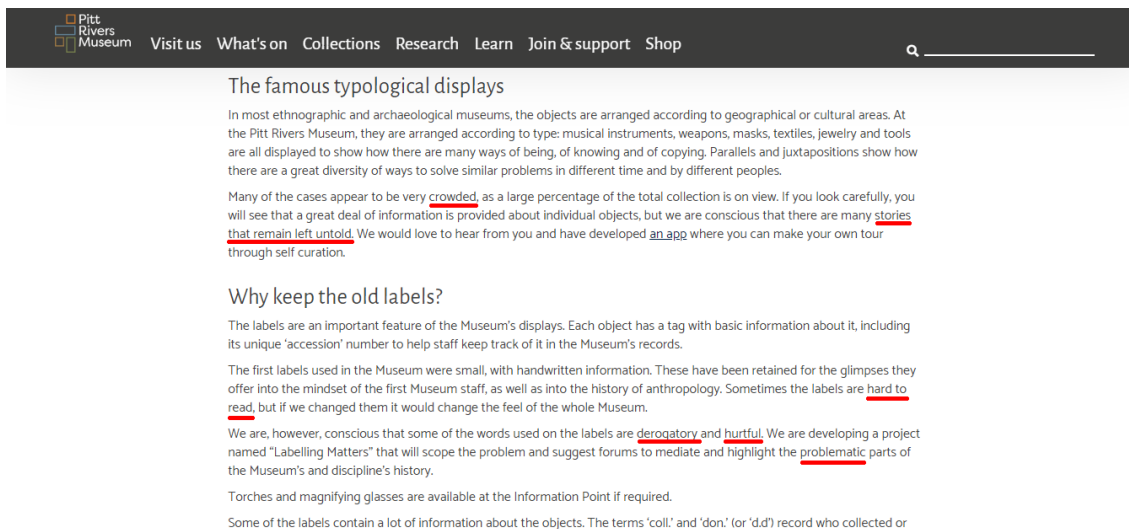
Figure 4.17. UK_ON2_AB2: "About" page of the website of the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford[8]

Self-mentions

Self-mentions are much more used by UK-EN museums (35.1%) than EU-EN museums (17.0%). This means that museums in the UK-EN refer to themselves in the texts more often than EU-EN museums do. Figure 4.18 shows the frequency of self-mentions per micro-genre. Surprisingly, the frequency is higher on "Information" pages than "About" and "Collection" pages. Self-mentions as a device to create an institutional image are used on "Information" pages probably to consolidate that image and to refer to the museum while providing practical information for the visit.

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[8] See the museum's website: https://www.prm.ox.ac.uk/history-museum.
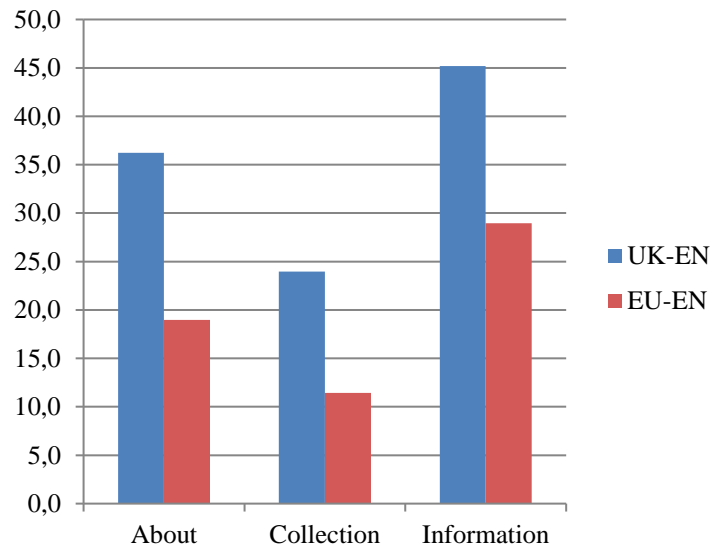
Figure 4.18. Percentage of self-mentions

A closer look at self-mentions reveals more details on the use of personal mentions ("we", "us", "our(s)") and impersonal mentions (e.g. "the museum", "the garden"). Figure 4.19 shows the percentage of personal and impersonal mentions over the total number of self-mentions in UK-EN and EU-EN texts, normalised per 1000 mentions. Impersonal mentions in the corpus outnumber personal mentions in both groups. The majority of personal mentions were found in UK-EN texts, while most impersonal mentions were in EU-EN texts: although both UK-EN and EU-EN museums prefer to refer to themselves impersonally as institutions (e.g. "the museum"), UK-EN texts tend to be more personal than EU-EN texts, constructing the image of the museum also as a group of people through the use of personal pronouns (e.g. "we") and possessive adjectives (e.g. "our collections"). For instance, while there were 145 occurrences of first-person pronoun "we" in the UK-EN texts, only 61 were found in the EU-EN texts.
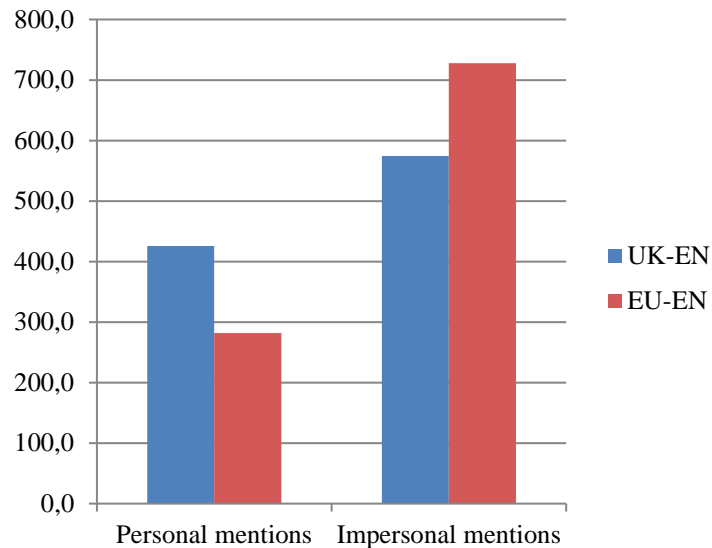
Figure 4.19. Percentage of personal and impersonal mentions over the total number of self-mentions

4.3.2.2   Engagement features

Engagement features include reader mentions, directives and questions.

Reader mentions

The percentage of reader mentions in the corpus is higher in the UK-EN texts (16.3%) than in the EU-EN texts (8.2%). In particular, reader mentions are much more common on "Information" pages than "About" and "Collection" pages (Figure 4.20). "Information" pages are those where the institution feels a stronger need to position readers within the text and engage them directly. As already argued in Section 4.3.1, "Information" pages tend to be more direct and interactive, by openly addressing readers through the use of either personal pronouns and possessive adjectives or other items to make the intended readers more explicit (e.g. "visitors" or "researchers"). In addition, on "Information" pages details may be provided for specific groups of people, e.g. disabled people and schools, so the need for addressing readers and making addressees explicit is stronger on "Information" pages than on other pages.

The percentage of reader mentions on "About" pages is higher in UK-EN museums, while the percentage on "Collection" pages is higher in EU-EN museums.
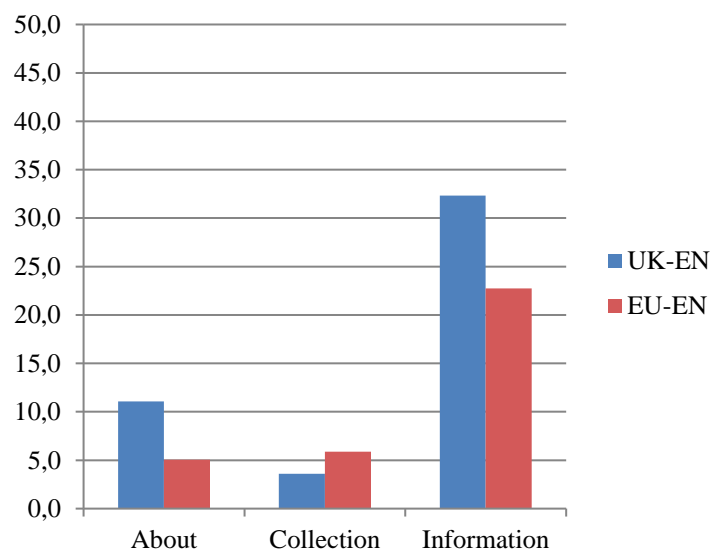
Figure 4.20. Percentage of reader mentions

Figure 4.21 provides more details about reader mentions by comparing the presence of first-person inclusive [9] pronouns and possessive adjectives ("we", "us", "our(s)"), second-person pronouns and possessive adjectives ("you", "your(s)") and impersonal references to the intended readers (e.g. "visitors", "students" and "all"). Results show that impersonal mentions are preferred by both UK-EN and EU-EN but are more common in the UK-EN texts. More interestingly, the percentage of first-person inclusive pronouns and possessive adjectives is higher in the EU-EN texts than it is in the UK-EN texts, while the opposite applies for second-person pronouns and possessive adjectives, which are used more by UK museums than EU-EN museums. This indicates that EU-EN museums use "we", "us" and "our(s)" in an inclusive way more often than UK-EN museums do, while the latter use "you" and "your(s)" more than EU-EN museums do to directly address the readers.

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[9] Exclusive pronouns and possessive adjectives were not considered in this analysis as they are supposed to refer only to the author of the communication, i.e. the museum, and are thus irrelevant within the analysis of reader mentions.
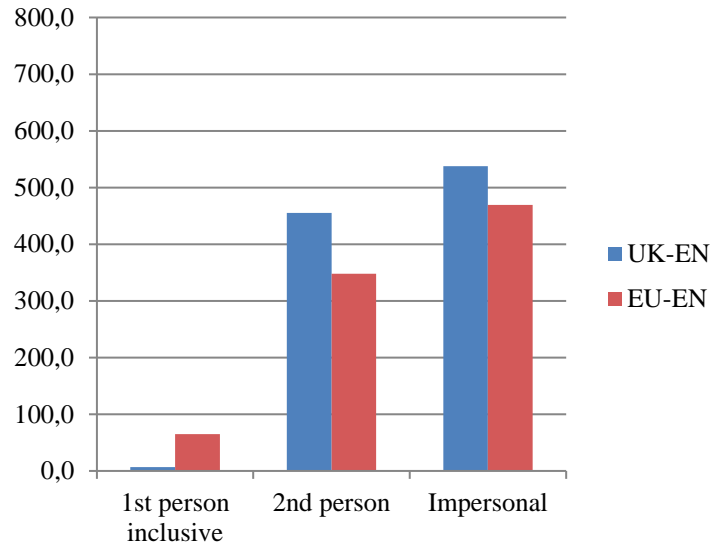
Figure 4.21. Percentage of reader mentions per type over total number of reader mentions

Inclusive pronouns may be used to create a sense of community and belonging. However, understanding the intended readers to whom they refer may be somewhat problematic in certain cases. A few examples are provided in Table 4.12 to clarify the use of inclusive personal pronouns and possessive adjectives in the corpus: the references are commented to show that they include both author (the museum) and readers, but probably only a specific group of intended readers.

	Example	Text
(60)	Because earlier generations made systematic collections of natural history specimens, *we* have unique opportunities in the present to document changes in *our* nature over time.	EU_DK_CO2
(61)	New art that reflects *our* time, collected within the context of the modern greats of the 20th century.	UK_MA2_CO1
(62)	We use our diverse and surprising collection to explore how the skills and experiences of farmers and craftspeople, past and present, can help shape *our* lives now and into the future. We work alongside rural people, local communities and specialist researchers to create displays and activities that engage with important debates about the future of food and the ongoing relevance of the countryside to all *our* lives.	UK_RG1_AB1

Table 4.12. Examples of inclusive pronouns and possessive adjectives

At a first glance, the possessive adjective "our" in example 61 may seem to refer to all human beings reading the text. However, it must be acknowledged that this depends on what "new art" is collected, e.g. Western art only or art from around the world, and how it is interpreted. For instance, the collection may represent Indian art, but not Chinese art. Therefore, the intended readers referred to correspond to the people represented by the collections of the museum. A similar case is example 62, where "our lives" may

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refer to the lives of every human being, but more probably refers to the lives of people in the UK: as a matter of fact, farmers and craftspeople in the UK may have a totally different life from farmers and craftspeople from other countries in the world, who may not see themselves represented by this. The same applies to example 60, where "our nature" may mean the natural environment where all human beings live and "we" may be supposed to refer to all of us. Nonetheless, "collections of natural history specimens" may include only specimens from the past found in a specific country or area (e.g. Europe), thus representing the natural history heritage of a limited group of people.

The previous examples show that the idea and the existence of a collection is generally strictly linked to the existence of a community to whom the collection belongs. No kind of heritage exists a priori, but is rather a product and representation of a specific community (Watson, 2007). Therefore, the use of first-person inclusive pronouns and possessive adjectives in a context referring to the museum heritage and collections will most probably be only partially inclusive, i.e. inclusive of a socially and culturally defined community.

The use of impersonal references make reader mentions more explicit, allowing to understand how museums conceptualise their intended readers. The occurrences of impersonal references found in the corpus indicate a very heterogeneous representation of intended readers, which may suggest that university museums are not only for students and academics, but for a more diverse audience. Table 4.13 illustrates the 20 most common impersonal reader mentions in the corpus and in the two groups[10]. The list of references found in the corpus (left side of the table) reveals that most of them refer to the "general" visitor (i.e. "visitors", "the public", "people", "the general public", "all", "everyone", "public", "adults" and "all visitors") or to specific categories, namely students, groups, researchers, volunteers, journalists and families ("children", "families" and "baby strollers"). The UK-EN and EU-EN lists show differences among them, as some references are unique of a single list. Among the most common references, "visitors" is high in the UK-EN list but not in the EU-EN list: UK-EN museums tend to refer to "visitors" or to specific groups of people, while EU-EN museums commonly use very vague references such as "the public" or "the general public".

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[10] Other categories were not included in the table due to the small number of occurrences or the limited variety of references, e.g. "asylum seekers".

Rank.	All corpus	Freq.	UK-EN	Freq.	EU-EN	Freq.
1	visitors	16	visitors	13	the public	7
2	students	14	students	10	the general public	5
3	groups	13	groups	9	group	5
4	the public	9	researchers	5	students	4
5	group	5	families	3	groups	4
6	people	5	volunteers	3	public	4
7	researchers	5	children	2	visitors	3
8	the general public	5	people	2	people	3
9	all	4	members of the public	2	children	2
10	children	4	large groups	2	all	2
11	everyone	4	the public	2	everyone	2
12	families	4	all	2	adults	2
13	public	4	teachers	2	larger groups	2
14	volunteers	3	students under the age of 18	2	primary and secondary schools	2
15	adults	2	patrons	2	the visitors	2
16	all visitors	2	student	2	wheelchairs	2
17	baby strollers	2	organised groups	2	baby strollers	2
18	journalists	2	everyone	2	families	1
19	large groups	2	our visitors	2	schools	1
20	larger groups	2	scholars	2	universities	1

Table 4.13. List of the most common impersonal reader mentions in the corpus and in the two groups

Due to the variety found in the corpus, impersonal references were divided into different categories, each one representing a different "persona". Table 4.14 provides the list of the main categories, with the number of occurrences and examples per category, as a representation of the most densely populated categories. The selected examples are reported with their frequencies (in the corpus and in the UK-EN and EU-EN texts respectively), and represent the three most common references for each category.

Category	Occurrences. (all corpus)	UK-EN	Freq.	EU-EN	Freq.
the "general" reader/visitor	75	visitors	13	the public	7
		people	2	the general public	5
		members of the public	2	public	4
groups and group leaders	43	groups	9	group	5
		large groups	2	groups	4
		organised groups	2	large groups	2
students, schools and universities	42	students	10	students	4
		teachers	2	primary and secondary schools	2
		students under the age of 18	2	schools	1
people with disabilities	22	wheelchairs	3	wheelchairs	3
		visitors with disabilities	2	the disabled	2
		those with additional needs	1	disabled visitors	1
children and families	21	families	3	children	2
		children	2	baby strollers	2
		families with pushchairs	1	families	1
academics and staff	18	researchers	5	international scientists	1
		scholars	2	researchers from all over the world	1
		multi-disciplinary researchers	1	researchers around the globe	1
other	18	volunteers	3	cardholders	1
		journalists	2	-	
		patrons	2	-	

Table 4.14. Examples of impersonal reader mentions per category

It is interesting to note that among each category there are different mentions, each one depicting readers with specific distinguishing features. References to a "general" audience are the most common in the corpus. Especially for UK-EN museums, the "general" reader usually seems to coincide with the "general" visitor, i.e. somebody planning a visit to the museum and probably looking for information for the visit. Other

references belonging to this group show the variety of representation of the "general" audience: we can find "citizens" — probably including local people living in the town where the museum is located — but also "tourists" and "visitors from around the world", referring to people coming from other towns or countries. Another interesting example within this category is "customers", which defines visitors as people buying and thus paying for a product or a service at the museum, whereas "guests" identifies them as people who are invited to visit the museum and spend some time there for entertainment or other purposes — which may also imply that the museum is not their house and thus does not belong to them.

Mentions of intended readers which may be typical of university museums include students, from either schools and universities, academic scholars and the university staff more in general.

References to people that do not belong to the academic world and have different ages are also found, such as children, young people, families in general and elderly. As previously mentioned, these references could reinforce the idea that museums are for everybody who wants to learn and to enjoy the collections.

Explicit mentions are also made to people with a range of disabilities, such as people with limited mobility and blind people. UK-EN texts display more mentions to disability and a greater variety of expressions, which include more nuanced, vague and "politically-correct" forms, such as "visitors with additional needs" and "those who need disabled access", as well as references to carers and groups of people with disabilities. EU-EN texts do not display such uses, but seem to stick to very direct mentions, such as "disabled people" or "the blind". Finally, references to wheelchairs and pushchairs were found in both UK-EN and EU-EN texts.

Other mentions which do not fit into the groups outlined above are references to people working for the museum ("volunteers") or contributing to the museum's activities from a financial point of view ("patrons", "sponsors") or by being members ("cardholders"). "Journalists" is also used in order to invite people from the press to contact the museum and promote their activities. Apart from "cardholders", these mentions were only found in the UK-EN texts.

Figure 4.22 shows the presence of references from each category of reader mentions in the three micro-genres. "About" pages seem to refer more to the "general"

audience, students and academics, as well as "other" readers, such as volunteers and sponsors. "Collection" pages include few impersonal reader mentions, which are mainly references to the "general" reader/visitor and academics or university staff, who may be interested in finding more details about the collections. Finally, "Information" pages are rich in references aimed at different categories, i.e. groups, general visitors, students, as well as children and families. An interesting fact is that references to disabled people are only found in one micro-genre, i.e. "Information" pages, while all the other categories of references appear at least once in the other micro-genres as well. Although this may not be surprising, it signals that discourse on disability is not evenly distributed on museum websites, but rather occupies a very limited, fixed space, which corresponds to pages which are supposed to provide practical details on the museum accessibility.
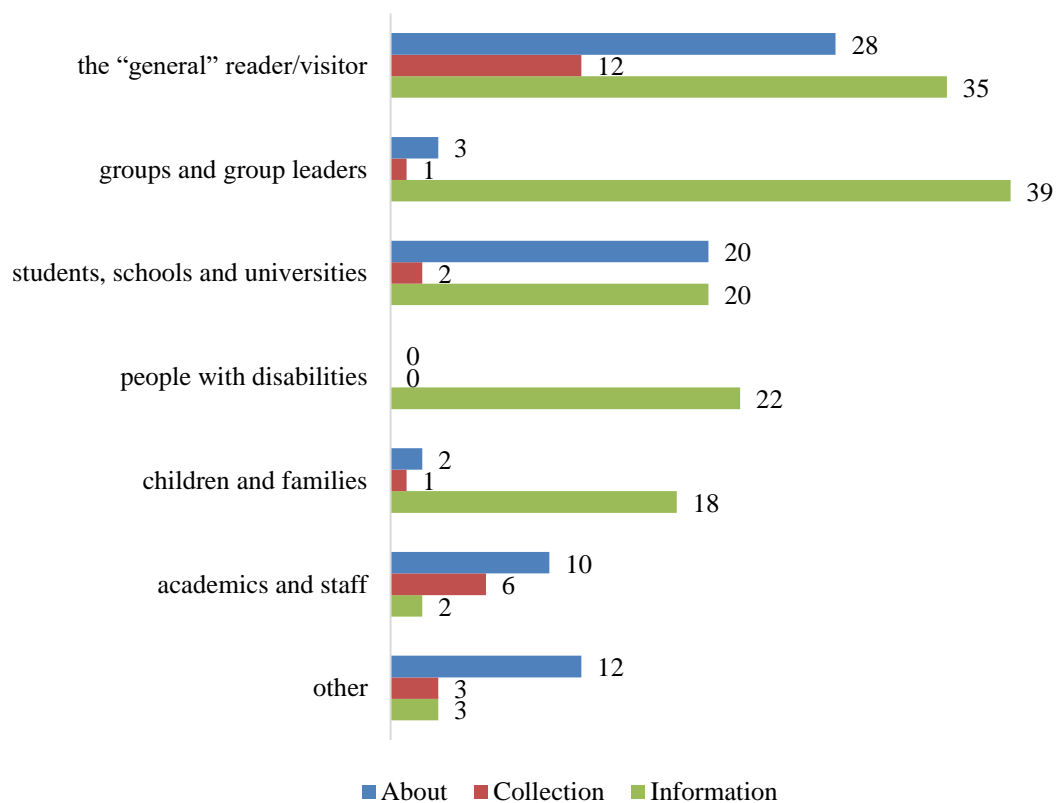
Figure 4.22. Frequencies of occurrences per categories in each micro-genre

Directives

As far as directives are concerned, the frequency of this feature is much higher in the UK-EN texts (15.0%) than in the EU-EN texts (5.2%). Figure 4.23 highlights that "Information" pages are the richest in directives, both for UK-EN and EU-EN websites. As already mentioned, this micro-genre needs to be very interactive and tell readers what they need to know for the visit: hence, pages are filled with imperatives, modal

verbs of obligation and other structures inviting readers to perform specific actions and telling them what they need to do before visiting the museum, as well as what they can or cannot do during their visit.
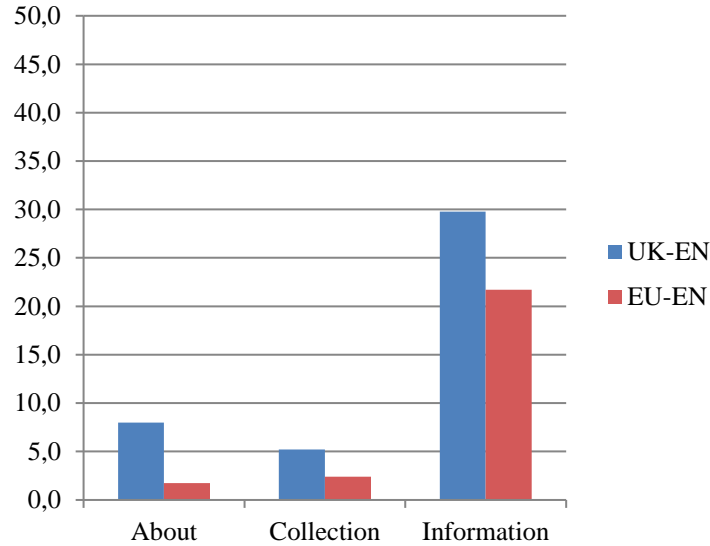
Figure 4.23. Percentage of directives

Instances of directives were identified as introducing different types of act, either textual, cognitive or physical ones (Hyland, 2008). Figure 4.24 illustrates that most of the directives found in the corpus introduce physical acts. Physical acts are more frequent in the EU-EN texts, while textual and cognitive acts are more frequent in the UK-EN texts.
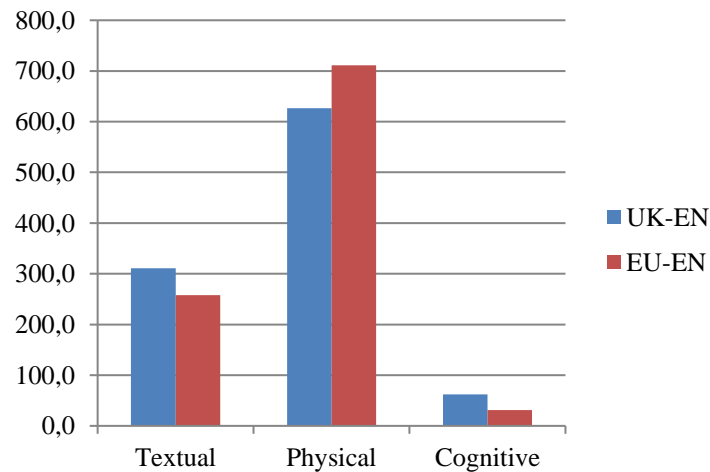
Figure 4.24. Percentage of directives per type over total number of directives

Physical acts involve a variety of actions, which may take place before, during or after the visit. Examples of physical acts are shown in Table 4.15.

Type of action		Example	Text
Actions to be performed before the visit	(63)	please do ***book*** in advance	UK_CB4_IN2
Actions to be performed during the visit at the museum	(64)	***we ask*** you not to take cover under trees during stormy and windy weather	EUS_HR_CO2
Actions which are not specifically related to the visit	(65)	***Make*** a donation today	UK_MA2_AB2

Table 4.15. Types and examples of physical acts

Textual acts are invitations to read texts, normally constructed through the use of links directing to those texts, which may be of different types, as indicated in Table 4.16. The most typical link labels introducing textual acts in the corpus include "see", "view", "read more", "find out", "find out more about", "click", "click here", "go to", "explore", "discover more about", "learn more about", "take a look at" and "check". Textual acts are more frequently adopted by UK-EN than EU-EN museums, and are especially common on "Information" pages of UK-EN websites, where practical information tends to be divided into different chunks and different pages, as mentioned while reporting results from the web writing analysis related to the frequency of links (Section 4.3.1.1).

Type of text		Example	Text
Another part of the same page	(66)	***Read*** more below	EUG_DK_IN1
Another page on the same website	(67)	please ***go*** to the School Visits information page	UK_CB2_IN3
Another website	(68)	***See*** GMT metrolink website for further details	UK_MA1_IN2
Document (not a web page)	(69)	***view*** The University Museum's collection management policy (PDF in Finnish only)	EUF_FI_CO1

Table 4.16. Types and examples of textual acts

Cognitive acts introduced by directives are very rare in the corpus and are used to invite readers to pay attention to something they need to know. The majority of the cognitive acts are found on "Information" pages, and seem to be used to highlight the importance of the information provided. In the example 70, the same information could have been framed as a physical act (e.g. "Students under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult" or "An adult must accompany students under the age of 18"). The directive introducing a cognitive act is a rhetorical device employed to remark that a piece of information is noteworthy and the action to be performed is essential.

	Example	Text
(70)	Please *make sure* that students under the age of 18 are accompanied by an adult	UK_CB2_IN3
(71)	Please *be aware* that parking in Cambridge city centre can be expensive.	UK_CB3_IN1
(72)	Please *note* that as we are often working with groups in the museum, we may not be able to get back to you immediately.	UK_CB4_IN3

Table 4.17. Examples of cognitive acts

The use of cognitive acts is more frequent in the UK-EN group, especially in "Information" texts: the strategy of remarking the significance of the information through the use of phrases such as "please make sure", "please be aware" and "please note" seems to be linked with the idea of preparing readers and making them aware of possible unpleasant events, as suggested in Section 4.3.2.1 (use of hedges and attitude markers with a negative connotation). Examples of such strategy (73, 74) show that directives introducing cognitive acts on UK-EN "Information" pages may also be used in combination with hedges ("*can* be expensive" and "we *may* not be able"): clusters of these features seem to stress the need for considering the possibility of a negative situation, e.g. having to pay a lot for parking or having to wait for a reply from the museum. UK-EN museums feel the need to prepare the reader to "the worst case scenario" and to implicitly suggest actions which are supposed to prevent this possibility from happening.

The directives in the corpus are realised through different lexico-grammatical structures. Table 4.18 reports a few examples of directives to show different structures found in the texts. The organisation of modal verbs follows the classification used by Biber (1999: 495). The examples in the table are a sample of the cases observed: the selection aims to represent the variety found in the corpus by showing occurrences from both EU-EN and UK-EN for each structure. As several different modals and semi-modals of obligation were found, an example for each of them (either in the affirmative or in the negative form) is reported.

Structure		Example	Text
Predicative adjectives controlling a complement *to-/that-* clause	(73)	*It is FORBIDDEN to*: pick, damage, collect and steal plants, fruits, seeds and all other plant parts	EUS_HR_IN2
	(74)	*It is NECESSARY to*: accompany the children and have them under supervision at all times	EUS_HR_IN2
	(75)	*it is essential that* you plan	UK_CB1_IN2
	(76)	*It is interesting to* note	UK_ON2_IN1
Imperatives	(77)	*Join* our workshop	EUS_CZ_CO1
	(78)	*Book* a guided tour	EUG_SE_IN2
	(79)	Please *be aware* that the Whipple Museum is part of a working University teaching department	UK_CB3_IN3
	(80)	Please *do not bring* into the Museum any large items	UK_CB4_IN1
Modals and semi-modals of obligation	(81)	Groups with more than 10 persons *have to* announce	EUG_AT_IN1
	(82)	These restorative operations have given back to us a museum that *ought to* be visited as one of the few examples of 19th century scientific museology	EUR_IT_AB3
	(83)	Bags *should* be left at the information desk before you visit the House	UK_CB1_IN1
	(84)	Photographs taken by visitors *must not* be reproduced or published	UK_CB2_IN1
	(85)	All groups will *need to* be booked at least one week in advance	UK_CB4_IN2
Modals and semi-modals of permission or possibility	(86)	You *can* also browse the collections online.	EUF_FI_CO1
	(87)	Umbrellas *may not* be taken into the galleries	UK_CB4_IN1
Modals of prediction	(88)	you *will* have a better understanding of one of the most ancient industries	EUR_PT_AB1
	(89)	The group leader *will* also be responsible for any storage keys	UK_CB4_IN2
Performative verbs expressing advice, request or permission	(90)	*Recommended* from age 5	EUG_SE_IN2
	(91)	By the end of visiting hours all visitors *are asked* to leave the Garden	EUS_HR_IN1
	(92)	Buggies *are allowed* in all galleries	UK_CB4_IN1
	(93)	We *advise* booking well in advance as slots book up very quickly	UK_ON1_IN2

Table 4.18. Structures and examples of directives

Few instances of directives are implicit invitations to perform an action considered as "essential", e.g. "booking *is essential*" (UK_MA1_IN3) or "The application *is to* contain the following information" (EUG_SE_AB3), without using one of the structures described above.

As shown in Figure 4.25, most of the directives found are built by using imperatives, which serve to trigger specific reactions from the reader. The majority of

them are used to introduce physical acts (196 occurrences), followed by textual (118) and cognitive acts (20). Imperatives are more frequent in UK-EN than in EU-EN, while most of the instances of all the other structures for constructing directives — i.e. predicative adjectives controlling a complement *to-/that-* clause, modals or semi-modals and performative verbs expressing advice, request or permission — are found in the EU-EN texts. This shows that the UK-EN and the EU-EN texts display different strategies used to engage readers and encourage them to perform specific actions.

In particular, predicative adjectives are almost absent in the UK-EN texts, while they are used in the EU-EN "Information" texts to introduce physical acts as suggestions or prohibitions for the visit, e.g. "*it is most convenient to* enter through the main building's western entrance" (EUF_FI_IN1) or "*It is FORBIDDEN to*: pick, damage, collect and steal plants, fruits, seeds and all other plant parts" (EUS_HR_IN2). The second example shows a list of actions and the use of capital cases to highlight that the actions are forbidden.
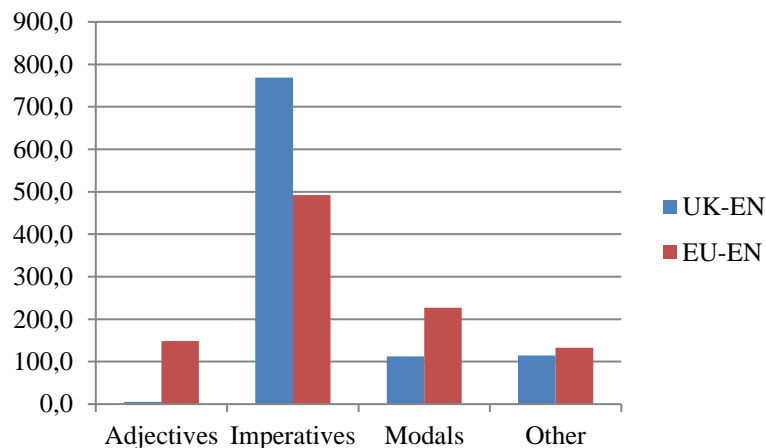
Figure 4.25. Normalised percentage of directives per lexico-grammatical structure over total number of directives

Questions

Finally, questions are not a common device used to create engagement with the readers in the corpus, as only 51 questions were found. The EU-EN texts (1.2%) display more questions than the UK-EN texts (0.8%). However, most of the occurrences of questions in the EU-EN texts (i.e. 25 over 30 total questions) are from one text from an individual museum (EU_CZ_CO1), which cannot be representative of the EU-EN group and may be considered as an exception. On the contrary, the 21 occurrences found in the UK-EN texts are more evenly distributed across 17 texts.

Figure 4.26 reveals the percentages of questions in each micro-genre. Most of the instances of questions on "Collection" pages are found in the EU-EN texts (especially the above-mentioned EU_CZ_CO1), while the frequency of questions on "About" and "Information" pages is higher for UK-EN museums than EU-EN museums. UK-EN museums tend to use questions more on "About" and "Information" pages than "Collection" pages. On the one hand, "About" pages display questions used as a promotional device to arouse readers' curiosity towards the museum and its collections, thus inviting them to continue exploring the website and the physical museum. On the other hand, "Information" pages tend to have a higher degree of interactivity, as already mentioned: they seek to guess what information is needed by readers and thus offer it in the form of a question. Very rarely do UK-EN museums use this strategy on "Collection" pages, which do not tend to create a direct dialogue with readers.
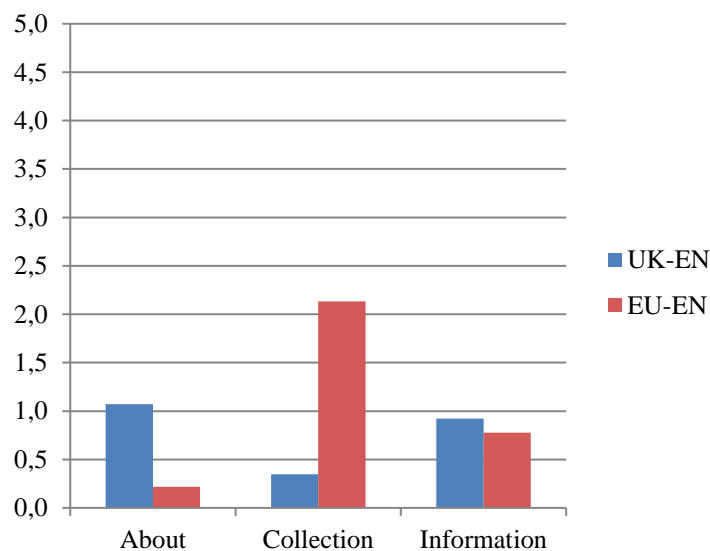
Figure 4.26. Percentage of questions

As far as types of questions are concerned, both informative and interactive questions are found in the corpus, although informative questions are more common. A few examples of informative questions are provided in Table 4.19.

	Example	**Text**
(94)	What are botanical gardens and what do they do?	EUS_HR_AB1
(95)	Where are we located? Botanical garden of the Department of Biology (Faculty of science) makes southern part of Zagreb's lower town Green or Lenuzzi horseshoe.	EUS_HR_IN1
(96)	Can we confirm if the patient could survive this operation? Even you will learn how to answer these questions with the help of real trephinated skulls.	EUS_CZ_CO1
(97)	What's new at the University Museum of Zoology? The new Whale Hall, designed especially to house our 21 metre long Fin whale, forms an impressive entrance to the Museum.	UK_CB2_AB1
(98)	But why do we go to all this effort to catalogue and care for this huge collection? The specimens we hold are a record of life on earth collected over the past 200 years, all too many from animals now that are extinct.	UK_CB2_CO1
(99)	Why keep the old labels? The labels are an important feature of the Museum's displays. Each object has a tag with basic information about it, including its unique 'accession' number to help staff keep track of it in the Museum's records.	UK_ON2_AB2

Table 4.19. Examples of informative questions

Question 94 is a gateway to introduce a topic and thus provide information regarding botanical gardens and their activities: its aim is to present information in a more interesting and compelling way. Through question 95, the museum seems to guess possible enquiries from readers who are interested in visiting the museum, and thus offers practical information for the visit through the use of questions. In example 97, asking "what's new" serves as an excuse to show the reader there is something new in the first place, thus expressing a specific attitude within the question, which encourages the reader to visit the museum.

Question 96 introduces the possibility to explain that visitors can find answers to these questions at the museum. In particular, the sentence following the question contains a booster ("even") to highlight that this is not just for experts: anyone — even the readers, whoever they are — can find answers to this question. This conveys an implicit message, i.e. if the readers visit the museum they will learn more about the facts mentioned, thus assuming that such facts will be described in a form that will be easily comprehensible for anybody: the intention is to spark the readers' interest and create expectations on what they may learn.

Question 98 seeks to meet the needs of the visitors who may feel something does not make sense in the work carried out by the museum staff. The institution takes a specific stance by providing a clarification on the approach adopted and explaining the rationale underpinning it. Along the same lines, question 99 seems to prevent possible

criticisms, and try and guess visitors' assumptions, reactions or questions about the display and interpretation of the collection by providing answers and clarifications on the curatorial choices made and the general museographical approach adopted by the museum itself.

Interactive questions tend to be more frequent in the UK-EN texts. Examples of interactive questions are provided in Table 4.20.

	Example	Text
(100)	Would you like to be guided through the ongoing temporary exhibition or the permanent exhibitions or both?	EUG_SE_IN2
(101)	Would you like to make your own mask? Join our workshop!	EUS_CZ_CO1
(102)	Want to dig deeper? Contact us if you would like to explore our collection in greater depth, talk to an expert or would like to find out more about our research and how you can get involved.	UK_MA1_AB1
(103)	Thinking of volunteering or working in the arts? We'd love to hear from you.	UK_MA2_AB3

Table 4.20. Examples of interactive questions

Question 102 invites the reader to perform an action, i.e. find out more about the museum by contacting it. It is an interactive question as it does not provide information about something, but rather seems a hidden directive, in that it invites readers to look for information. Also, the choice of the verb "dig" and the structure of the question omitting the subject ("*Do you* want to dig deeper?") make it sound very informal. There were many questions similar to this one in the UK-EN texts. Question 103 is another example of question that seems an implicit directive: the museum is saying that if the reader is thinking of volunteering or working in a museum, they should get in touch with them. It is an invitation to find information about volunteering and thus considering it. Question 100 and 101 are somewhat more formal than the previous interactive questions shown, but have the same aim, i.e. inviting the reader to do something, in these cases joining a guided tour of the exhibitions or a workshop.

However, in certain cases the distinction between informative and interactive questions is somewhat problematic, as some of the questions in the corpus display features of both types. These questions are considered as hybrid. A few examples are shown in Table 4.21.

	Example	Text
(104)	Have you ever seen artificially deformed skulls? There were always ethnic groups that considered the natural shape of the skull not aestethical and therefore tried to deform skulls of their children by using different tablets or dressings. Academic painter Foita's collection shows an artistic representation of African tribes' life (pele-pele, mutilations, sculptures).	EUS_CZ_CO1
(105)	Are you a visitor with special or additional needs, or are a carer of a visitor with additional needs? Download our access information.	UK_ON2_IN1

Table 4.21. Examples of hybrid questions

Question 104 directly addresses the reader by asking a personal question, which is not informative per se, although the text following it seems to provide information related to the collection. The underlying message is that visitors can see deformed skulls at the museum. Question 105 seeks to engage with a specific type of intended readers, i.e. disabled visitors, and provides them with information related to access.

Interim summing up

In summary, the UK-EN texts display more stance features than the EU-EN texts do, apart from hedges, which may serve either as academic writing devices to enhance cultural credibility or to leave a space for readers to evaluate the information provided so that they can construct their own understanding. On the contrary, UK-EN texts display a wider use of features such as boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions which contribute to creating a specific institutional identity — usually very positively connotated. Apparently, expressing stance is more important for UK-EN museums as a strategy for constructing the institutional identity and promoting it. Among stance features, attitude markers and self-mentions were the most common in both groups.

Reader mentions and directives are the most common engagement devices in the corpus, and they are used more by UK-EN museums than EU-EN museums. In particular, "Information" pages are the richest in both reader mentions and directives. Questions are not widely used, as they are found in only 21 texts. Interactive features are very common in UK-EN texts, which directly address readers to foster a relationship and create a dialogue with them: this is done either by adopting (often impersonal) references to intended readers within the texts in order to catch their attention or through the use of directives to guide and invite them to perform specific actions.

The next chapter is devoted to the presentation of the themes emerged from the qualitative interviews carried out in a subset of the museums.

5 Results of the qualitative interviews

5.1 Overview of the chapter

This chapter outlines the results of the qualitative interviews, by separately discussing the themes emerging from the UK-EN interviews (Section 5.2) and the EU-EN interviews (Section 5.3). Interviews were carried out to address the following research question and sub-questions:

3. What is the intended audience for whom university museums in Europe write texts in English on their websites?

3.1. Who is involved in the writing process of these texts?

3.2. Do the people involved display awareness of the possible need to address a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous audience when writing these texts?

3.3. If evidence of such need arises, to what extent does it influence the way in which these texts are written?

The main insights gained from the interviews conducted with the UK-EN and EU-EN participants are presented separately for a number of reasons. First, as mentioned in Section 3.4.2.1, the UK-EN and the EU-EN were treated at all times as two different contexts where English is supposed to have a different status (i.e. official language vs. international language). Second, the UK-EN interviews involved many participants from two institutions from the same country, while the EU-EN interviews included a smaller number of participants representing different institutions from different countries. Finally, different interview guides (cf. Section 3.5.3.3) were used for the two contexts, thus aiming to explore different topics related to the research questions. Therefore, UK-EN interviews and EU-EN interviews were carried out and analysed separately, although the former have partially informed the latter as the UK-EN interviews took place before the EU-EN ones.

The report of the results for both contexts is organised by theme. Data extracts are used as direct quotes to better describe themes and give voice to participants. Quotes have been edited for clarity in the cases where pauses and other features typical of spoken language make reading and understanding more difficult. Data between square brackets have been added by the researcher where the co-text provided was not

sufficient to make the extract understandable, e.g. when deictic are used. Bold is used to highlight key words in the data extracts. "I" stands for interviewer and "P" for participant. In the cases where the extracts may make it easy for readers to potentially identify a participant, part of the extract is omitted in order to protect their anonymity: empty square brackets are used in these cases. The same convention is used to remove segments of data that are not relevant for the point being made.

A final note is in order concerning the use of "quantifying language", i.e. expressions used to describe trends in the data. It is important to note that terms referring to quantities are only used to provide some indication of the strength of a theme. As a matter of fact, the use of frequencies is not common in qualitative research, as some scholars claim that "frequency does not determine value" (Braun & Clarke, 2013: 376).

5.2   UK-EN interviews

The thematic analysis of the data collected through the UK-EN interviews (cf. Section 3.5.4.2) highlighted five major themes. Every theme — apart from the second and the third ones — is divided into a number of sub-themes, as follows:

1. A shoot in the dark: a heterogeneous and vague intended audience;
    1.1. Referring to the audience: variety and ambiguity;
    1.2. Defining variety in terms of prior knowledge: experts and non-experts;
    1.3. Defining variety in terms of cultural and linguistic background: L1/L2 speakers of English;
    1.4. Defining variety in terms of origin/location: local vs. global/international audience;
    1.5. Audience representation in the collection and co-production of meanings;
2. Being a university museum: sense of belonging vs. autonomy;
3. One for all, all for one: writing texts for the website;
4. The website and the information provided;
    4.1. Evaluation of the website;
    4.2. "Useful" and "basic" information offered;
    4.3. Top-three most important pages on the website;
5. Language use and linguistic awareness;
    5.1. Conforming to style guides;

5.2. Describing language use;

5.3. Writing for translation.

Interim summing-ups are provided for themes including sub-themes, in order to bring together the different aspects discussed.

As already mentioned in Section 3.5.3.2, the acronyms used to indicate the participants refer to the belonging institution: "MM" refers to Manchester Museum, "WG" stands for Whitworth Gallery and "MW" is used if the participant works in both institutions. In Table 5.1 participants are identified by the team to which they belong, rather than their specific job role.

Collections	Learning & Engagement	Marketing & Communications	Visitor Team
MM2	WG2	MM3	MM1
MW3	WG3	MW2	MW1
WG1			

Table 5.1. UK-EN participants divided per team

5.2.1 Theme 1. A shoot in the dark: a heterogeneous and vague intended audience

The first theme captures a central concept in relation to the research question concerning who the intended audience of the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth is when they produce texts for their websites. As this theme is quite wide, the narrative around it is organised into a number of sub-sections in order to facilitate reading. Firstly, the expressions used by participants to refer to the museum and gallery audience are reported to present insights on how they naturally "label" their audience, which suggests great variety, but also ambiguity. Secondly, the heterogeneity of the audience depiction is highlighted in terms of: prior knowledge, i.e. experts vs. non experts; cultural and linguistic background, i.e. L1 vs. L2 speakers of English; origin and location, i.e. local vs. global/international audience. Finally, a sub-theme is presented, which is related to audience representation within the collection — i.e. the importance for visitors to see themselves reflected in the stories told through the collections and the role of co-production of meanings.

<u>Referring to the audience: variety and ambiguity</u>

One of the first aims during the analysis of the data collected was to understand how the participants imagine and refer to the museum and gallery audience. It is important to clarify that during the interviews I mostly used the expressions "audience", and in general I tried to adapt to the participants' way of referring to the audience by taking on the expressions they used. I report different expressions used by the participants to refer to the audience. Some of them are collective nouns, such as "audience", "community", "public" and "group": apart from "public", they can all be found both in their singular and in their plural form, which implies that there may be different groups of people to which the participants refer. In extract 1, MM1 refers to "a range of audiences", spanning from people who are interested in science to people who have never been to the museum before. This is reflected in extracts 2-4 in the comments from other participants, who mention actual visitors ("our visitors and stakeholders") but also people who are not regular visitors ("audiences that aren't coming", "potential new audiences").

(1)   I think … we want to appeal to **a range of audiences**. We want to appeal to … **people** who are super interested in science … but we also want to appeal to **people** who have never set for a museum before … or even know … what "entomology" means. [MM1]

(2)   So, we can establish who we are already attracting, but also identify which **audiences we aren't reaching**, and then think about what we do as a consequence of that. So, how do we target the **audiences that aren't coming**? [MM3]

(3)   Emerging platforms for social media … became an obvious kind of opportunity for us to … to engage in … and develop further reach for **our audiences**, and **our visitors and stakeholders**. [MW2]

(4)   […] a middle ground that we constructed … gives **new audiences** or … **potential new audiences** a bit of a grounding of what that work is […] [WG2]

These expressions, as well as others such as "a broad audience" (MW1, MW2), "different audiences" (MW2, MW3, WG3), "diverse audiences" (MM1, WG3), "multiple audiences" (WG1) and "a wider audience" (WG1), denote a vague, unclear idea of the intended audience. However, there are also cases where the audience is more explicitly defined, as participants refer to more precise groups.

The majority of the instances refer to the physical museum visitors, such as "visitors" (MM1, MM2, MM3, MW1, MW2, MW3, WG1, WG2), "physical audience" (MM2), "the audience we see in the gallery" (MW2), whereas others point to non-

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visitors who may be engaged as newcomers, such as "new audiences" (MM3, WG2), "audiences we aren't reaching" (MM3). Few specific references to online users can be found in the data, i.e. "online audience" (MM1, MW3), "mobile web audience" (MW2), and "users" (MW2, WG3). Other expressions define the audience according to the activity performed in relation to the content produced by the museum/gallery: these are "readership" (MM1, MW1), i.e. those who read their content, and "viewership" (MM1), i.e. those who view it.

Participants refer to an audience of specialists by using expressions such as "academic audience" (MM3), "research people" (MM2), "researcher" (MM2, MW2), "peers" (WG1, WG3), "scholars" (MW1). These references are counterbalanced by references to the "general audience" (MW3) or "the uninitiated" (MM2), i.e. non-specialists. Among the latter category, "school audience" (WG3), "schoolchildren" (MM2), "students" (MM1, MW1, MW2, MW3, WG2, WG3) and "learners" (MW2) can be found in the data, pointing to schools and universities. "Families" (MM1, MM2, MW1, WG2, WG3) are also commonly mentioned, as well as "child" (MW1, MW3), "children" (MM1, MM2, MW3, WG3), "teenager" (MM2), "young people" (MW1, WG1, WG3), "parenting" (WG2), "carers" (WG2), "mums and dads" (MW1).

Furthermore, participants mention local people as "audiences of Manchester" (WG2), "local audience" (MM2, MW2) and "civilians" (WG3), and among them specific cultural groups in Manchester, such as "South Asian audience" (WG2), "Chinese audience" (MM1), "Indian audiences" (WG2). However, data also include references to "people who have maybe just moved to the country" (MM1), "refugees" (MM1) and "international audience" (MW3).

A number of patterns seem to emerge which appear to be related to the participants' role within the institution, whether that is the museum or the gallery. MM1 and MW1, who are both members of the Visitor Team, show a preference for the terms "people", "visitors" and "communities", while they use "public" and "users" less than the other participants. This may suggest that both of them have a strong focus on the people visiting the museum or gallery.

MM1 and WG1 think of the potential visitors when they write texts for the website. A potential visitor can be somebody who may want to visit the collection and needs to know if the museum is accessible to them, e.g. people with wheelchairs.

Both WG2 and WG3, who are part of the Learning and Engagement Team, favour "audiences" and "students", rather than the more generic "public", which is never used by them.

MM3 and MW2 have a different perspective than the former participants. This might be due to the fact that they are both part of the Digital Communications Department: apart from the very common "audiences" and "visitors", they refer to "users", which is a web-related term.

Although MM2 and WG1, who are both curators, do not show any particular common pattern, they never speak about "students", "users" or "schools", but they rather prefer referring to "visitor", "community" and "people". In particular, WG1 uses "academics" more than all the other participants, which probably shows the gallery's need for targeting that group as well.

The audience mentioned by the participants is thus varied and heterogeneous. The majority of the participants seem to agree that the audience they want to reach is vast and diverse. The participants refer to "a broad audience" (MW1, MW2), "a wider audience" (WG1), "diverse audiences" (MM1, WG3), "different audiences" (MW2, MW3, WG3), "multiple audiences" (WG1), "more audiences" (MM3) and "new audiences" (MM3, WG2).

These instances partially suggest the great variety of individuals that the participants imagine as an audience. However, heterogeneity is also accompanied by a vague, loose definition of that audience. Extracts 5-7 may indicate that participants do not have a precise idea as to the audience they are targeting: apparently, they wish to engage with a broad, undefined array of people.

(5) So, I think, what we're trying to do is have our overall tone, and have our overall language, but also be able to … kind of really connect with **various people**. And that's what the website should be doing. [MW1]

(6) I guess by inclusion what I mean is … that we can appeal to **the broadest sense of … people** as we can. [MM1]

(7) We're quite often looking at exhibition making, at programming, at … lectures and things like that, and how we can make them more accessible to **a broader sense of … broader range of people**. [WG2]

MM3, MW1 and MM2 offer a very broad and vague representation of the audience they have in mind when they write contents online, which spans from people living in Manchester to tourists, from families to academics and students, from children

to elderly people. The impression is that they do not have a clear idea of their audience, let alone of a possible multicultural audience.

> (8) […] the website is aimed at our **general visitors**, … so the picture of the visitor that we already have … and- so that would be **somebody who … lives in Manchester** or Greater Manchester … or **a tourist** who's looking to get some information about what we do at the museum generally. … So, those are the audiences that we talk to on the website. [MM3]

> (9) I think we are trying to … connect with **as many people as possible**, but we know certain areas of the website need to be more directed at, you know, **young families**, you know, mums and dads in certain areas, and then, you know, **scholars** in certain areas, and **MA students**. So, I think, what we're trying to do is have our overall tone, and have our overall language, but also be able to … kind of really connect with various people. [MW1]

> (10) Personally […] I would think about **research people**, who […] want technical information about some of the collection … and then … **school children** … of all ages, people doing school projects … and then **the general visitor**. And by general visitor I count anyone from **a teenager** not doing a school project to **a retired person**. So I see them as specialists (researcher), school (researcher), which is still, you know, a form of research … wanting particular information … and then the general public, who want to visit, or … on a very general level want to find out more about the collection. [MM2]

MW3 mentions SPECTRUM,[1] the UK collection management standard for museums developed by Collections Trust, also including guidelines for documentation and cataloguing. In reference to this standard, MW3 claims that there is no instruction on the audience to be targeted in museum texts. The personification of the user depends on the individual institution and its staff.

> (11) I would say that **within the guidelines they don't mention … the who you are writing it for**. It is very much more of an internal guideline, rather than … writing with any audience outside in mind. I feel that they leave that bit up to the institutions to decide. [MW3]

The intended audience thus appears to be varied but also ill-defined: the data analysed seem to suggest that participants do not have a clear idea of their intended audience, probably because scarce attention has been paid defining it, especially in relation to the production of texts for the website.

Defining variety in terms of prior knowledge: experts and non-experts

The participants who work at the museum commented on the variety of people addressed in terms of their expected prior knowledge on the collection: apparently, the museum strives to reach both an academic, specialist audience and a non-specialist,

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[1] See SPECTRUM page on the Collections Trust website: https://collectionstrust.org.uk/spectrum/.

non-expert audience. As shown in extracts 12-15, MM1, MM2 and MM3 refer to both an academic and a non-academic audience, highlighting the importance of a balance between the two. In particular, it is noteworthy how the participants here refer to the general, non-expert visitor, namely "a non-specialist" or "the uninitiated".

(12)   […] we need to make sure that we engage our **academic audiences** as well. [MM3]

(13)   We're a museum for … **anyone, not just students or staff**. [MM1]

(14)   So again, some of our audiences might not necessarily understand what entomology is, they might **not be an academic audience** … but they are … people who are interested in our collections […] [MM3]

(15)   […] So, you should keep "canopic jar". Although it is a technical term […] [and] add a definition because the context should make it clear for **the uninitiated**, or you could make a rough case, and for most people they will have a rough idea […] [MM2]

Defining variety in terms of cultural and linguistic background: L1/L2 speakers of English

The description of the target audience is thus diversified. However, the question is whether diversity is also expressed in cultural and linguistic terms, i.e. whether a multicultural audience is taken into account. Extract 16 is a reference to local, multicultural audiences.

(16)   […] I think about 13% of our local audiences is of **South Asian heritage**. […] [WG1]

Almost all of the participants, apart from MW3, mention a South Asian audience, which is a strong community in Manchester in terms of demographics, as reported by the Census 2011.[2] Other specific non-English communities are also mentioned, i.e. Chinese, Indian, Italian, Sudanese and Syrian ones. In extract 17, MM1 refers to "people who have maybe just moved to the country", such as "refugees", and expresses concern about their linguistic competence. To him, who is part of the Visitor Team, this translates into a need to help these people when welcoming them into the museum, e.g. by speaking slowly and using gestures.

(17)   But also when we started talking about our language tours, we thought: actually, should we produce- do an English tour … for **people who have maybe just moved to the country** or … and maybe like for example **refugees**, **who might not know English very well** … and that would be the very … kind of similar in

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[2] See the Census 2011 data on the website of the Office for National Statistics: https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011census/2011censusdata.

> terms of speaking very slowly and … again using gestures and thinking about **people who don't know English that well** … but maybe who want to learn English or you know what I mean. [MM1]

This may show that local visitors with different cultural backgrounds are taken into consideration, although attention seems to be paid only to physical visitors. When explicitly prompted to talk about multicultural audiences, MM3 defines engaging with them as a "real priority" and mentions a few ways in which they are trying to do so and attract them to their website, e.g. by using social media. However, she does not explain how they intend to use social media to engage particularly with multicultural audiences.

> (18) I: According to you, how do you try to engage with multicultural audiences?
>
> P: That's **a real priority for us**. And if those audiences aren't already engaged, they're not going to be looking at our website, because they don't know who we are. […] So, thinking about our outreach and engagement activities, and thinking about how we can … target new audiences online through social media or through … different digital platforms: it might be news platforms, or … other arts and culture platforms, for people who are **different minorities and ethnic backgrounds**. So, we're already thinking about things that we put in place … to engage audiences, and then as a consequence hopefully they'll come and visit our website. [MM3]

MW2 seems to point out a basic resemblance between the physical audience and the audience they target online, stressing that in both cases it is "a very multicultural audience". He also stresses the importance of adapting content to a specific target audience, and thus having different contents on the website according to the intended readership. However, whether these contents are also written in a different way is not made explicit. WG2 seems to imply the opposite when he states that all the pages on the gallery's website are written in the same way. The gallery does not tailor language for targeted users, so observations on the audience apparently do not affect the use of language.

Few participants mention the linguistic background of the visitors as a factor that should be considered when writing (web) texts, as shown in extracts 19-21.[3] However, MM3 claims that the museum does not provide them with guidelines on how to adapt texts for people speaking English as a second language, so this does not appear to be a priority for the museum as a whole.

> (19) […] we don't have … any specific guidelines on how we should approach … looking at … how we speak to … **people whose English is a second language**. [MM3]

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[3] These extracts were not the direct response of the interviewer's prompts or questions on this issue.

(20) […] it's about trying to capture as many people as possible, so that you're not alienating anyone. And with **people with English as not their first language**, it might not translate the same […] [MW1]

(21) […] we feel probably … because we are a civic museum … **a greater proportion of visitors have English as a first language**. So, that is a consideration. […] [MM2]

Extract 21, by MM2, reveals a basic assumption underpinning the way in which he conceptualises the museum audience: he assumes that most of the physical visitors are L1 speakers because it is a civic museum, i.e. a museum that aims to engage with the local population in general. Apparently, for this reason less consideration is paid to L2 speakers of English. However, as the local population includes both L1 and L2 speakers, it is hard to understand why MM2 thinks that most of their visitors are L1 speakers of English.[4] Furthermore, here MM2 seems to think about the intended audience only in terms of actual "visitors", thus excluding non-visitors, i.e. people who do not usually visit the museum. This may partially be due to the fact that MM2 is particularly responsible for certain collections and the curatorial work including interpretive texts within the galleries, so he may be more focused on visitors than on online users.

However, MM2 is also involved in writing online texts and specifies that he does not think of a local multicultural audience when writing contents for the website, the blog and social media. While in extract 28 he refers to a "multicultural but local audience" not being his target when writing, in extract 29 he refers to users visiting the website from other countries. In the latter extract, he stresses that he knows that people from all over the world visit his blog, which is linked to the museum website but specifically addresses topics related to the collection for which he is responsible. He knows this for a fact as he has access to the statistics of the visits to his blog provided by WordPress, which also include information on the users' origin. However, despite knowing the provenance of users, he voluntarily disregards a multicultural audience and admits he does not write for that intended audience. He does say he aims to make texts "accessible", but he does not say how.

(22) […] none of my blogs or the Facebook or Twitter pages or the website pages are done with that **specific multicultural but local audience** in mind. [MM2]

(23) […] WordPress, as you probably know, gives you statistics on how the material is used, and it gives you international statistics […] **Do I consider this? Not at**

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[4] This claim does not seem to be supported by specific statistics on the museum visitors.

all. I try to make texts as accessible as possible … but **I'm not specifically writing it or thinking consciously about it being translated into** [other languages]. [MM2]

MM2 assumes that L2 scholars working in his specific area may be interested in reading the texts he wrote, and that they should know the terminology related to the field, as English works as "a lingua franca" of academic research. Implicitly, he seems to say that technical terms can be used for this reason and that language does not need to be adapted because readers have sufficient linguistic and cultural skills to understand it as L1 speakers do. No consideration is made here on L2 non-specialists, which MM2 recognises as a possibly "wrong" assumption.

(24)   […] there is an **assumption, probably a wrong one**, that … they should know … **people interested in** […] **should know** [the terminology] […] [MM2]

(25)   I guess … I assume … that often **English is the lingua franca of … of … academic exchange**, that they must … understand … English sufficiently to understand the interpretation … there. [MM2]

In a similar vein, MW3 states that although they "always" consider an international audience, they are not aware of, and not really interested in, the linguistic needs of their audience: the underlying assumption seems to be that they want to attract an international audience, but they do not think that that audience has specific linguistic needs which may differ from the needs of L1 speakers of English.

(26)   So one thing I thought about in some of those answers was that … I do feel like an **international audience is always considered**. … But it's very much about the … we know that there's **people in other countries** who may want to view our collection and can't get here obviously because of the distance … and it's about making it available. That consideration about … **they may not speak English … maybe isn't always thought about**, or isn't the first consideration. [MW3]

<u>Defining variety in terms of origin/location: local vs. global/international audience</u>

In the data collected, there is also a balance between references to a local and a global audience. MW3 refers to "people of Manchester and beyond":

(27)   It's Manchester's collection, and so making it available to the **people of Manchester and beyond** is … is part of the point. [MW3]

However, "beyond" sounds quite vague and could refer either to Greater Manchester and other areas of the UK or other countries. As a matter of fact, the same

expression is used twice in the museum's Strategic Plan for the years 2015-2018,[5] and it seems to refer to areas around Greater Manchester. Therefore, this may be part of the mission statement of the museum.

(28) By engaging a large and wide variety of users, and by working in partnership with others in **Greater Manchester and beyond**, the Museum not only contributes to the University's goal in this area, it also plays a role in the fulfilment of a range of strategies in the city-region. [Manchester Museum's Strategic Plan 2015-2018]

(29) […] we will embody the spirit of transformation in our innovative partnership work **across the city and beyond** [Manchester Museum's Strategic Plan 2015-2018]

The importance of considering a global audience is especially highlighted when the participants talk about the website and its aims, thus referring to their online audience. MM1, for instance, seems aware that the online audience may also include people who have never visited the museum before.

(30) Our online audience isn't restricted to the people who've walked through the doors […] **our online audience is global**. [MM1]

(31) I have said for a long time the website is very important because … a lot of **off-site people remotely** access it. [MM2]

(32) […] you have the people who you think are gonna come and visit, who might be the ones who are already visiting and using it as an extra tool, or **people from all over the world** who are accessing it and coming through, so you have to be very mindful of who it is. [MW1]

A few conflicting comments on the international profile of the audience can also be found. When asked about the depiction of the online audience, MM2 imagines the online user as a reflection of the physical visitor. Nevertheless, according to MM2, although the museum website may be visited at a global level by international users (most of them researchers), the physical audience visiting the museum is not very international. This statement, however, does not appear to be supported by precise data, but it is rather an assumption of the participant.

(33) Honestly, I think of … well, I think of the general visitor and the school visitor in terms of … I assume … school visitors … are going to be … fully local, but probably … UK-based … although I know they're not: they can be … **international website visitors** who are not locally-based. I think of the **most specialist researchers** … as potentially the **most international** […] [MM2]

(34) […] for our physical audience, **we do not have as international a profile** as for example the British Museum. [MM2]

MW2 also refers to an international audience, and MM1 considers it while talking about in-gallery guided tours in other languages meant for physical visitors coming from abroad. In particular, MM1 acknowledges that there may be a need for adapting texts for international visitors, not only in terms of language but also in terms of contents.

(35) […] it would be ideal to be able to serve the **international community** better with a better representation language-wise […] [MW2]

(36) And then more advanced ones [tours] … would be for … I guess our **international visitors**, people who know the language really well … and maybe the content would be different as well. [MM1]

<u>Audience representation in the collection and co-production of meanings</u>

Some of the participants (MM1 and MM2 from the museum, WG2 and WG3 from the gallery) discuss the issue of audience representation within the collection, which is closely related to that of the audiences targeted by the museum. According to Sturge (2007: 130), the museum itself is a form of translation and mediation meant as a "representation of cultures". A museum can more easily talk to and engage with the people whose culture is represented in its collection, as they see themselves represented in that context and thus feel included. For instance, a collection which only includes art produced in the Western world can be assumed to be problematic if a gallery wants to engage with black and minority ethnic groups (BME), since they may not see themselves represented in the collection, and thus feel alienated and excluded. Representing a culture in a collection and co-creating exhibitions with people with different cultural backgrounds means giving voice to different cultures.

In general, the participants stress the wide range of cultures represented in their collections. In extract 37, MM1 claims that although texts written by the museum are not offered in different languages, cultural diversity is a feature characterising the museum collection. To follow up on this, I asked him about specific pages within the website addressing multicultural audiences. He answers saying that probably there are not specific pages for multicultural audiences, but adds that the collection itself speaks to people from different cultures as it includes objects "from different … part of the world". Later in the interview, he adds that the museum is going through a process of redevelopment which will also involve the creation of a gallery on South Asian art: this seems to suggest that this process will enable the museum to be more representative of the cultural diversity which is inherent in the city's social fabric.

(37) So … whilst it may not be … the language as diverse … the languages that we would like them to be in … we're still … speaking about the importance of … the **different cultures that are represented** in our collection. [MM1]

The participants from the Whitworth shared similar thoughts on their collection. WG2 explains that the programme of exhibitions developed by the gallery is very diverse: in extract 38, he claims that it involves artists from different cultural backgrounds to co-create exhibitions, and thus it represents and engages with different cultures.

(38) So, even not in a language sense, actually, just … the tone … the works in an exhibition … the way that we approach exhibition-making should … lean more towards **different cultures or different backgrounds**, because that's reflected in who's actually making the content, not just who's … translating the content made by a kind of white European … voice. [WG2]

Finally, when asked about the contents on the website, WG3 provides a similar opinion to MM1 saying that there are not specific pages written for multicultural communities, in particular South Asian communities. He also stresses the importance of images: according to him, through images people visiting the websites "can see themselves reflected in what they see". This, however, assumes that images can ideally relate to a wide variety of people, who can see themselves represented in them.

(39) I think, again, **through images and through pictures people can see themselves reflected in what they see**, so they kind of always see themselves mirrored in what they see, rather than read, I think. [WG3]

These extracts possibly suggest that staff from both institutions pay more attention to cultural representation within the collection rather than language use in order to engage with different cultural communities without alienating and excluding them. The focus is on the collections themselves and on organising exhibitions and events in co-production with those communities in order to interpret the stories involved and create meanings collaboratively.

Interim summing up

Overall, the perception of the intended audience is very heterogeneous and diverse, in that participants refer to different types of audiences and convey the message that they would like to reach a broad range of people. However, the description of an intended audience within the data generally tends to be extremely blurred and unclear, which may suggest that there is not a strong awareness of the audience that is addressed by the two institutions. If the definition of the intended audience tends to be vague, it is even more so when it comes to the intended audience of the website. Not only is there a

tentative understanding of the audience addressed within the website, especially in terms of linguistic and cultural background, but data also cast doubts on whether a multicultural audience is being thought of in the first place. Cultural representation in the collection seems to be the major strategy through which the museum and the gallery aim to engage with a diversity of cultural communities.

5.2.2 Theme 2. Being a university museum: sense of belonging vs. autonomy

During each interview, I specifically brought up the fact that both institutions are university museums in order to explore the relationship between the museum/gallery and the university: in particular, I was interested in discussing to what extent this relationship shaped the identity of the institution and affected the intended audience and the use of language.

A question was included in the interview guide (cf. Section 3.5.3.3) which focused on the extent to which being a university museum may have an effect on the use of language online. When answering this question, most of the participants for both institutions state that they are part of the university, thus expressing a sense of belonging. MM3 acknowledges that the museum is part of the university and that their collections and activities are used for research. He also claims that the academic audience is a priority for them, but that sometimes it may be difficult to cater for that group.

> (40) […] we need to make sure that we engage our **academic audiences** as well. And that's very important to us because **we are part of the University of Manchester**, and a lot of what we do is **used for research**. And … yes, that's very important to us. So … again, about being inclusive, we have to include our academic audiences, and sometimes that can … prove problematic. [MM3]

In a similar vein, WG2 states that although the gallery is conscious of the need to target the academic community, this is not the only community they target. The fact that they belong to the university — defined as "universitiness" — further contributes to going in the other direction, i.e. "more towards communities and wider audiences". For instance, being connected with university research enables them to activate projects with schools and thus engage with non-university students.

> (41) So, we're really aware that […] to be … **relevant and usable and useful to students, academics, university users** … so, that has to inform the type of work we do and the way we present it. […] we use our "**universitiness**" to advantage when we're pointing the other way, more towards to **communities and wider audiences**, in the sense that we can connect to the university departments in terms of **research**, so … we might do shared projects and the school's

programme might be in our science collaboration, so the language they'll learn reflect that. [WG2]

MM1 also stresses that, as a museum, they "represent" the university, and thus share the same values. He points out that there is a close relationship between the two institutions, as the university is really proud of the work carried out by the museum. However, MM1 comments that he does not think that texts produced by the museum need to be validated by the university: according to him, the museum is free to produce its own texts without the need for the university's approval.

Similarly, MM2 says that being a university museum does not affect the way they write their texts online. To elaborate on this idea, he recounts that while working in partnership with other museums to create a touring exhibition, the other institutions were worried about Manchester Museum creating exhibition and online texts that were too academic. MM2 explains that although they are a university museum, their audience is not only made of scholars and students, but they also serve the same general audience as any other museum, in particular school groups and families. However, MM2 names one "disadvantage" for them, i.e. the location within the university campus, which is not in the city centre.

Comments on being part of the university also appear in other moments of the interviews, as part of the participants' answer to other questions. These insights are particularly interesting as they do not come from my own questions and prompts, but rather they are the product of the participants' own reflections on other issues. Not only is academic belonging important for MM1, but he also claims that the museum identifies itself as "a part of Manchester as a city", and thus as a public, civic museum in the first place. This is part of an answer to a question on the image that the museum wants to shape of itself on the website, so it is quite meaningful: the museum aims to convey the image of a civic museum on its website, which probably implies that it wants to be recognised as a public museum open to everybody. MM1 further acknowledges the fact that the museum also feels "separate" from the university, as it is "a museum for anyone", with its own brand and identity.

Other comments focus on brand, and more specifically on the relation between the university brand and the brands of the museum and the gallery. MW1 clearly states that their brand is the university's brand. This is quite significant: the museum and the gallery are connected and have the same image and communicative approach. Although

this view is partially shared by other participants' opinion, who confirm that the brands of the two institutions were developed along with the brand of the university, MW2 reveals that Manchester Museum and the Whitworth also have their own brand, with their own logo, which is "a sub-brand of the university's own brand". Nonetheless, MM3 points out that the university took part in the creation of the museum brand guidelines by signing them off, which means that they had to comply with the university values.

> (42) So, the University of Manchester were an integral part of helping us to … produce and **sign off the brand guidelines**, so we needed to make sure that … the University of Manchester were also happy with our brand guidelines and that it **fits within the university** as well, and that they were aware of our values, our messaging, our tone of voice, how it looks as well. So that's all being signed off by the university. [MM3]

WG3 further stresses that the university guidelines informed the "look" and "feel" of the Whitworth website: extract 43 seems to suggest that being a university museum has had an impact on the creation of the website, especially in terms of visual communication.

> (43) Because it's **part of Manchester University**, we kind of cover a little bit about how that is structured through the university. … So … **the look** and also **the feel** of it [the website] is often, you know, kind of **guided by university guidelines**. So, even if we're trying to create our own … our own … site, it is kind of governed by **university rules** too, and also the … the terminal for … the kind of server that we have to work within. [WG3]

A disadvantage which emerges is the fact that the Whitworth website had to be developed as part of the university's website. WG3 defines the gallery's website as a "micro-site" of the university, as it was built as part of the bigger academic website. As the Whitworth website was built within the same framework of the university's website, WG2 claims that the gallery was limited in its possibility of creating its own identity and being digitally "innovative". However, no further comments are made on the types of limitations faced by the Whitworth.

> (44) I'm quite critical about our website. I think we struggle at the Whitworth because obviously, we're trying to be … an international art gallery that it's relevant to … the local community, you know … trying to be a lot of things for a lot of different people … and we're quite **restrained because we sit within the framework of a website which is within the University of Manchester's broader … set-up**, so … **you can't be maybe as innovative in terms of your digital content** as maybe an independent art gallery could be. [WG2]

According to MW3, being part of the university is not an everyday thought for him. He explains that he never really thinks about the university: he normally thinks about the two institutions as "a museum" and "an art gallery", with no concerns about

their academic belonging. However, he is aware that part of the staff feels that they need to take into account the university's mission and objectives, e.g. ensuring that students can access the collections. After my follow-up question, he also answers that they do not have specific requirements from the university.

Although overall a sense of belonging to the university pervades the data, the participants acknowledge the importance of considering the two institutions not only as parts of the university, but also as a museum and a gallery per se, aiming to address both an academic and a general audience. According to the data collected, the academic and public soul co-exist both in the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth. The relationship between the museum/gallery and the affiliated university seems to be a positive one, even though some participants mention limitations related to being an academic body. As far as university guidelines are concerned, both seem to adopt the university brand, including its values and missions, but at the same time they seem to attach importance to their own identity as a separate institution. In particular, participants do not mention any university style guide that the museum and the gallery need to follow in terms of language use. However, observations more explicitly involving language — which some participants define as "academic", and thus not very accessible and appealing to non-academic audiences — will be presented in Section 5.2.5, which deals with the theme of language use.

5.2.3   Theme 3. One for all, all for one: writing texts for the website

One of the themes explored during the interviews is the process of writing texts for the website, which is a key issue for this research and is presented in this section. Data provide insights on who is involved in this process and the extent of their involvement, as well as the steps leading to the creation of these texts. Data suggest that all the participants are to some extent involved in the writing process. Furthermore, participants from both institutions seem to agree that this process is a joint effort of "collaborative text writing" (WG1), as many people from the staff contribute, and people involved vary depending on the focus of the texts.

At Manchester Museum, MM1 claims that people from different departments are involved, e.g. curators and Marketing & Communications, and that the people involved vary in each department. He explains that the Visitor Team, which is his own team, wrote the "Access" page in the "Visit" section of the museum website by

gathering information from different members of the team, while their manager was in charge of the final editing step. MW1, who also belongs to the Visitor Team, shares a similar view, adding that in both institutions all the pages get overseen by Marketing & Communications and by the Directors.

MM2, who works with Collections, provides insights on the "Collection" pages by saying that a group of curators at the museum has worked on them in consultation with each other: it was a self-editing process, and no overall editor took care of style consistency. MW3 shares a similar opinion, saying that all the curatorial staff may be involved.

MM3 from Marketing & Communications argues that "anybody related to that specific piece of information" is involved in writing: for example, the curatorial team takes care of pages on the collections, while people form Learning & Engagement write texts on outreach and schools. She further explains that the Marketing & Communications department is normally involved with general news, but is also responsible for looking at the texts written by others: she checks if changes are necessary to ensure that texts are "accessible" and "inclusive" in order to capture their "general audiences". MW2, who works in the same team, claims that members of Marketing & Communications and of the Visitor Team are the main contributors to the website, but other staff may be involved as well depending on the content — e.g. Learning & Engagement "populate their own pages". According to him, the final editing step is generally carried out by Marketing & Communications and the Directors.

At the Whitworth, WG1 from the Collections team asserts that "everybody" is involved: curators take care of the exhibition-related contents, Learning & Engagement is responsible for engagement and events, but also Marketing & Communications and the Visitor Team may be involved to some extent, as well as external people. According to her, "there's not one filter either", as "there's no one person that all texts go through", in a very "spontaneous" process. However, she explains that every text is read by at least one or two people as a minimum, who may be people within the author's team or external to it.

WG3, from the Learning & Engagement department, describes the work that his team does in relation to the website by saying that they write texts for their individual area and for the kind of audiences with whom they work: he comments that the writing

process "starts with the people who are close to civilians", then it is "re-read by other people" within the team and approved by Marketing & Communications.

WG2 basically confirms what other participants say, i.e. there are "lots of different people inputting to the one website", as the gallery does not have a team who explicitly deals with writing texts for the website. According to him, this might be "slightly problematic", but at the same time it has an advantage, as the "tone of voice […] doesn't feel too … monotonous or … robotic": he believes that using a personal style allows the website to convey "some personality", as it "feels like it's been written by a person" rather than an institution.

Multilingual people may occasionally be involved in writing texts for the website. For instance, MW1 mentions a member of staff from the Visitor Team and Collections team who can speak other languages than English, and MW3 also mentions staff from the Collections team. However, MW1 claims this is not "a standard practice", and similarly MM3 says that they do not have "any specific measures in place" as they adopt "a quite fluid approach".

More interestingly, in extract 45 WG1 describes the work that the curatorial staff carries out at the gallery on specific exhibitions which are co-produced with an external group of curators, adding that the latter do speak "multiple different languages". However, she explains that these external, multilingual curators suggested that they should not worry too much about people's possible reactions to their language use, as they cannot predict the type of "response to language" that they may get. They should, on the contrary, use language consciously and be prepared to respond to concerns by openly motivating any linguistic choice they made.

(45) P: […] the people we've consulted with have told us not to worry quite so much …. that an institution anxiety … perhaps is projecting itself onto, you know, a way of working that … yes, that it's always useful.

I: So, what do you mean by "not worrying too much"?

P: About … that kind of institutional tendency … perhaps … to … place energy … into thinking and talking … about … I guess it's about issues that have **potentially political ramifications** or … to such an extent that it becomes **paralysing**. … And actually to work with people and to use the works in the collection to make productive kind of outcomes from that without trying to … again, similar to this morning, **without trying to guess what we think people reaction will be to the language** that we're … using … to acknowledge that if we're going to explicitly talk about, or use language that might be difficult … that that's okay, and that **we can't possibly anticipate the response to language** and … that as long as we can respond thoughtfully and personally … to concerns

> or anger that people might have, that that's what we should be doing, rather than spending a huge amount of energy trying to pre-empt … response. [WG1]

Overall, the data collected consistently suggest that a variety of members of staff from the museum and the gallery contribute texts to the website depending on the contents of the texts, and thus probably their intended audience. A final editing step seems to be always carried out, but no special attention emerges from the data in relation to the need for creating a unified sense of website characterised by a single style and stance: on the contrary, some hints show that the website is intended as a collective effort with a choral voice made of different personalities.

5.2.4   Theme 4. The website and the information provided

A central focus throughout all the data is the website. A few questions aimed at exploring participants' perceptions on the website as a whole, especially in terms of its main aims and the institutional image that it is supposed to convey. These data partially reflect the participants' opinion about the type of information offered on the website, which is thought to be interesting on two different levels: first, it reveals the type of information which they consider to be important and necessary on the website; second, it provides some evidence on the intended audience for whom that piece of information is offered.

Evaluation of the website

Comments were made on the centrality of the website for both institutions nowadays. WG2 hypothesises that there is a possibility that websites are not needed anymore, as they are starting to be replaced by other platforms, such as social media, which are undermining the necessity of having websites in the cultural domain. He claims that museums and galleries having a website are perhaps "behind the curve", as they are still adopting "an old way of thinking": websites are thus implicitly described as an outdated means for communication which may be replaced by new platforms in the near future. MM2 expresses a similar assumption in extract 46 by reporting the opinion of "other people" on the museum website, while stressing that for him it is still important.

> (46)   Some other people may tell you: the website is never visited, so it's not important, but … I still think it … it is, yes. [MM2]

More specific opinions about the two websites involved (i.e. the Whitworth site and the Manchester Museum site) can also be found in the data. Some of the

participants express a negative evaluation of the belonging institution's website, in terms of either usability, navigability or information offered. MM2 complains about the museum online catalogue, which is not part of the website itself but it is strictly related to it, as it provides partial access to the collection database. According to him, the online catalogue is "not intuitive to use". However, MM2 observes that this may not be a problem of use of language per se, but rather a technical problem where language plays a partial role as well. MM2 also compares the usability of Manchester Museum's website to Liverpool World Museum's website, which he finds "much easier to use", adding that the information provided are more extended and more accessible. Unfortunately, MM2 does not elaborate on what makes information "accessible".

A common pattern in the data seems to exist, where the Whitworth website is considered very large and rich in web pages, which results in usability problems related to finding the information needed within the website. For instance, WG1 comments on "the limitations" of their website by saying that she believes it has "many many pages", which makes it difficult for users to find information, especially on exhibitions. She also vaguely mentions that the website may potentially offer something more than practical information on the exhibition, but she does not elaborate here on this point.

> (47)   Because of the limitations of our website, although it has many many pages, it's **difficult to do research or to dig deeper into an exhibition**, or to **use it as a kind of information-giving point**, rather than something perhaps more interesting, which it could be. [WG1]

WG1 better explains this by saying that the website does offer something more than practical information, namely details on how people can participate directly in the gallery's activities and be a part of the gallery itself. However, she claims that this information — which is provided on the "Getting involved" page — seems "pretty hard to find" within the website. WG1 further argues that some information related to exhibitions and events provided on the website is not always "current" — meaning that they probably do not update it regularly — and it may not be "the information that you want". This may implicitly mean that they do not know exactly what kind of information related to exhibitions and events may be interesting or necessary for their intended audience, which is perhaps a concern for her. Furthermore, she is worried about their collections not being "terribly easy to access": through this claim, she addresses a similar problem as the one raised by MM2 for Manchester Museum, i.e. the

need to improve the possibility of virtual visits to the collections on the website or on other satellite sites (such as the online catalogue).

Being part of the Visitor Team, MW1 reports the bad experience of some visitors who went to the gallery to visit an exhibition but did not know that it was closed, as they could not find that information on the gallery's website. MW1 thus indirectly points to a problem of the website, i.e. navigating it and easily finding information for the visit. The attention he pays to the information for the visit derives from his role: he is constantly in contact with visitors, who may report on problems that they encountered while planning their visit.

Some participants mention that users need to go through a number of pages before finding the necessary information. In extract 48, WG2 argues that there are "too many pages" on the website, and as a result users may feel overwhelmed by the quantity of details provided, and thus not able to navigate through them effectively. To him, some of the information provided is unnecessary, thus creating confusion and making it difficult to find other information. Unfortunately, he does not make a distinction between pages or passages which are redundant from those which need to be kept. When he refers to the number of "clicks" needed to get to a certain page to find a specific content, he seems to be thinking about the actual user experience of navigating a website and making choices about what page to open and what page to leave. However, he acknowledges that this is not a problem of language per se, and implicitly suggests that navigability and usability are the "digital language" that needs to be adopted to make the user experience a positive one. Similarly, in extract 49 WG3 seems aware that this is not a linguistic issue, but it is related to the structure and organisation of the website as a whole, which makes it difficult to find specific information. WG3 further claims that online users want to find the information they need very quickly and easily, so this is the reason why the amount of clicks needed is actually a problem in terms of usability. In other words, if users cannot find that information rapidly, they may get bored and decide to give up on trying to find it in the first place.

(48) I think there's maybe **too many pages on our website**, **so you can get … swamped in content** and language that you don't need, something is quite deep in the website in terms of **how many clicks you need to get to it**, so … I know **that's not the language**, but it's the kind of **digital language** […] [WG2]

(49) Really, for me it's the first page, but then obviously there are **lot of clicks** to get to places, so **that's not necessarily the text**, but … you know, there's **a lot of**

> **clicks** that you have to do to get to the … you know, the information about schools, or the information about young people. [WG3]

According to WG3, who works in Learning & Engagement, this is a problem affecting pages related to learning, as they are usually "further down" the hierarchy of pages of the Whitworth website, and thus not very visible.

> (50) I'm not an expert in this, but people tend to … you know, want to try and find the information in **one to two to three clicks**, so … you've got to go to the homepage, which draws people attention to what's happening Whitworth-wise, so then you've got the events, you've got the news, but then also the Learn stuff is kind of often, you know, **further down** […] [WG3]

"Useful" and "basic" information offered

Participants from both institutions thus seem aware of the issues concerning the museum and gallery websites at the moment. MM1 clearly states that he does not think the museum site is "perfect", but it fulfils its basic objective, i.e. providing "something" which can be "useful" to people. The concept of the website offering "useful" information occurs in other parts of the interviews. Insights about the website offering "useful" or "basic" information were found by looking for repetitions of the same words across different data items. For instance, MW1, who works in the same team as MM1 (i.e. the Visitor Team), explains that they are interested in assessing what people find useful in order to know what to add or remove from the website.

In a similar vein, MW2 from Marketing & Communications feels the need for improving some aspects of the website in order to make it "more effective and useful and enjoyable" by evaluating the user experience: he wants to get data from visitors on the areas of the website they find "difficult to navigate" or "less necessary" so that the website can be reduced in size.

> (51) I think … we need to refine the site so that … based on that data and looking at how visitors are finding some areas difficult to navigate, some pages less necessary than others, see if we can condense and streamline the site to make it more … more effective and **useful** and enjoyable for our visitors, and also it would make it easier for us to kind of maintain as well. [MW2]

A number of participants refer to the amount or quality of information offered on the website: most of them (MM1, MM2, MW1, MW3) define it as "basic information", while WG3 describes it as "a small amount of information". Therefore, the common opinion shared by these participants is that the website is expected to offer and does offer little information. According to MM1, who is part of the Visitor Team,

this "basic information" is "really quick" and "easy", and relates to practical details for the visit, such as opening hours or current exhibitions.

In a similar fashion, MW1 claims that the "basic information" needed includes information for the visit, such as how to get to the gallery, opening times and details about exhibitions and events (e.g. the Thursday late openings). At another point during the interview, MW1 defines it as "basic, static information", which seems to suggest the related texts are not supposed to be updated regularly. He assumes that users are not going to look for such information elsewhere, e.g. Twitter, and thus the website is the place where it needs to be offered.

MW3 also thinks that such "basic information" is related to "physical visits": in particular, he explains that the website aims to introduce the institution and its goals, as well as provide information on its location and how to get there.

MM2 mentions "basic information" in relation to the type of intended audience for such information: he hypothesises that people living in Manchester or visiting it may be interested in looking at the website through their phone to know more about events happening at the museum that day. However, he also imagines a user visiting the website "from far away", but still wanting to find information on the museum location for some reason — for instance, to plan a future visit to Manchester.

Another type of intended audience consists of researchers who are interested in a specific collection of the museum. MM2 believes that they may want "basic information for that", probably referring to the collection itself. However, he does not consider that someone doing research on a certain collection may need more than "basic" information.

WG3 claims that the website includes a small quantity of information, but he also shares an assumption about user experience. According to him, people visiting the website may be using it "visually": apparently, he suggests that the website probably needs to offer little information, because "visual navigation" is more important than text. Although it is not at all clear what he refers to with this, he seems to point to the importance of visual aids, images, links and other features of digital communication to provide a visual experience, rather than a textual one.

(52)   It's more about **visual navigation** rather than text. I mean, text is there obviously. It gives you the audience, it gives you **a small amount of information**, but generally I think users are probably using the website for … for … for … you know, **visually**. [WG3]

Therefore, most of the information that is considered "basic" and "useful" appears to be addressed to people who may be interested in visiting the institution, with a view to facilitating their visit.

Top-three most important pages on the website

During the interview, all the participants were asked which were the three most important pages on the website of the museum/gallery according to them. Table 5.2 shows their answers: the pages are listed according to the order in which they were mentioned by the participants.

Participant	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3
MM1	History	Exhibitions	Events
MM2	How to get there	Collections	What's on
MM3	About	Collections	What's on
MW1	How to get there	What's on	About
MW2	Homepage	What's on	Collections
MW3	About	How to get there	What's on
WG1	About	What's on	Collections
WG2	What's on	Exhibitions	Collections
WG3	Homepage	Events	Collections

Table 5.2. The top-three most important pages according to each UK-EN participant

Table 5.3 summarises the results of the previous one. Eight different pages were mentioned: among them, the most commonly cited were the "What's on" page, the "Collections" page and the "About" page.

Pages mentioned	Number of participants mentioning them
What's on	7
Collections	6
About	4
How to get there	3
Homepage	2
Exhibitions	2
Events	2
History	1

Table 5.3. Pages mentioned and number of mentions for each one

The Manchester Museum website and the Whitworth website are structured in a very similar way. On both websites, "What's on" is a first-level page including sub-pages

such as "Exhibitions" and "Events". Apparently, most of the participants (7 out of 9) believe that the "What's on" page is one the most important on the museum/gallery website. The "What's on" page is a page collecting information on events and exhibitions on display. For both institutions, participants from all the different teams pick this page: namely, MM2, MW3 and WG1 from Collections, MM3 and MW2 from Marketing & Communication, MW1 from the Visitor Team and WG2 from Learning & Engagement. The participants who do not mention the "What's on" page choose the "Events" page (MM1) or the "Exhibitions" page (WG3), which are sub-pages of the "What's on" page. This suggests that, no matter what team the participants belong to and what kind of work they do, all feel that one of the most important pages is one presenting events or exhibitions and inviting people to come and visit. It also suggests that the staff acknowledge the importance of organising different types of events and exhibitions and promoting them online in order to engage with a wider audience.

However, when mentioning the "What's on" page, MM2 claims that nowadays social media are increasingly used to know about events and special activities organised by the museum, and adds that the related pages on the website tend to be more "static", thus suggesting that they may be updated less frequently. He also seems to imply that the website is slowly leaving space to other platforms for this type of current information.

The "Collections" page, a first-level one, is picked among the most important pages by five participants out of nine. Not only is the "Collections" page chosen by people directly dealing with Collections (MM2 and WG1), but also by staff from Marketing & Communications (MM3 and MW2) and Learning & Engagement (WG2 and WG3).

"About" is another first-level page mentioned by the participants among the most important ones. WG2 points out that the "About" page may be important for "setting a tone", i.e. telling the story of the institution and shaping its institutional voice. However, he doubts that the "About" page is a "relevant" page for users, as he is not sure whether it is actually visited: he thus assumes that museums and galleries have an "About" page only because everyone has it.

The other pages mentioned among the three most important are all sub-pages, apart from the homepage. "How to get here" is a sub-page of the "Visit" section,

"Exhibitions" and "Events" are included in the "What's on" section and "History" belongs to the "About" section.

When asked to choose the three most important pages of the website, only MW2 and WG3 find that the homepage is a very important one. However, MM1 also mentions the homepage at a certain point during the interview when he is asked to elaborate on a point made about how the museum website could be more user-friendly. In that context he refers to the homepage as "the first page", which may imply that he assumes that it is the first page to be visited by users navigating on the website. Similarly, MW2 describes it as "the central point where people should be able to find the information quickly".

In general, the participants' choices reflect their role and main concerns. For instance, MW1 — who works in the Visitor Team — wants to create "expectations" for people planning to visit the museum and the gallery, so that they may be able to anticipate their experience during the visit, especially in terms of items they will see and people they will meet. This indicates that MW1 expects the website to be an instrument where people may find anticipations about the visit, along with information they may need in order to plan it and feel more comfortable during it.

(53)   […] I think the first bit is … "How to get to us" […] So I think that the website needs to be: how to find us and what to expect when you're coming here. Some expectations, **set up your expectations**. The second one I would say is "What's on now", **what you're gonna see**, **what you're going to experience**, and I would like to see **who you're gonna meet** as well […] some photos of people you're gonna see … and meet. And after that, I think it would be … learn more about us: who are we? Why are we here? Where have we come from? What's our story? … And who works here, in case you wanna get in touch. [MW1]

The same applies to MW2, who is part of Marketing & Communications. When listing the top most important pages according to him, he mentions the use of "data that shows how people use" the pages within the website, i.e. analytics. Since he knows what pages people visit more due to his role within the two institutions, he recognises that he is "a little bit biased" in his choice. In other words, he is not just picking the pages which he feels are central to capture what the museum and gallery are and do as cultural institutions: he is also assessing which pages are more visited. While MW1 thinks about the potential physical visitors when making his top-three list, MW2 is focused on online users and their behaviour on the website.

(54)   […] the "Homepage" obviously is the central point where people should be able to find the information quickly […] **I'm a little bit biased because of the data**

> **that shows how people use it** and it's tricky, because if we're not providing something, then data won't show … people can't visit a section or a page that isn't there […] if I can cheat slightly, I'd say the "Homepage", "What's on" […] and then the "Collections". […] But again, the **What's on and Events**, that's important because it's what people … want to look at really, that's always kind of **high in terms of analytics**. The collections search not so much […] [MW2]

The data generated through this question portray a homogenous perception of the main web pages that convey the identity and activities of the two institutions. Data also show that participants are generally aware of how the website is structured and what it can (and cannot) offer. In particular, all participants seem to agree on the importance of offering information on current exhibitions and events ("What's on"), introducing the collections and allowing users to search them online ("Collections"), as well as presenting the institution to set expectations for the potential visitors ("About").

Interim summing up

In general, data related to the perceptions of the website and the information provided on it are quite diverse. Some participants stress the importance and centrality of the website within the communicative strategy of the museum/gallery, while others believe social media are going to replace it in the future. There is a common perception that the website is too big and includes too many pages, which may make it hard to find the information needed. The website is intended as a source for basic, useful information, which generally includes practical details for the visit and current exhibitions or events. This type of information seems to be addressed to actual or potential museum visitors.

5.2.5 Theme 5. Language use and linguistic awareness

A fundamental theme in the data is the use of language by the museum and the gallery, which was a leitmotif throughout all the interviews. In general, participants seem aware of the important role played by language in different communicative situations within the museum environment, both on-site and online. In particular, the awareness of the importance of language in relation to the need for engaging with new audiences is evident in extract 55.

> (55) […] obviously language is going to be **very important** to making sure that we include the audiences that we're not reaching already. [MM3]

The use of language is a constant concern for the museum and the gallery. According to WG1, they daily think about language when they discuss their "interpretation strategy", i.e. the approach they adopt to write in-gallery texts such as

labels and leaflets for the exhibitions (cf. Section 2.2.3). In particular, she refers to an exhibition that was on when the interview was carried out. She also mentions the "website" as the place where they write other interpretive texts about their exhibitions or collections.

> (56) Yeah, we talk about and continue to talk about it [communication], in particular **in relation to our interpretation strategy**: our labels, leaflets, texts and website … Over the past twelve months […] we had the … exhibition that's in gallery 1, which is called "Beyond Borders", that has worked with four different artists, from Pakistan, Bangladesh and UK, and worked with different parts of our collections well from South Asia … and we're trying to think quite carefully about language in relation to that project, but more broadly … we have been and are trying to think about language … quite … seriously at the moment in relation to our interpretation strategy and the exhibitions and programme […] [WG1]

The data from the UK-EN interviews reveal different aspects of the use of language, which are organised into separate sub-themes:

- conforming to style guides;
- describing language use;
- writing for translation.

Conforming to style guides

During the interviews, I directly asked the participants whether they need to follow a specific style guide for writing the online texts. The majority of the participants reply with only a brief remark regarding the use of a style guide and a few of them answer that they do not know whether or not they are required to follow one, but they have never heard of web writing guidelines they need to conform to. For instance, MM1 says that he is not aware of the existence of any style guide for the museum, without providing further details.

WG3 holds a similar opinion in relation to the gallery. He adds that although nobody has ever told them how to write texts for the website, they have been using texts written by somebody among the staff as "good examples" of the "style" the gallery wants to adopt. He also explains that he personally has attended "text writing workshops", and that his approach to writing is informed to some extent by the "principles" that he has been taught on those occasions. Finally, he claims that the "rebranding" process that the Whitworth has undertaken was aimed at defining a style for the gallery's communication, based on the idea of "saying what was important first."

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(57) **Not really, no**. […] obviously, the good examples would get flagged up and shown … and people generally start to work to that style because they see other people getting it. It was never: "you must write it with, you know, this, this and this." I mean, I have been on **text writing workshops** myself in the past […] so, I still work on those kind of principles and I think, yeah, that was what this new **rebranding** was hopefully doing: it was kind of saying what was important first. [WG3]

Other participants mention guidelines on brand. MM3, for instance, explains that the museum brand guidelines also include suggestions for the website: these are not just on texts, but on the "visual identity" that the museum wants to construct.

Similarly, WG2 mentions "brand" and "tone of voice" — the latter basically referring to style. According to him, they do not follow "formalised guidelines" in terms of writing texts for the web, apart from the brand guidelines.

(58) **No, well … not as such that I'm aware of**. I always … kind of … we go through processes, that kind of peer-assessing copy before it goes up […] And I tend to … see, so just to check … things like tone of voice or those things, so … and it's probably not successfully. It could be but all the website feels like it's written from the Whitworth as opposed to individuals within the team. […] So, yeah, in terms of formalised guidelines … we've got a kind of **brand, tone of voice … guide**, which relates to that, but … yeah, **nothing too formalised** in terms of … individual edits to the website. [WG2]

WG1 mentions the work that they did in relation to their "new brand guidelines" and "interpretive strategy" while the gallery was closed. However, she says she is not aware of any web writing guidelines which the gallery staff need to follow: she acknowledges the fact that specific guidelines for the web may exist without her knowing about them, but also adds that if they do exist, this means she does not comply with them.

(59) **Not that I'm aware of**. Because the text is often shared between the two [the physical space and the website], it must relate in some way. I know that when the gallery was closed before the reopening there was a lot of work on doing a **new brand guidelines**, the **interpretive strategy** … it's possible that there are specific guidelines on the web and I just haven't read them in the book that … MW2 and MW1 might be able to tell you, but I guess what's telling about that is that **I'm obviously not abiding by them because I don't know what they are**. [WG1]

In order to get more insights on writing practices and use of language from the participants, I showed them a document labelled "Manchester Museum Guidelines for writing accessible text" (see Appendix D), which was written in 2009 and includes a list of writing guidelines for the museum on-site texts. The document includes the museum "Interpretive Strategy" with guidelines adopted for writing a variety of museum interpretive texts, e.g. panels, labels and online texts. The guidelines stress the

importance of identifying who the museum is writing for and the circumstances under which the text will be read, e.g. passing through a gallery, standing up, sitting down, on the wall, on paper or online. Guidelines include the use of "familiar, everyday language", "a conversational tone", "an 'active' voice" and "short sentences". They also invite the potential writer to avoid "subordinate clauses", as well as "technical terms and jargon". However, the document highlights the risk of "dumbing down" and requires the writer not to oversimplify texts. A few suggestions for checking "readability" are also included.

I asked the participants whether they think similar guidelines are adopted for writing the texts for the website. Surprisingly, MW1 and MM2 claim that a similar approach is applied on the website as well, although it seems that they do not systematically follow these guidelines. There seems to be a contradiction in the data: when the participants are asked about the adoption of web writing guidelines in general, most of them say that they do not know anything about a style guide. However, when I show this, they actually say these guidelines are probably used. This may suggest either that they are not familiar with the notion of style guides, or that there is not a complete awareness of the writing approach adopted, as they do not have a clear, coherent communicative strategy shared among all the staff.

MW1 stresses the importance of creating "a cohesive story" among the different texts created by the museum/gallery: as the aim is to create "not something digitally different", he assumes that if those guidelines apply to the on-site texts, they probably apply to online texts as well. On the other hand, MM3 implicitly denies that these guidelines could be used online by claiming that on-site and online texts have "different purposes": texts produced for an online environment and on-site one are very different, but she does not elaborate on this.

(60)　Because they're **both for different purposes**, ours is about … I mean, they're interlinked, so definitely related to what we do in terms of creating texts for our audiences, but what we're doing is we're … **the kind of texts we're producing is very different**, because it's about what we do … as opposed to … information about an object, or an exhibition … if that makes sense. [MM3]

WG1 confesses that she does not know whether the guidelines for the museum in-gallery texts may be used on the gallery website as well.

(61)　**I don't know! I don't think so**. … We have got a list of all around the style guides that have to do with language and tone. […] I'll have a look and I'm happy to share **the style guidelines** with you if that would be helpful. [WG1]

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Other style guides are also mentioned. For instance, MM2 mentioned a specific style guide he was asked to follow when he started working at the museum, i.e. the Guardian style guide for English. He also acknowledges the fact that curators are asked to write in a different way according to the textual genre and the intended audience of a text. MW3 mentions the use of "SPECTRUM", which is the most widely adopted collection management standard in the UK, including indications for different types of procedures, e.g. cataloguing. I showed MW3 the guidelines for the museum on-site texts, and asked him whether they could be considered similar to the SPECTRUM guidelines. According to him, SPECTRUM and the museum guidelines for on-site texts are very different, as SPECTRUM does not provide this type of indications. However, he recognises the need for having similar instructions which can guide the writing process.

(62) **No, SPECTRUM doesn't … doesn't guide you in this way**. But I feel that this is the exact sort of thing that we … if we don't already, should have for writing descriptions. I feel like it only maybe applies to descriptions and interpretation. [MW3]

MW3 also adds that the two institutions have "written guidelines" but they are "outdated", meaning that they were written a long time ago and probably never updated.

Participants' comments on the use of a style guide seem contradictory, as they have different levels of awareness of the writing approach adopted as an institution. This suggests that neither one of the institutions strategically adopts a style guide which is shared and applied consistently by the members of staff contributing to online publication of texts.

Describing language use

Although participants from both institutions do not seem to follow a specific web writing style guide, data seem to suggest commonalities in the description of the use of language. These patterns are related to the fact that both the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth are university museums. Even if participants do not seem to have well-defined intended readers (cf. Section 5.2.1), they aim to engage with both an academic audience and a general audience. These two intended audiences seem to affect the use of language as described by the participants. On the one hand, both the museum and the gallery attempt to write in a way which may be considered academic by adopting a formal style and an objective, neutral stance, and by prioritising accuracy and

technicality by employing specialised terminology related to the fields of knowledge associated with the collections. On the other hand, however, participants seem to agree that their language use is expected to facilitate engagement of the general audience, through the use of an informal style, a more subjective stance and strategies aimed at improving text accessibility and making them easily understandable.

The patterns related to language use are presented in this section as follows:

- academic language;
- simplicity, clarity and conciseness;
- style and stance;
- linguistic accessibility;
- technical accuracy;
- trend towards simplification;
- peculiarities of online texts.

There are different instances where participants refer to the language being "academic". On the one hand, this is considered necessary in order to reach the university audience; on the other hand, it is also dangerous if they do not want to exclude the general audience. MW3 acknowledges that the academic audience and the general one have very different communicative needs: the former looks for "the data", i.e. disciplinary facts provided in writing, while the latter probably enjoys a more visual, "image-led" communication. MW3 describes this visual communication as "more informative": although this sounds contradictory, as providing information seems to imply the use of "data", it may refer to a popularised form of communication (cf. Section 2.3.4).

(63) There is the academic scientific audience that almost needs… maybe no images, and it's about **the data**. [MW3]

(64) And then you've got the audience that doesn't know about all that and is after just an experience about what a museum has and maybe is **more image-led** and what is written in about them is a bit **more informative**. … So, yeah. [MW3]

At the museum, MM3 acknowledges the need for using an "academic" style but at the same time adapting it in order to engage with non-academic audiences as well.

(65) So, for example, if it is related to our collections, and it's quite **academic**, while it needs to … remain **academic**, because we want to make sure we're capturing that audience, but also we might need to … just consider how we change some of the language […] so it fits general audiences as well. [MM3]

According to MM1, the museum staff tries to make sure that the texts they write — being printed texts or online texts — are "not overly academic".

(66) I think that would go for anything that we write, so whether that's … print … or online or on our … gallery walls, we'd always … write in a way that's **not overly academic** […] [MM1]

The same is reported by MM2, saying that the museum interpretive texts on-site and online are not "too academic", as they are aware their audience is not only made of academics.

In different points during the interview, MW1 mentions that there was a shift in the communication, both at the museum and at the gallery: once, they both used an "academic talk" which is typical of the university and is defined by him as "almost business-like" and "very academic-like", but now the style used is considered by MW1 more "inviting".

(67) So, very early on, we went from the **university kind of academic talk** […] Everything was … very based in facts, sciences, **academic talk**. [MW1]

(68) Well, the image I would believe we'd have to be … something that is inviting, and goes with our values. So our values here at the Whitworth is to be personal, intelligent and playful. … And if they turn up to a website that was just like: "the University of Manchester is proud of the Whitworth" … and it was very kind of business-like or **academic-like**, we haven't achieved really any of those. [MW1]

(69) So our tone of voice needs to … reflect who we are as an organisation … and that language… it used to be very … almost business-like, **very academic-like** […] [MW1]

At the Whitworth, WG1 also describes her first project there and she remembers that interpretive texts and the website used to be "very very academic". WG3 points to the concern about not being "too academic", which started during the rebrand after the Whitworth reopened.

(70) […] when the Whitworth reopened in 2015, we … had a kind of rebranding of the gallery […] we all tried to kind of develop a language style that was … quite easily accessible […] It wasn't trying to be **too academic**. It was trying to be much more … friendly. … We did kind of as a whole gallery, think about that as way we use language … externally. [WG3]

Therefore, a balance between academic and non-academic language seems to pervade the participants' opinion about language use, both on-site and online.

Simplicity, clarity and conciseness also seem to characterise language use. Extracts 71-73 show how the participants describe language use by the museum and the

gallery, providing hints on the approach adopted. In general, the language is perceived as "simple" and not "overly complicated".

(71) You may want to know, if you're visiting from far away, how do you get there … so definitely the location information in **simple English**, again. [MM2]

(72) […] it would be … language that … **isn't overly complicated** … and is **readable** to anyone who walks through the door. [MM1]

(73) So, for instance, if we had, you know, "Beyond dementia" was the … exhibition we had on there [at the gallery]: **you're not gonna … you know, have very complicated language** for talking about things in such a great detail for … for people who might want to come in and have it as a very therapeutic space and to be relaxing […] [MW1]

In describing the use of language, MM1 also refers to people who cannot speak or read English, probably meaning at a very good level.

(74) […] some of our visitors may not be able to speak English or read English, but hopefully by using a kind of standard … text that **isn't overcomplicated** they might be able to pick out words or … even speak to a member of staff to ask to … describe the pieces as well. [MM1]

MM2 deliberately refers to "Plain English", whereas MW1 calls it "simplistic language": although the latter is usually associated with something which is overly simple, and thus carries a negative connotation, MW1 does not seem to use it with a negative meaning.

(75) […] and I say this advisedly: **Plain English**. [MM2]

(76) And with people with English as not their first language, it might not translate the same, so you wanna use quite **simplistic language** to … maybe dissect a complex theory or term, and I think it's useful for everybody. [MW1]

Nonetheless, contrasting opinions emerge in the data: for instance, while MW3 defines it as "everyday language" by drawing on the museum guidelines for on-site interpretive texts (see Appendix D), MM1 does not think they use "everyday language" at the museum because texts need to have "a certain formality". MM1, however, probably thinks of slang when he says "everyday language in England is not necessarily everyday language in Spain", thus assuming it is better to avoid it because it could sound too colloquial to L2 readers.

(77) That's it: "**everyday language**". I think we're all … aiming for **everyday language**. … [MW3]

(78) […] I'd say that we use **familiar** … well, maybe **not everyday language** … on the texts, because it does have to have a certain formality to it, and everyday language in England is not necessarily everyday language in Spain. [MM1]

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Some participants elaborate on the concept of simplicity by associating it to that of clarity in order to describe the museum and the gallery language. MM1 uses the adjectives "neat and clear", but does not explain what he means by them.

MM2 limits the concept of clarity to "grammatical clarity" and provides an example of what he means by saying "short sentence": his concept of clarity thus seems to refer to syntactical structure.

WG2 also defines the gallery texts as "clear" but adds "concise", i.e. short and to the point. She also uses the adjectives "digestive", "short" and "economic", thus stressing the links between clarity and conciseness.

A similar view seems to be shared by WG3, who claims that the museum staff involved in writing say things "very simply" and "very clearly", but also "almost in one line", thus evoking the same idea of shortness.

WG3 also tries to explain how they operate in order to write texts "as clearly and as effectively as possible": basically, they think of their audience as a non-expert one, i.e. people who do not know anything about the gallery.

(79) It's just trying to communicate I suppose as **clearly** and as **effectively** as possible. One of the things that I know that we are trying to do is to … you know, trying to put yourself in a user that doesn't know anything about the gallery … so that's the key for getting somebody who knows nothing about the Whitworth to almost read it to see if they understand it, so that's the kind of headspace we're trying to … operate in. [WG3]

The concept of shortness is thus present in the data, where the underpinning idea seems to be that a short sentence is also clearer. A general preference for conciseness emerges in different parts of the interviews. For example, MM1 claims that he writes in a "concise way."

In a similar vein, MM2 reports a suggestion he had at the university about writing short sentences and paragraphs. At another point during the interview which is not reported here, he also mentions that the museum staff involved in writing texts for the website had a limit for text length, but he does not specify the maximum number of words allowed.

(80) […] our supervisor at my university said: "you should write like a … tabloid journalist", you know, one of these very popular newspapers: **very short sentences, very short … paragraphs** […] [MM2]

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MW2 stresses the importance of writing "concise" texts: he uses the verbs "condense and confine" as if to create a concentrate of content reducing the space it occupies. This, however, implies that the sentences may be short, but the lexical density may be high.

> (81) We use a variety of different tools and we also have to try and have a number of parallelised reading … reading any of the content that goes on there, because obviously having it as **concise** as possible is great […] [MW2]

> (82) So, as much as possible we'd try and **condense and confine** … make it as **concise** as possible … while still conveying everything we want to at the same time. [MW2]

Finally, WG3 argues that they aim to write texts which are "quite concise and not too wordy", which seems to suggest that they try to reduce text length. However, none of the participants appears to be aware of any specific maximum length which was set for online texts.

As far as style is concerned, different perspectives can be found. MW1 suggests that they try to use an informal style of writing, which he calls "tone of voice". On the one hand, he defines it as "informal", "personal" and "playful", which might mean that they use questions, personal pronouns, slang and figures of speech; on the other hand, it is "professional" and "intelligent", which may mean that it also needs to convey credibility. Likewise, WG3 defines the gallery's approach to style as "friendly" and "playful", but "playfully serious": apparently, they like to "play" with language, but also to adopt a sober, credible style.

Although MM1 does not think that "an overly formal" style should be used, he recognises that texts need to have "a certain formality" and that the museum should not use a conversational style of writing. A contrasting opinion is shared by MM3, who works in Marketing & Communications: interestingly, she mentions a "more formal" style on the website than in the in-gallery texts, but "still conversational".

The data also offer different perceptions about stance. Some participants advocate for the use of an objective stance, while others prefer the use of a more subjective one. MM1, from the Visitor Team, thinks that in-gallery texts are "more factual" as they tell the facts and stories behind the objects of the collections. However, texts in other formats, such as videos or audios, may be "more personal", as they may involve interviews with people telling their own personal views. He also thinks that the

priority is being "polite", which probably means respectful of everybody — a vague concept if applied to texts.

MM2 comments on a text from a "Collections" page which he wrote. He believes that, as a curator, he aims to offer "factual content", i.e. a text based on scientific facts. Although technical accuracy seems to be a priority to him, MM2 also acknowledges that each curator as an author brings their own personal style to the texts. He, however, considers the negative consequences of prioritising accuracy and "facts" in writing. He thinks that this text may feel not only "very neutral", but also "quite clinical and cold", as it is "not colourful" and "not very humane": in other words, it might be solid from the scientific point of view, but also distant and inexpressive.

According to MW1, there has been a shift in the museum use of language on-site from a more neutral style based on "facts, sciences, academic talk" to a more "lovely language" expressing emotions. Taking a subjective stance seems to have a positive connotation: in his opinion, conveying subjectivity implies adopting a "caring way of speaking", also online. Apparently, he wishes that the museum takes a stance which is "more personable", and which can thus be shared by the readers, allowing them to identify themselves in the stories told. "Caring" is an unusual adjective to define language, which may disclose different realities: on the one hand, it may suggest that the museum commits to be thoughtful of its audience without imposing meanings and hard facts; on the other hand, it reveals that it is probably not possible to adopt an expressive style without taking a specific stance and thus imposing a personal view.

Participants from the Whitworth seem to share a similar view on the stance used by the gallery. For instance, WG2 considers that they tend to make online texts "more personable", rather than trying to adopt the institutional voice of authority.

(83) And that's, I think, making a quite interesting step forward in terms of … in terms of language and actually how people … consume language and having that on the website as opposed to a paragraph that's been signed off … in the Whitworth tone of voice … ultimately feels **more personable**. [WG2]

WG1 explains that their interpretation strategy dissuades them from creating "very didactic labels", but rather encourages them to write texts which are "poetic" and "experimental". Stance is thus not objective, but rather subjective: feelings are preferred over facts.

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(84) But we had a show here … or there's also … at the Whitworth … because of part of the interpretation strategy which was explicitly against having **very didactic** labels … there is an occasional tendency for us or for the writing to be very … I'm not quite sure what the right word is, but **poetic**? Or … **experimental**? In relation to our exhibitions. Rather than you know, **didactical**, telling you exactly what you're going to see. … And that I think has to do with the **freedom offered by being a university art gallery**. … However, at the same time, it is **tempered by accessibility, in particular when working with academics**. [WG1]

According to WG1, adopting a "poetic" stance is possible for them because they are a university gallery. In extract 85, being part of the university is seen as an advantage in terms of language use by WG1, who describes the possibility of taking more risks with language and using it with more freedom. According to her, being a university gallery allows them to use terms, such as "bodies of colour", that would not be considered "suitable" by other organisations dealing with heritage for different reasons, e.g. because they are difficult terms. In another extract, which is not reported here, she comments on the discussion that staff at the Whitworth has had on the exhibition "Bodies of colour" in relation to language use: she explains that the complexity of the term "of colour" has been discussed, and that these internal discussions about language are included in the on-site interpretive texts of the exhibition.

(85) I think that as a university arts gallery seems to be to me that occasionally … not occasionally, but we're in a position where … **we can take more risks with the way we use the language**. And organisations that are founded explicitly … through the Arts Council and the Council, and that could be with … the vocabulary that we use … or it could be with the potential … kind of **difficulty of vocabulary that we use**, like "Bodies of colour", for example, as an exhibition title. […] some of the language that we use here, vocabulary, would not have … been … deemed suitable for … [other] organisations […], because of issues of **accessibility**. [WG1]

A constant concern about the accessibility of language pervades the data: all the participants during the interviews refer to the texts either being accessible, readable or understandable. For instance, I asked MM1 to provide more details about what he means by "familiar language" in relation to on-site texts: he refers to the concept of readability saying that texts need to be "readable to anyone who walks through the door."

MW3 claims that texts need to be "understandable", and that this is a common expectation in the museum field, which is unstated but always applicable according to him.

MW1 describes language in terms of "level" saying that they aim to use a level which can be "penetrable" by people with different levels of proficiency. In extract 86,

"penetrable" seems to mean understandable, comprehensible, and suggests that there should not be 'hidden' meanings.

(86) So, again, it's about trying to use … the appropriate level of language that is … **penetrable by … people with various … English skills**. [MW1]

Making language penetrable also implies making meanings more explicit. For instance, when telling about an art producer with whom she is working, WG1 describes her use of language as "very explicit", i.e. open, direct and unambiguous.

(87) I'm working on a project at the moment with … a playwright and she's a producer, an art producer really, […] and I think we'll be … working on something in the gallery, and her language is **very explicit**: it's about race, again. [WG1]

Several mentions to accessibility can be found in the data. Some examples are reported to show how accessibility is — or is not — defined. In extract 88, MM2 does not provide clarifications on how he intends accessibility, nor references to whom the text should be accessible.

(88) Here … we were trying to make the text as **accessible** as possible. [MM2]

MM3 relates accessibility to inclusivity, probably assuming that if a text is accessible it allows understanding and wider participation.

(89) And depending on the text that we do get back from colleagues, we'll have a look at it with them, and if we do need to change it to make sure that it is … **accessible** and **inclusive** on our website, then we will. [MM3]

The idea that the museum and gallery texts should be "accessible for everybody" (MW1) or "accessible to a number of audiences" (MW2) is spread throughout the data set, and is evident in extracts 90-94. The references to a broad, heterogeneous audience in relation to accessibility seem to reveal a basic assumption, i.e. that a text can be ideally "accessible", and thus easy to understand, for different types of readers at the same time. However, this wide audience never seems to be fully defined, as data suggest that participants do not have a clear idea of their intended audience (cf. Section 5.2.1).

(90) […] we wanted to very actively get away from that, and remove things that might be considered jargon, things that might be … and not go away too down where you're kind of patronising and making it too simple, but having it so that it's **accessible for everybody** to understand. [MW1]

(91) I think this was imported from some of the consultations that the … the modern designers … were looking at these texts, and trying to make it **accessible to a number of audiences**, without dumbing it down […] [MW2]

(92)   So … we're quite often looking at exhibition making, at programming, at … lectures and things like that, and how we can make them **more accessible to a broader sense of … broader range of people**. [WG2]

(93)   […] the kind of … entry point […] should be **as open and accessible as possible**. [WG2]

(94)   […] we all tried to kind of develop a language style that was … **quite easily accessible** … playful in its kind of tone, so it was trying to say things very simply, it was trying to say things very clearly […] almost trying to look at ways that it was … **accessible to all**. [WG3]

Similarly, in extract 95 MM1 claims that they "try to speak universally", as if there were a universal use of language which could be appropriate for anybody visiting the website "from all over the world". In extract 96, MW3 explains that the Whitworth once used to adopt the Ekarv method, which is a system (named after its creator, Margareta Ekarv) for writing on-site interpretive texts. They then stopped using it since they thought that they could "write simply for all".

(95)   So … **we try to speak universally** … if that makes sense … so we try to write in a style that … would suit … would appeal to **anyone reading it from all over the world**. [MM1]

(96)   I know that in the past […] all of our interpretation within the gallery spaces used to be written via something called the Ekarv method […] which was a very poetic … structure in how you write things … […] people thought: "we can just … **write simply for all** anyway." [MW3]

Some participants relate accessibility to writing for a specific age group. Several participants are asked whether their intended audience is a certain age. Although each of them mentions a different age group in extracts 97-99, MM3, MW3 and WG3 seem to share the idea that some contents are made for a certain age-range. The assumption underpinning this idea is that texts made for a younger audience should be more readable and easier to understand. There is no explicit link being made in the extracts between writing for children and writing for L2 speakers, but writing for a certain age group seems to be a strategy used to make texts more accessible in general.

(97)   I: Do you think you are trying to aim a certain age group … in the texts on the website?

P: So … **a nine-years-old plus**. That's the … the recommendation I've had to, when producing all of our communication material, to look at: if a nine-year-old could understand what we've written, then it's … then it should be **accessible**. [MM3]

(98)   We've obviously got different audiences in mind at all times, but there's always been an attempt and this comes through in the label texts that everyone writes also within the exhibition space in the physical space. … There you're aiming for a sort of common denominator … and … I think … for memory … label text is aimed at a kind of … **12 to 15 year-old sort of age person**, in that if a 12-15 years old child can understand it, then it should be that the broadest sort of …

breadth of people can also understand it without attempting to sort of … make it too childlike in terms of appealing to younger children. [MW3]

(99) […] obviously **a school audience**, so I'm imagining teachers, if it's students I'm imagining the kind of demographics **15-20**, so we try to … we try to get all the people like it […] [WG3]

WG1 relates accessibility to prior knowledge: according to her, texts cannot be written as if they were addressed to peers, taking certain concepts for granted, because readers cannot be expected to know much about the contents involved in the texts.

(100) And the Whitworth quite rightly thought that it should be made … **accessible**, and not make assumptions about knowledge, because it was for a wider audience. […] Because the advantages of thinking about making language **more accessible to a wider audience** are infinitely preferable than just think that because it's not about … peer-to-peer reception anymore. [WG1]

In order to elaborate on the concept of accessibility, WG1 describes her experience at a museum conference involving different types of people, such as academics and artists, and refers to the language used during the presentations as "exclusionary", making explicit that if someone does not belong to that field and thus has not prior knowledge on what is being told, they cannot participate in that discourse.

Technical accuracy is also an issue which emerges from the data and is strictly connected with accessibility: using or avoiding technical terms appears to be an important fact for the participants working at the Manchester Museum. On the contrary, no participants working at the Whitworth Gallery mention this issue. MM2, who works with the museum collections, admits that when he writes texts for the website he always includes technical terms which are specific to its field without providing definitions. However, he claims that he tries to avoid "jargon", which he unclearly distinguishes from terminology.

(101) So, when I say "accessible" yes, I try … and be grammatically clear. But I also avoid **jargon** … but I will **include technical terms […]** [MM2]

(102) So, an answer to your absolute question: no, I do not provide added … generally, **I do not provide added definitions**. [MM2]

On the other hand, people from the Visitor Team or Marketing & Communications, such as MW1, MM1 and MM3, opt for either removing terms or adding explanations to it in order to make it accessible. In particular, MW1 suggests that "complicated" words that need to be included may be linked to other pages which "give a better context" by expanding on the information offered and contributing to explain the meaning of such words.

(103) And you need it almost to a certain degree to understand what it was in front of you. And if you didn't, you might just pass that by … we wanted to very actively get away from that, and **remove things that might be considered jargon** […] [MW1]

(104) And also maybe if there are words in there that need to be in there that might be a bit complicated, just **link them** … to something else that might **give a better context** of what it means [MW1]

(105) We want to be able to reach everyone. And I think by … **writing the scientific name and the definition of it**, I think, in a non-patronising way, just as a kind of sub-heading … is really important. [MM1]

(106) So again, some of our audiences might not necessarily understand what entomology is, they might not be an academic audience … but they are … people who are interested in our collections and … we need to make sure that the language or **the terminology is explained** so that they're able to understand it. [MM3]

MW3, working with the collections across the two institutions, also expresses the need for avoiding "very subject-specific sort of words" or for adding a description or explanation: according to him, this should be provided in "the more common language".

MW1 expresses the idea that scholars and specialists do not need technical language, because they still get the information they need without it.

(107) So, I mean sometimes, **even if you are a scholar I don't think you need to have those** [scientific words], cause you already know them, so I don't think you would go: "Oh, well that's not … written intelligent enough for me." You still get the information, you see what I mean? [MW1]

On the contrary, MW3 claims that the research community certainly needs technical terms in order to find and identify an item of the collection.

(108) I think we're all … aiming for everyday language. […] I think for the museum it's just hard sometimes, because of the subject matter. Sometimes the subject matter gets in the way of being able to do that, because you need to use certain things to say what it is … and does … I feel that the museum might be bound by certain standards as well where they need to use **Latin names**, cause **if they don't the research community won't know what it is**. So, again, they maybe have to do something twice. [MW3]

Including terminology would be fundamental also for improving visibility of specific information in terms of Search Engine Optimisation (SEO): drawing on basic notions of SEO (Ledford, 2008; Mavridis & Symeonidis, 2015; Patel, Prajapati, & Patel, 2012), if a web page on the museum site includes a specific technical term, a scholar using that term on a Google search will be more likely to find the related content on the museum website. Although this fact is not explicitly mentioned by any of the participants, MW2, who works in Marketing & Communications, mentions the use of SEO strategies and the "semantic nature" of the web in extract 118, which will be

reported when showing the participants' references to the peculiarities of online language.

A general trend towards simplification can also be noted, as attempts to simplify texts are mentioned in various parts of the data. Some participants mention simplification without elaborating on the concept and providing details of what they really mean. This, for example, is the case of MM2 and MW1. The latter talks about "stripping it down and "simplifying it", and repeats that these are priorities. He claims that he does not understand the reason why texts should be "complicated": according to him, their intended audience (i.e. a general audience) needs something which is "easy" to understand. Again, simplicity is preferred to accuracy.

> (109) I just wanna **simplify** everything. I **don't know why this all needs to be complicated**. If someone wants to come and complicate it, then I'm sure we will do that, but I think … the majority of the people want something that they can connect to, that is **easy**, and that **they can feel that they understand**. [MW1]

MM1 refers to simplification in terms of length: according to him, the museum does not want to provide a lot of details about the exhibitions online, so as to attract people on-site.

> (110) […] with the exhibitions, it has to be … a certain level … it has to have more detail … than online, because we want people to visit the exhibition, so you put too much online, I guess … what's the point visiting? So you have to get a kind of a taste of what the exhibition is about … and **simplifying how much you talk about it**, I guess. [MM1]

WG2 also points to the need of reducing texts, but in a specific way. He does not aim at simplifying, but rather at "trying to cut out" parts of texts which he defines as "unnecessarily kind of heavy academic texts". He thinks that this kind of texts can exist in some formats, but that they should not be included at "an entry point level", as they undermine accessibility for a general audience. He points to the idea of "trying to make things as economic as possible" by reducing contents and making them clearer and simpler. He also argues that if visitors are not able to understand the message of an exhibition, this might be related to texts being unnecessarily complicated.

However, especially at the Manchester Museum, an opposite concern can be observed, i.e. one regarding oversimplification. MM1 and MW1, who both belong to the Visitor Team, express the fear of making the texts sound "patronising". Making texts too simple might undermine people's opportunity for understanding and meaning-making by imposing a single top-down view. MM1 claims that the museum does not

want to humiliate readers, as he is aware they are "intelligent" and thus capable of understanding a text.

(111) […] we'd always … write in a way that's not overly academic, but also … be sure **not to make it … too simple**, because **we don't want to patronise out visitors**. We have intelligent visitors. [MM1]

(112) And I think by … writing the scientific name and the definition of it, I think, in **a non-patronising way**, just as a kind of sub-heading … is really important." [MM1]

(113) […] we wanted to very actively get away from that, and remove things that might be considered jargon, things that might be … and **not go way too down** where you're kind of **patronising** and **making it too simple**, but having it so that it's accessible for everybody to understand. [MW1]

MM2 and MW2 describe the risk of "dumbing down" when trying to simplify texts and making them more accessible. Both participants thus stress that making texts simpler does not mean making them more unintelligent. In particular, MM2 thinks that raising expectations and creating texts to a higher standard by providing technical details about the collections is important for museums as they are not "a neutral space", but a cultural institution specialised on specific domains of knowledge and having the opportunity to disseminate it. Implementing text accessibility should not jeopardise the readers' possibility of learning and meaning-making.

(114) And frankly, to get into the … the debate about **dumbing down** … if you raise the bar a bit higher and say: you know, here is a technical description, on a website or on a physical label, about a very specialist group of material in a museum … you know, **we're not a neutral space**, you've come into a museum, we're not in the middle of a … a shopping centre […] [MM2]

(115) I think this was imported from some of the consultations that the … the modern designers … were looking at these texts, and trying to make it accessible to a number of audiences, **without dumbing it down** […] [MW2]

Some participants also mention features that are typical of online texts. MM1 and MW2 points to the use of headings and sub-headings to structure the text, e.g. including both the scientific name of a collection in the heading and its general, common name in the sub-heading.

WG3 assumes that the readers' attention mainly focuses on the first sentence, and thus stresses the importance of prioritising the most important information by putting it at the top of the page in the first sentence.

(116) I have been on text writing workshops myself in the past, which … kind of help you … look at … how to **put the most important thing that you want to say first**, so you're actually trying to structure it in that way, so rather than perhaps leaving it for the conclusion … that was taught perhaps 25 years ago always told you to kind of leave the best till the last, leave the punchline till the end, and I

think what that kind of structure taught me was to kind of almost **say what you really want to say in the first sentence, cause that's when you've usually got people's attention**. [WG3]

MW1 and MW2 both highlight the possibility of using links to connect pages that may be related to each other and appropriately organise contents within the website. In particular, MW2, who works in Marketing & Communications, advocates for the use of "contextual links" which need to be descriptive and meaningful, as well as metadata for images and tags in the body text of the page. He also mentions that the latter are important due to "the semantic nature of how Google works", explicitly referring to SEO: within his team, they look at "which searches people have used" to get to the museum website in order to understand the keywords employed by users. This helps them understand how users normally find the website and what they are looking for.

(117) And also maybe if there are words in there that need to be in there that might be a bit complicated, just **link them** … to something else that might give a better context of what it means […] [MW1]

(118) It's been quite individual in terms of … working with bloggers, which is probably another one of our key areas for **SEO**. And with the website itself, we'd look at how … which searches … again, going back to the analytics, **which searches people have used to find us**, which … **tags** and **terms** are kind of the most … mentioned in relation to us, and … and also the way in which we describe things as well, so as a kind of almost … I'm forgetting the name of the principle now, but the kind of … the semantic nature of how Google works with texts and having **contextual links**, rather than any kind of … basic good best practice really, so avoiding "click here", having the … the … kind of **metadata for images**, the **alt tags in good order**, so accessibility … making sure that we are aware of who our key referrers are and where people go to from our sites … so making sure that kind of … effectively … network our presences. But also yeah, the copy on the page, and the **tags** in the body of the page as well. [MW2]

Finally, MW3 emphasises the need to offer an experience which is "more image-led" for people who are not experts, implicitly assuming that the online experience generally needs to be mainly visual: the abundance of images and of a visual type of communication in general is a feature that he found on other cultural institutions' websites which have inspired him.

(119) And then you've got the audience that doesn't know about all that and is after just an experience about what a museum has and maybe is **more image-led** and what is written in about them is a bit more informative. … So, yeah. [MW3]

(120) I feel that the big thing we always take from other sites is … more the presentation and the images. It's trying to … especially for the people who want it to make it a lot more **image-led**. [MW3]

These clues pointing to features which are typical of web texts may reveal that participants do pay attention to adapting texts for the web to some extent, or at least that they acknowledge the specificities of web texts.

<u>Writing for translation</u>

Most of the participants refer to issues related to translation at a certain point of the interview, even if they were not prompted to talk about it. For instance, MW3 asks a question on translation at the beginning of the interview, assuming that this is the focus of the interview: a possible reason for this may be that MW3 — like all the other participants — was told that the present thesis was carried out in a translation department.

> (121) So it's not about the information necessarily being prepared for any kind of **translation**, it's just the appropriateness of the English to non-native English speaking people? [MW3]

When asked about how they try to engage with a multicultural audience, MM1 talks about the possibility of translating online contents to be included in a specific blog about South Asia.

> (122) I: And how do you try to engage with a multicultural audience?
>
> P: Well … we're about to embark on South Asian specific blog. Hopefully … we've not fully explored it, but it would be really nice if we could get to **translate that into different languages** that are spoken in South Asia. [MM1]

MW1 and MW2 mention the use of Google Translate to translate some of the museum contents. MW1 refers to a specific exhibition at the museum where the visitor can get mobile digital contents in different languages. He explains that Google Translate has been used for this translation with non-professional post-editing carried out by members of the staff speaking the languages involved. However, MW1's view is somewhat idealistic, in that he hopes that Google Translate will evolve and thus be appropriate to use to translate texts into "all the languages".

> (123) We're still looking at how **Google Translate** works, and how we can try and find other things. But the additional information, we're putting it in different languages now. So you could be able to scan … we've got … "Nature's Through Romans' Eyes" at the museum. […] so you can scan something you get in English or you can go: now it's in Spanish, or it's in Italian. And **we've Google Translated it and then we've edited it** … to see how it fits, cause I wanna keep seeing how the **Google … Translate** evolves. Because if it's getting better, then we can rely on it a little bit more, and then we could try and use all the languages. … So right now it's still in its infancy. [MW1]

MW2 also refers to the use of Google Translate to create subtitles for their videos into different languages: apparently, he thinks this is necessary mainly to engage with the diverse local communities in Manchester, but also to be more international.

(124) I think in the past we made use of **Google Translate** as an option, and kind of tried to direct people to that also. … But, yeah, in an ideal world it would be great to **have all of our videos transcribed** … into multiple languages etc, but it's been a case of capacity really. But yeah, in terms of Manchester having so many languages as well … it would be great, just in terms of local audience, local communities, local visitors, but … obviously … we hope to be even more … on the international kind of radar really. [MW2]

MM2 refers to "translatability": although he does not give a definition of what he means by this, the concept is probably related to the ease of translating contents from one language into another or more than one. Translatability, for example, may involve the use of a controlled language in order to reduce ambiguity and complexity at different levels. MM2 explains that when they wrote the texts for the museum website, they tried to think about accessibility but not in terms of translatability. Then, he mentions the possibility of having a web page translated into another language, probably automatically through the use of machine translation systems such as Google Translate. However, he seems to also suggest that when he wrote them, he did not think about the ease of translating his own texts into other languages, such as Arabic.

(125) Here … we were trying to make the text as accessible as possible. But I do not think we were thinking specifically about … **translatability**. Now, I don't know … this is a technical question … nowadays, let's try … can you translate pages? If it's a web page … don't know how you do it? But … if I were using for example a page in Italian … and my Italian is not so good, there may be an option to take a page like this and simply translate it into English. So … there was no consideration given to how easy that would be. [MM2]

(126) I try to make texts as accessible as possible … but I'm not specifically writing it or thinking consciously about it being **translated into Arabic**. [MM2]

In extract 127, MM2 also comments that texts may be written in a specific way if the authors are already aware that those texts will be translated, but does not specify how the texts would be written. He explains that he did not write the texts for the website by checking "legibility" or "readability of English for translation": here, he does not seem to refer to translation intended as providing contents into another language, but he rather seems to suggest that he did not think about L2 speakers of English, who may need to translate those texts into their own language by themselves in order to fully understand them. MM2 later refers to a lecture he gave at the University of Bologna, where he knew that interpretation services were offered, and thus that what he was saying was being simultaneously translated into Italian: apparently, this helped him to be more conscious of his use of language in order to facilitate translation. According to him, a similar approach would have been useful for writing texts for the

website, i.e. thinking about the texts potentially being translated, but actually this was not the case.

> (127) I try to keep to the guidelines for the … for the original label, but then once things get complicated there is so much text … it's almost as if there's too great a volume of staff, and then … you can't check it … you certainly can't check it with thoughts about … the **legibility or … the readability of English for translation**. And really it's funny that you're asking me this because when I gave this lecture in Bologna … I really thought about how I was expressing my English. Because it had to be **translated simultaneously**. And maybe if I had thought about it more the text that I produced for the website would be more like … my spoken version of that lecture in … in Bologna. [MM2]

Other comments can be found in the data where the concept of translation is referred to, for example in relation to the use of terminology. MM2 and MW1 make contrasting observations about technical terms. MM2 says that technical terms "do translate to other languages", which probably means that they are internationally recognisable by people working within the field: as already mentioned (cf. Section 5.2.1), MM2 assumes that people from other countries who are specialists in a specific academic area know the terms related to that field in English, due to its status as a lingua franca in academia.

> (128) These [technical terms] **do translate to other languages** … and anyone … I don't want to make generalisations here, but people […] who are familiar with [a specific field] are probably being taught … a lot of the times with reference to English scholarship, or scholarship in English, or in French. [MM2]

On the contrary, MW1 suggests that technical terms "might not translate the same", which perhaps means that a certain technical term may be difficult to understand to L2 speakers of the language, and thus may not convey its meaning.

> (129) But if you do have that language and you're already intrigued cause you go: "I know what entomology is" and you wanna continue on reading, but … it's about trying to capture as many people as possible, so that you're not alienating anyone. And with people with English as not their first language, **it might not translate the same**, so you wanna use quite simplistic language to … maybe dissect a complex theory or term, and I think it's useful for everybody. [MW1]

WG1 makes a similar remark on the language involved in on-site interpretive texts at the gallery, saying that "it might translate differently into different languages". However, it is not clear what participants mean by "translate" in this context: they do not seem to use this idea to refer to translation from one language into another, but rather to describe a text which can or cannot be meaningful to L2 speakers of the language involved.

> (130) It's the same with this exhibition. So, there's careful thinking about … language and how it **might translate differently into different languages** as well, from the interpretation that we have here. [WG1]

Although translation into other languages is mentioned by participants at different points during the interviews, it does not seem to be a daily thought when it comes to the production of the texts for the website.

<u>Interim summing up</u>

Comments from the participants suggest that a style guide for writing online texts is not strategically and consistently adopted by the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth: language use thus seems to come down to individual choices, although style is supposed to be influenced by shared guidelines on brand and visual identity.

Language use does not seem to be greatly affected by the intended audience: language is adapted only when thinking about the intended readers in terms of prior knowledge (e.g. academic vs. "general" audience), but not in terms of linguistic background or origin. Furthermore, a common idea in the data seems to be that "simple" language — without oversimplifying — may serve different types of readers and be readable for "everybody": there is a constant reference to making texts accessible to "all", as if it could be possible to shape language so that it fits the needs of a broad, heterogeneous audience, but the way in which this could be achieved is not clear. Data seem to reveal that participants do not have a strong linguistic awareness, neither in terms of the intended audience's needs nor in terms of their actual language use.

Finally, although some participants refer to translation and "translatability", the latter do not seem to be daily thoughts or widely discussed issues affecting text production.

We now move on to the report of the themes developed from the EU-EN interviews.

5.3 EU-EN interviews

This section presents the results related to the EU-EN interviews. Through the thematic analysis of the data collected (cf. Section 3.5.4.2), four major themes were developed that address the research question and sub-questions. The themes are as follows:

1. Original and English versions of the website: talking to whom?

1.1. The intended audience of the original version;

1.2. The intended audience of the English version;

1.3. The use of web analytics;

2. Different university museums, different relationships with the university

3. Two sides of the same coin: writing and translating texts for the website;

3.1. Original version: people involved in writing;

3.2. Translated version: translation process and people involved;

3.3. Top-three most important pages on the website;

4. One-size-fits-all approach to language: which English?

4.1. Discussing external communication;

4.2. Conforming to guidelines for writing texts;

4.3. Simplification strategies vs. use of terminology;

4.4. Use of English: one language, different perspectives.

In reporting themes including sub-themes, a final interim summing-up section will also be provided.

As mentioned in Section 3.5.3.2, the acronyms used to indicate the participants refer to the country in which the corresponding museum is located. In Table 5.4 participants are identified by the team to which they belong.

Participant	Institution	Team
DK	Natural History Museum, Copenhagen	Marketing & Communications
FI	Helsinki University Museum, Helsinki	Collections
HR	Botanical Garden of the Faculty of Science, Zagreb	Collections
IT	Museum of Human Anatomy, Turn	Collections

Table 5.4. EU-EN participants

The interview with IT was the only one which was not carried out in English but in Italian due to practical reasons: in reporting results related to this interview, the original extracts in Italian (in italic) are followed by my translation into English.

A note is in order before reporting the results. Drawing on the EU-EN interview guide (see Appendix A), no reference was directly made to "translation" in the questions, as I could not assume a priori that the texts in English were the product of a translation process rather than being written ad hoc in that language. In other words, I asked participants about "the process of writing texts in English" and never referred to

"translating texts" in the questions, unless participants had already mentioned translation themselves during the interview, thus letting me know that a translation was carried out in the first place. Since all the four cases included a translation process to create texts in English, I have decided to refer to "translation" directly in the report, as well as to include it in the name of the third theme.

5.3.1 Theme 1. Original and English versions of the website: talking to whom?

As in the case of the UK-EN interviews, a fundamental theme which was developed was the museum's intended audience for their website. However, while in the UK-EN cases there is one version of the website which is supposed to address its intended audience, the EU-EN cases involve two (or more) versions of the website, which are meant to engage with different audiences. This theme has thus been divided into the following sub-themes:

- The intended audience for the original version;
- The intended audience for the English version;
- The use of web analytics.

While the first two sections are complementary, in that they focus on the original and the English versions of the website, the latter is thought to provide a different perspective, focusing on the use of tools to assess what is the real audience visiting the website.

The intended audience for the original version

I first tried to capture how participants imagine the audience for the original version of their website. Apparently, the intended audience mostly coincides with the museum physical visitors. DK, for instance, describes the situation at the Natural History Museum of Copenhagen. At the moment, their website is divided into three different areas, i.e. "Collection", "Education" and "Research": as the research centre and the museum have been recently separated, the museum staff are planning to create a new version of the website including only the "Collection" area. According to DK, this new version of the website needs to be exclusively "visitor-oriented", thus providing information which are necessary to people who may want to visit the museum, namely location and directions, exhibitions, activities and family programmes.

(131) […] we'll also remove some content that has to do with the research and all that stuff … but then simply just make it … **visitor-oriented**. How do you find us? What are our … exhibitions? What … what are our activities? What can families do? All that stuff. [DK]

Interestingly, DK divides intended readers into two separate categories: "visitor audience" or "museum part", and "scientific audience" (i.e. researchers). Apparently, he assumes that the museum only addresses the former group, while the latter is targeted by the research centre of the university.

(132) […] we're talking about … **visitor audience**, not scientific audience here, right? Just to make absolutely certain we're talking about **the museum part**. [DK]

Furthermore, while talking about the aims of the website, DK explicitly defines their "main audiences" as "families" and "individuals", specifying that they want to attract "people that have an interest in natural history".

Similarly, HR claims that their intention is to provide visitors with the information they need to visit the Botanical Garden, thus confirming that their main intended audience on the website reflects the physical audience.

(133) […] we wanted to prepare **our visitors** to have information if they want to see it [the Botanical Garden] […] [HR]

On the contrary, when asked about the intended audience for the online pages about the collections, FI does not seem to refer directly to museum visitors, but to online users as "the general audience" reading the online texts. She also refers to researchers looking for specific objects within the collection.

(134) I think … for one … to **the general audience who are maybe … just reading** and … trying to find out what kind of museum we have and what kind of collections we have in general. And then also for **researchers** who are looking for websites for … to know if there is some specific object which he/she is interested in. [FI]

However, in extract 135 she stresses the importance of the general audience. She explains that as part of the university they have an intranet website aimed at the university staff, but the "outer website" is "the website for the general public", who is "more important" to them.

(135) […] we have this intra website also but we don't have very much stuff there, because this … as we said, this outer website, **the website for the general public**, is more important to us, because we are … I think … we are more orientated to our own public … university is orientated to students, those who are maybe becoming future students, researchers and so on, but to us **the general public is more important**. [FI]

Like DK, HR mainly refers to the physical visitors: he assumes that "people who are coming" do check the website before the visit, but he does not support this assumption with any data about the visits. However, he believes that some of their visitors are also teachers with school groups.

> (136) And I think **people who are coming here** […] are checking our website. But also I know the **people from Croatia** are checking it because … if you want to order something or guided tour information they have to go and open it and so they can look at it. And also we send an information to **teachers and professors** who are usually coming with kids to the Garden, that they can find all the necessary information in the website about the history and the collections. [HR]

He also seems convinced that most of their visitors — especially the local ones — are not "professionals", but people who decide to enjoy a day at the Botanical Garden "for leisure".

> (137) […] most of the people are **not professionals**, who come to the Botanical Garden. Especially Croatians, you know: they come here **for leisure** and to enjoy. [HR]

On the contrary, IT explains that they have visitors who are scholars or researchers from different scientific fields, and some of them are international researchers who visit their collection to carry out research.

> (138) […] *questi crani sono una collezione di riferimento per **studiosi di diverso tipo**: abbiamo spesso ... medici, dentisti, piuttosto che antropologici, fisici, che vengono qua. E spesso **vengono dall'estero per fare ricerche**.* // […] these skulls are a reference collection for **different types of scholars**: we often get … doctors, dentists, but also anthropologists and physicists, who come here. And they often **come from abroad to do research**. [IT] (my translation)

However, data from the interview with IT seem to suggest that they mostly think of the general audience as their main audience, which she refers to as "the big audience", thus pointing to its size and heterogeneity.

<u>The intended audience for the English version</u>

I asked the participants about the audience they imagined when they wrote the texts in English for the website. FI tentatively suggests that they did not think thoroughly about this. Later during the interview, FI describes the intended audience for the English version of the website by saying that they may have thought about it when they reviewed the translations of the texts: she mentions international or exchange/lecturers who are at University of Helsinki, as well as students and researchers from other universities abroad or "other audiences in other countries", which is very vague.

(139) When we approved the translation, we maybe … think that the readers are neither … **exchange students** or **exchange teachers** or other foreign teachers or professors in the university in Finland, but also of course **students and researchers in other universities** maybe or **other audiences in other countries**. [FI]

On the contrary, IT seems to have a clear idea of their intended audience, claiming that they did not think of scholars and researchers, but rather a general audience.

(140) I: Quando c'è stata quindi questa decisione di creare una versione inglese del sito, a che pubblico avete pensato o state tuttora pensando?

*IT: A un **pubblico generico**, non a un pubblico di studiosi, no. //*

I: So when the decision to create an English version of the site was made, what audience have you thought about or are you still thinking about?

IT: A **general audience**, not an audience of scholars, no. [IT] (my translation)

At other points during the interview, IT seems aware that some of their physical visitors are international tourists, i.e. 5% of all their visitors according to a questionnaire which visitors are invited to fill in at the end of their visit. In particular, the museum welcomes many French tourists, due to its proximity to France. She also mentions that they have school groups from abroad visiting the museum. These facts, however, do not seem to have informed the English version of the website, which is not intended specifically for international tourists or school groups.

While FI does not seem convinced about having many tourists visiting the museum, both DK and HR think about international tourists as the intended audience for the English website. In particular, HR refers to tourists from other European countries, but also tourists from Asia, thus showing awareness about the cultural background and geographical provenance of their visitors.

(141) I: But when you think about your audiences, do you think about-

P: Tourists.

I: International tourists?

P: Absolutely. That is **international tourists**. [DK]

(142) […] we get more and more **tourists** every year. Actually, I think half of the visitors during the last two years … from maybe … May until now … are **mostly tourists**. We get lots of different tourists … **from European countries** also, but lately quite a lot of **people from Asian countries** … especially from Korea, from China and Japan sometimes. [HR]

Furthermore, when referring to on-site texts, HR assumes that international tourists read those texts more than Croatian people: this seems to confirm the

underlying assumption that the latter visit the garden because they are looking for a leisure experience (as already mentioned), while the former prefer a learning one.

DK claims that they do not think about international students: these are supposedly more interested in the research centre of the university rather than the museum, especially now that the two institutions are separated. However, this may seem a contradiction: apparently, as students are not attracted by the museum, the museum does not feel the need for serving that audience, while this could possibly be a reason why the museum should try to engage with students in the first place.

(143) I: Do you also think about international students, studying here at the university?

P: No. … To some degree, we would have done before but … but the thing is that … this is "Education". And this is "Collections" and this is "Research". So, this is the sort of the three pillars. … We will … distance ourselves from research and education a lot. [DK]

DK also thinks that they do not target people who have moved to Denmark and may not know Danish. Furthermore, he explains that they only think about "the target audience", which seems to include mainly families and general visitors: thus, people who have moved to Denmark are not supposed to be part of "the target audience".

(144) I: Do you also think about people who have moved to the country?

P: No. No. … No. No, that would be … No, we don't. We think about … **the target audience**, and we don't particularly think: "well, we have this percentage of people who have actually moved to Denmark." No, we haven't done that. [DK]

Apparently, none of the participants thought of non-native speakers of English when translating the texts or sending them to be translated. DK admits that this was not part of their thoughts, but shows interest in this question by saying that he will bring up this issue with his team.

The use of web analytics

FI mentions the use of Google Analytics to know who visits their website, but explains that she has been too busy with other tasks and she has not looked at these data. IT also talks about the statistics on the visits to their website, but admits she is not responsible for that, and thus does not know data about online users visiting the museum website. In a similar vein, HR refers to the analytics offered by WordPress, but makes it clear that he does not know anything about it because a colleague of his deals with these data. Furthermore, HR explains that their website is still too young to use the analytics

appropriately, but they will do so "after one year … of web existence". Apparently, the EU-EN participants that work in the Collections team are not familiar with data about the usage of the website and the types of users who actually read their texts.

On the contrary, DK, as part of the Marketing & Communications team, reports that he has been using web statistics. These have revealed that the English version of the research section of the website is visited more than the original version of the same section: assuming that the research area is mostly visited by researchers, this seems to suggest that the museum has many international researchers — probably more than the local ones — visiting its website. However, as the research part of the website is going to be eliminated, DK argues that the actual audience for the original and the English versions will look like each other more in the future, thus meaning that "families" and "museum visitors" in general will represent the majority of the online users of the website.

Interim summing up

Overall, data seem to suggest that the intended audience for the original version of the websites involved in this research is the general audience, meaning physical visitors to the museum and families in particular. Researchers and teachers are also mentioned, but do not seem to play an important role. As far as the English version is concerned, while FI mentions international students and researchers, IT claims that they did not think of a professional audience for the international version of the website, but rather to a general audience. Similarly, DK and HR explicitly describe that audience as international tourists. However, participants do not seem to think that the image of a specific intended audience has informed to some extent the creation of the website as a whole and in particular of its English version.

5.3.2 Theme 2. Different university museums, different relationships with the university

As was done during the UK-EN interviews, I specifically brought up the fact that both institutions are university museums, and asked EU-EN participants about their relationship with the university in order to understand the extent to which this may have affected their language use and the creation of the website as a whole.

In particular, data shed light on whether the museums involved are supposed to conform to university guidelines for creating their website and writing texts for it. For instance, HR explains that being a university botanical garden does not affect their language use, as they are not expected to follow any guidelines provided by the university. Apparently, the university only asks the garden to comply with the European regulations, such as the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). According to him, most of the botanical gardens in Europe are institutions which belong to a research centre or a faculty, so HR's situation is not exceptional.

HR also emphasises their autonomy from the university: he explains that creating the website was their own idea at the botanical garden, and they independently carried out this process, without any requests being made by the university. However, he clarifies that the garden is a member of a European network, thus stressing the commitment to discussing common issues with other botanical gardens around Europe.

> (145) Everything that we did was **our own idea**: it was not presented or asked of us from the faculty or the university. So … you know, **we depend on ourselves** and … but also … our Garden is **part of the European Network of Botanical Gardens**, so our Director goes to meeting two times a year with … chiefs of different botanical gardens in European countries and they discuss different things. So, web pages were not really part of their talks ever. [HR]

Unlike HR, FI stresses on different occasions that the Helsinki University Museum follows the guidelines of the university. First, they are required to provide contents in three different languages, i.e. English and the two official languages of Finland (Finnish and Swedish). Apparently, the use of the English language is something which is fundamental for both the university and the museum. This is linked to a second aspect, which is the importance of "internationality": FI claims that the university pays a great deal of attention to being international, especially in terms of getting money from international students and researchers.

> (146) I think in the University of Helsinki strategies this **international … role** is very important and universities try to get also money from abroad, students, researchers … it's very important for the university, this **internationality**. And that's why it's maybe … we also … think it's important to us. [FI]

Third, when asked about the main aims of the museum website, FI points to "the whole university strategy", describing accessibility as one of their priorities, e.g. by enabling blind users to access the contents on the website.

> (147) I: What do you think its main aims are? The main aims of your website.

> P: I think … it's … it's something to do … with **the whole university strategy** and also our own museum strategy. We must … be **accessible** and available because we got our money partly from the government and state. […] And also this **accessibility** is very important today. It's … that … we use the **university's templates** […] for example, if you're blind or have some kind of difficulties, there are means that site can be accessible also if you have some difficulties. [FI]

Finally, she also explains that a university office, i.e. "Communications and Community Relations", provided the museum with specific web writing guidelines, which they followed when they created the museum website. Therefore, university belonging seems to encompass different aspects and decisions at the museum.

> (148) […] this **university Communications and Community Relations**, they helped … universities … this museum and other university units […] and they have made very good … **guidelines** for … for these content creators. And when we made the new site, we read and studied these guidelines very much and … tried to follow the lines […] [FI]

DK does not explicitly mention university web writing guidelines used by the Natural History Museum of the University of Copenhagen, but he explains that when writing texts for the museum website they need to "speak with absolute authority": this means that they need to check that content is "correct" with researchers and experts before publishing it online, so as to ensure scientific credibility. DK only mentions university guidelines related to the design of the website: he argues that they have been required to adhere to these guidelines, but they actually "need something different" to promote what they do at the museum "visually content-wise". He declares that this has been difficult for them, as until now the university has not given them this freedom. Nonetheless, he hopes that now that the research centre and the museum have been separated, the university will let them make their own decisions in terms of web design without mounting "resistance". This description of the relationship between museum and university conveys a struggle between the university's interests and the museum's need for a more independent, open approach to the construction and use of the website. In particular, DK advocates for the removal of some elements of the website which refer to the academic environment, and may thus be "confusing" for families and general visitors.

> (149) And for many years the **university … design guidelines** … we've had to adhere to them. Completely. […] **we need something different** from our website. We need **visually content-wise**. And that has been very very difficult for us […] the university, the dean, faculty keep saying: "But look. You're part of the research here. We can't just let you do stuff with this, because … then we can't see it's the University of Copenhagen." […] So, now we expect … it … now we expect **no resistance** […] [DK]

(150) […] the version 1.5, we need to sort of **remove elements** … that are part of the university and that is simply just **confusing** for people that are … you know, families, visitors. "Why is there 'intranet' and 'phonebook'?" We don't need that, right? We don't need the huge footer […] **We need different stuff**. [DK]

DK further asserts that they normally compare their communication and brand strategy with that of other university museums, in order to understand how to promote themselves as part of the university.

IT describes their situation saying that their website was made by an external agency. This, however, was the product of a great effort made by the museum staff to get the permission from the university to outsource the creation of the website. The reason for this was that the university required the museum to use the university's own website, while the museum preferred to use a different one. The domain of the museum website still belongs to the university, but having their own site allows them to internally manage and update it, although she admits that their web platform (Joomla) is now "a little obsolete". When asked directly about specific guidelines from the university, IT replies that they are not required to follow any.

IT also illustrates their relationship with the university, which is not all roses: she claims that their museums are not so appreciated by the university staff, in particular lecturers, although she argues that museums may be a fundamental instrument for education.

(151) *I musei […] non sono **mai stati troppo graditi dai docenti**. […] Da poco c'è un po' di cambiamento di idee sul fatto che di fatto anche i musei possono essere uno strumento non solo di comunicazione ma anche di insegnamento, di formazione […]* // Our museums […] have **never been too popular among lecturers**. […] Recently there has been some change in ideas about the fact that museums can be a tool not only for communication but also for teaching and education […] [IT] (my translation)

On the other hand, IT supports their academic identity by saying that this is very important to them, and they do promote and stress it when they give items from their collections on loan to other museums abroad: she argues that they care about being recognised as university museums, because this is part of their identity, and academic heritage is also part of the university.

(152) *[…] **noi ci teniamo tantissimo a ricalcare il fatto che siamo musei universitari**. Noi esportiamo molto i nostri musei all'estero con le mostre. […] E questa è l'occasione in cui **rimarchiamo la nostra identità**.* // […] **we are very keen to stress the fact that we are university museums**. We export our museums abroad a lot through exhibitions. […] And this is the occasion in which **we underline our identity**. [IT] (my translation)

Different museums seem to have different approaches to being part of the university, spanning from a close, dependent relationship to a more autonomous one. In certain cases (HR), being a university museum does not seem to have a particular impact on the institution, while in others (DK, FI, IT) this may either affect directly the construction of the website or result in the compliance with university guidelines in terms of general strategies, design and style. If university belonging does have an impact on the museum's choices, this is sometimes described as a normal procedure which is part of the university's overall strategy (FI), but other times it seems to be felt as a constriction, and defined in more negative terms (DK, IT). Overall, few mentions to language choices and style in the data seem to be directly connected with being a university museum.

5.3.3 Theme 3. Two sides of the same coin: writing and translating texts for the website

The theme of writing texts for the website — either in the original language or in English — is a central one in the data. The steps included in this process and the people involved are the major aspects of this theme, which were brought up during the interviews. Particular attention was paid to the creation of the international version and to the characteristics of the people involved, i.e. type of expertise and native language. The former characteristic was considered interesting in order to understand whether the people involved in writing or translating texts in English were either disciplinary experts in one of the fields related to each museum's collections, communication experts or translators. On the other hand, the latter characteristic was important to investigate whether the people in charge for this process were native or non-native speakers of English: this was also intended to explore perceptions around non-native speakers writing in English as L2, as well as the relevance of the native speaker paradigm (cf. Section 2.4.1).

The theme is divided into the following three sub-themes:

- Original version: people involved in writing;
- Translated version: translation process and people involved;
- Top-three most important pages on the website.

The first one focuses on the production of the texts for the original version of the website, while the second one explores the creation of the texts in English. As the English texts of these museums' websites were the product of a translation process, an initial focus on the original version of the website is essential to explore the original material which was used for — and may have partially informed — the translations into English. Finally, the third sub-theme reports the three most important pages on the museums' websites as identified by the EU-EN participants.

<u>Original version: people involved in writing</u>

The interviews suggest that all the participants were to some extent involved in writing some texts for their museum website. Furthermore, most of the participants (DK, FI, HR) comment that different teams within the same institution were involved in this writing process. For instance, FI says that the exhibition team and the collection team both took part in writing texts in Finnish for the website. She explains that each person involved wrote their own texts, and then they commented on each other's texts and gave feedback in order to understand if a text was "too complicated" and thus in need of editing. FI also adds that this feedback process only applies to the Finnish texts, not so much to the English ones. However, she thinks one person in the staff, who has a good level of English, sometimes notices if the texts in English have issues related to comprehensibility.

DK shares the opinion that texts on the website were the product of a collective effort, as different departments were involved, i.e. communication, exhibition and researchers. He claims that his team, i.e. communication, would provide "a first draft" or help other people and "guide them" in writing their texts. He adds that the communication team alone cannot write texts about the exhibitions, thus stressing the important role played by the exhibition department in this process: according to him, they are the only staff members who can describe the reasons and scope of an exhibition, as they were the ones who created it. However, DK also highlights the centrality of the communication team: although they first need collaboration on the part of the exhibition department and the researchers, who are the disciplinary experts, to write the academic texts, they eventually need to rewrite these texts in order to "find that story" and create a copy that "people can read" and understand. He uses a food metaphor to describe this process, saying that the communication department need to "chew the words" and then "regurgitate them" to get a product which can be easily consumed. This seems to imply

that the exhibition department cannot do this alone, as perhaps they do not know how to speak to the general audience.

(153) We couldn't write just any text there. We needed to know: why is this whale important? Why are these little seashells? Why is this spider important? And then we need to … **find that story** and then we need to … **chew the words** and … **regurgitate them into something that … that people can read**. Either the … exhibition department, mostly the exhibition department has done that. [DK]

HR says that "everyone" at the botanical garden was involved in writing texts for the website, explicitly referring to "all the botanists". He also explains that the contents on the website were derived from a paper publication, namely a booklet for the guided tour. As this booklet is meant for visitors strolling around the garden, contents on the website may be thought to specifically serve people who may want to visit the botanical garden.

(154) […] we had to re-write and write the new guide with new information and so on. […] We used … basically, **most of those texts for the website** and we already had the Croatian and English version, so that was very helpful. [HR]

According to HR, the texts derived from the booklet were to some extent adapted before being published online: some texts may have been "shortened", while "new texts and sub-texts" were created. He adds that the website offers more contents than the booklet, so new texts were written ad hoc for the web. HR also explains that the booklet was created with a specific "concept", i.e. providing visitors with possible paths to explore the garden during the visit. According to him, this concept was not adopted online. This idea is, however, still present on the website: texts do seem to follow a visit-oriented approach (cf. Section 4.3.2.2), as they are rich in directives guiding the readers in a virtual tour of the botanical garden, and thus seem to be written for somebody who is visiting or is going to visit the garden.

Extracts 155-156 confirm that the collection texts on the website serve people who will potentially visit the botanical garden: HR explicitly says that they wanted to prepare their visitors by providing them with the information they may need in order to appreciate the flowers and plants in the garden. This supports the idea that HR assumes that people do visit the website before visiting the museum. Although HR seems aware that the text he wrote is long, he does not consider this as a problem. Furthermore, he thinks that the website offers "simple information". However, this judgment may be biased by his own background, as he is an expert in botany and he was the one writing the text: in other words, the text may look simple to him, but not to a lay person.

(155) This was my text […] this was written from my own head. **Simple information**. There is **a lot of text**, **a lot of plants are involved**, but this is just because we wanted to prepare **our visitors** to have information if they want to see it. [HR]

(156) […] we're trying **to spread the knowledge**. This is the most important thing for us. [HR]

As in the case of HR, IT explains that the texts for the visit contained in their museum booklet and the texts on the website are pretty much the same texts. Her assumption seems to be that if a text "works" from the communicative point of view on paper, it will "work" in the same way online. However, she adds that the museum staff met the external consultants a few times to discuss the creation of the website: apparently, the external agency gave them feedback on web communication. When asked whether the texts have been adapted, she adds that texts may have been reduced a little in length before the online publication.

(157) *P: Testi e immagini sono stati dati da noi ai ragazzi che si sono occupati di mettere in forma il sistema. E devo dire che molti di questi testi **non sono poi così diversi dai testi che lei vedrà sulla guida** … così come le immagini, in fondo alla fine **si cerca anche di ottimizzare**: creato qualcosa che funziona anche dal punto di vista comunicativo […] Abbiamo fatto tanti **incontri per la costruzione del sito** volti a migliorare … dal punto di vista comunicativo grazie alle loro conoscenze, alle loro ricerche in ambito di web, quello che noi avevamo in testa più a livello di documentazione cartacea, ecco.*

I: Quindi in parte quei testi sono stati adattati ad un linguaggio web?

*P: Sì. Sì. Magari un pochino, sì, ad un linguaggio web, oppure **ridotti** … riassunti, insomma. Hanno fatto un lavoro di questo genere. //*

Texts and images were given by us to the young people who were responsible for creating the system. And I must say that many of these texts **are not so different from the texts that you will see on the guide** … and this also applies to images, because at the end, **you also try to optimise**: once you have created something that also works from the communicative point of view […] We have made many **meetings for the construction of the site**, which were aimed at improving … the communicative side of what we had in mind more at the level of paper documentation, thanks to their knowledge and their research on the web.

I: So have those texts been partially adapted to a web language?

P: Yes. Yes. Maybe a little, yes, to a web language, or **reduced** … summarised, really. This is what they did. [IT] (my translation)

Translated version: translation process and people involved

As far as the production of the texts in English is concerned, all the participants mention that a translation was carried out for this purpose, as shown in extracts 158-161.

(158) […] I have **translated** a lot of stuff […] we have simply asked someone, a **translator**, to help us. [DK]

(159) […] we have the university's own translation services and we sent texts to **translation** […] [FI]

(160) […] So, we decided it's not a good idea […] until we have someone who can actually check the language and **translate** it … in good quality. [HR]

(161) […] *l'inglese del sito web … è stato …* **tradotto** *dalle persone, dai ragazzi che hanno costruito il sito stesso* […] // […] the English of the website … was … **translated** by the people, by the guys who built the site itself […] [IT] (my translation)

Some of the participants declare that they outsourced the translation of their website texts. FI, for instance, argues that the museum staff does not deal with the translation, but rather sends texts to be translated to the university's translation services, where professional translators — either in-house or freelance — take care of this. She further adds that these translators are expected to deal with the administrative texts as well as the exhibition texts, but normally find the latter "much more interesting" to translate.

IT describes that when the website was constructed, they immediately decided to create an international version in English: in order to do so, they relied on the external agency in charge for the construction of the website, without making specific requests as to the English version. Texts from Italian were thus translated into English by a person within the agency with "a good knowledge" of English.

Other participants claim that the museum staff took part in the translation process. DK, for example, argues that he has translated many texts for the museum website. However, he adds that they can only take care of the translations themselves if the text is "not too complicated" or "too scientific" — otherwise they need to have it translated by someone else.

Similarly, when asked about who was involved in writing the texts in English, HR explains that the three internal botanists — including him — wrote the texts in English about the garden collections for the booklet, which were also used on the website, as already mentioned. Nevertheless, these texts were eventually sent to a native speaker of the language to edit them. This suggests the importance given to having the texts reviewed by a native speaker of English.

(162) So, again … **the three botanists** who are working here: myself and two colleagues. We were writing about our collections and the history of the Garden for the booklet. And that text was **written in English by us** and then we **sent it to a professor in Scotland**, who was the mentor of my colleague, and **he reviewed it** and … you know … made suggestions on how to change something and so on, and that was used in website also. [HR]

HR also adds that some of the texts for the website were not included in the booklet, so he took care of their translation. He claims that he used the Internet to search for terms and asked a professor of English for help. Interestingly, he seems to have looked only at websites from countries where English is spoken as an L1.

(163) […] some new things I had to translate from Croatian … from start, that was not on the booklet. [HR]

(164) And everything else which is basic information I just … **picked up phrases from the net**. I was looking at websites of different countries, in **England, America or Canada**, to see how they're saying some things and we tried to **clone this**. [HR]

(165) I used … **terms that I found on the net** or I asked … my wife's sister, who is professor of English to check for me. [HR]

Nonetheless, HR is not the only one to stress the need for a native speaker. IT recognises that they have asked a native speaker of English to translate the texts for their booklets — but not those for the website. She also emphasises that the person who was involved is a medical doctor, and thus may be familiar with the museum collections.

(166) […] *ora non ricordo più se fosse Anatomia o Lombroso, l'abbiamo dato a un* **traduttore che è madrelingua inglese** *che si occupa di tutte le traduzioni della rivista "Museologia scientifica", che è la rivista associata all'Associazione Nazionale Musei Scientifici.* […] *è un* **medico di formazione**, *quindi … avendo noi questo aspetto già di collegamento di questo traduttore con l'associazione, abbiamo sfruttato lo stesso traduttore anche per le nostre guidine.* // […] now I don't remember anymore if it was for the Museum of Anatomy or the Museum of Criminal Anthropology, but we gave it to **a translator who is a native English speaker** and takes care of all the translations for the "Museologia scientifica" [Scientific Museology] journal, which is the journal associated with the National Association of Scientific Museums. […] he is **a doctor**, so … since we were already in contact with this translator through the association, we have also asked the same translator to translate our guides. [IT] (my translation)

DK also mentions the requisite of relying on a native speaker as a "general rule" when he claims that you can translate a text from a foreign into your own language, but you only "version" in the other direction. Although it is not clear what DK means with "version", he emphasises the importance of involving a native speaker in the translation process.

(167) […] many of these, **we need a native speaker**. I mean, as it's usually **general rule**, right? You translate to your own language or you version to the foreign one. But … So … translations … we have simply asked someone, **a translator**, to help us. [DK]

DK explains that the same people who wrote the texts in Danish were involved to some extent in creating the English texts, but he makes explicit that this does not mean that they translated those texts themselves. When they did not translate, he claims

that they provided translators with feedback on "the tone of voice", i.e. the style to be used. As the museum does not have written style guidelines, apparently, they have provided this feedback orally.

> (168) So, as far as an answer to your question "who's involved?", well, that would be pretty much the same people who were involved in writing the Danish copy, but **we're not necessarily the ones who actually … translated**, but we have most definitely … **provided feedback to the translator on … the tone of voice**, right? [DK]

> (169) But unfortunately, again, just to get back to that, **we don't have … a writing guideline** that we could just hand them and say: "well, we write with this voice." We would have to tell them. [DK]

DK describes that they have a number of translators who have been involved in translating the online texts from Danish into English. When asked about the translators' backgrounds, he says that the university itself has a "translation centre" which they have used in the past, but adds that they have also hired external freelancers: thus, they have generally worked with professional translators.

It is interesting to note that in extract 170 DK admits that they do not have "a one-to-one translation" of their website, thus suggesting that some pages may not be translated, while in extract 171 HR claims that the English version of their website is "almost an exact copy" of the original Croatian one, as "everything" was translated into English.

> (170) **We don't have a one-to-one translation of our website**. Not many places have, I think. [DK]

> (171) So, everything we do is in Croatian and in English. We have … booklets in Croatian and English, and also the website is in Croatian and English. […] It's … **almost an exact copy**: everything that I wrote in Croatian was translated in English […] [HR]

Some participants also mention the translation into other languages. IT, for example, acknowledges that English is known to be a "widespread and internationally recognised language for communication", but due to their closeness to France, they first thought of translating their museum brochures into French and then English.

Likewise, HR explains that in their case English was not the only language in which they wanted to provide "basic information", first on the guided tour booklet and then on the website: they also wanted to translate their texts into French and German, which are described along with English as "three diplomatic languages". This shows a partial attention to providing materials in other languages to be used by international

tourists for the visit. HR recounts that for each targeted language they wanted to send the texts to be translated to a person with a disciplinary background but who was also a native speaker of the language: in other words, they were looking for experts in botany who were native speakers of English, French and German. Since they were only able to find this person for English, they hired "translators" for French and German, who were probably native speakers but not experts in the field (although he does not make this clear). Eventually, he was disappointed by their work (he says that they did "a massacre" on their texts): according to him, the problem was that they were not familiar with the scientific terminology used in the texts. Therefore, the museum ended up with having texts translated only into English. This implicitly shows that their online texts about the collections are full of specialised terminology: HR is aware of this fact and seems to assign a very important role to terminology.

(172) […] there was an idea to provide information, at least basic information, in **different languages**. We started three years ago with writing the new … guided tour. It's a small … it's a booklet, which leads you through the Botanical Garden. And we wanted to do it in **English, German and French**, as … **three diplomatic languages**, basically, but that proved to be impossible because we couldn't find **a biologist who could be a native speaker in German or French**. So … we could do this with English because some of our mentors are professors in England and Scotland, so they … checked our texts and that was fine […] with German and French it was a problem because … **translators** that we used were … basically, what they did was a **massacre on our text**, because it's … you know, lots of scientific things and Latin names and so on. […] we decided it's not a good idea to … to do in different languages because … or … until we have someone who can actually check the language and translate it … in **good quality**. [HR]

IT thinks that her level of English is not good enough, and apparently this is the reason why she cannot update the English version of the website: while the original, Italian version is regularly updated — especially the news section — the English version is "frozen" and remains unchanged.

<u>Top-three most important pages on the website</u>

As was done during the UK-EN interviews, all EU-EN participants were asked to mention the three most important pages on their museum website according to them. Table 5.5 lists the pages mentioned by the participants according to the order in which they appear in the data, showing that the homepage and the "Collections" page are the most common in the list. Participants make few comments in relation to their choice, as is reported in this section.

Participant	Page 1	Page 2	Page 3
DK	Exhibitions	Activities	Information
FI	Homepage	News	Collections
HR	Homepage	Information	Collections
IT	Homepage	Virtual visit (Collections)	About

Table 5.5. The top-three most important pages according to each EU-EN participant

DK recognises that he would have once thought of the "Research" page as the most important within the museum website, but now he does not think it is central anymore, as the research centre and the museum have been separated. This suggests that as a museum may change and evolve over time, the most important pages of a website are also likely to change, especially in relation to the activities carried out by the museum and its intended audience. DK now lists the "Exhibitions" page as the most important, as it gives readers "a good overview" of what they "can experience" during the visit. The "Activities" page is mentioned as the second one, which is another page that informs readers about what the museum may offer, thus trying to attract them to the museum.

> (173) So … what would be the best … well … for sure, it must our … this page we have where you can see all our **exhibitions**. […] So, that would be it, because that gives you … quite a good overview, right? Of **what you can experience**. So, that would be our exhibition page, absolutely. … **Activities** would be another one. Because that is right now an important part, and will be even more. Because we need to figure out **what activities we can offer**. […] [DK]

Finally, DK mentions the "Information" page, with practical details for the visit, such as location, admission fees and accessibility. Again, this is a page addressed to people who may be planning a visit to the museum. Therefore, all the pages mentioned by DK are aimed at potential visitors, i.e. the main intended audience for the museum website (cf. Section 5.3.1). DK also adds that they are currently editing the information offered on such page because they have realised that "it is too difficult", and they the need to rewrite it — both in the Danish and English versions.

In a similar vein, HR refers to the "Information" page among the three most important pages within the garden's website. Apparently, they have received complaints at the botanical garden about information related to the opening times which are lacking on the website. HR, however, blames the readers: he claims that this piece of information is available on the site and users just need to find it and read it carefully. This may reveal that this page is hard to find within the website. Both DK and HR

recognise the centrality of this page, but while DK expresses the need for editing their "Information" page, HR does not seem to believe that it may be difficult to reach their "Information" page, and thus that they need to restructure the organisation of the information within their website to make this page more visible.

> (174) **Location and Visiting Hours**. This is very important. And we have **a very complicated visiting hours**, because it's not complicated, but people are not reading everything and quite often we have **complaints**, you know: "it's not written there." But it is: you just have to read about it. [HR]

IT mentions the "Virtual visit" page, i.e. a sub-page of a section called "Visit" which offers information on the collections. The page mentioned contains a short video which accompanies the viewer in the visit to the museum through images of the collection. It is interesting that IT picks this page describing it as "a good synthesis" of the museum's identity, as it includes multimedia contents: her assumption is that a video is more visually appealing than a written text. Another remarkable aspect is that the page does not provide any textual details of what is shown (cf. Section 4.3.2.1), either on the page or within the video itself (through audio and/or subtitles).

> (175) […] *secondo me probabilmente l'immagine chiamiamola ancora una volta di "Home" è quella che dà più l'idea. Dopodiché se uno vuole più addentrarsi all'interno di … far vedere cosa c'è anche questo video, che è **la visita virtuale**,* […] *è una buona sintesi proprio perché è un video, quindi è una parte un pochino **più animata** … **multimediale** rispetto a … Poi dipende molto dai propri interessi* […] // […] in my opinion, once again probably the image of the "**Home**" is the one that gives a better idea. Then if you want to go deeper into … seeing what there is, this video, which is **the virtual visit**, […] is a good summary precisely because it is a video, so it is a little **more animated** … **multimedia** compared to … then it depends a lot on your own interests […] [IT] (my translation)

Finally, IT does acknowledge that the contents shown on the homepage vary, as they are usually related to news and current events. This makes explicit that the homepage is a very dynamic page which serves as a showcase: several different contents may coexist there, directing to pages which belong to different sections and are addressed to different intended readers.

On the contrary, FI does not seem particularly aware of what contents are normally linked to on their homepage, although she chooses it as the most important page on the museum's website: she vaguely refers to "links to all the stuff" included in the website, but does not refer to any page in particular, nor does she mention that the homepage is likely to change regularly.

Interim summing up

All in all, data suggest that the participants were involved in the creation of either the original texts or those in English, which was a process in which different teams took part to some extent (DK, FI, HR). Some texts on the website (IT and HR) were originally paper texts aimed at the visit, which have somewhat been adapted to be published online: however, they have partially maintained their original function, thus serving mainly potential museum visitors. All the texts in English were the product of a translation process: in certain cases (FI, IT and partially DK), the translation was outsourced, while in others it was carried out by the museum staff at least to a certain extent (DK and HR). The importance of involving a native speaker of English, either for translating the texts or for reviewing them, is stressed by most of the participants, i.e. DK, HR and IT for the translation of their booklet. Furthermore, some participants (HR and IT) also emphasise the preference for assigning the translation or review to disciplinary experts, who are familiar with the fields related to the museum collections. Finally, data indicate that originally languages other than English were also the target of a translation effort in some cases (IT and HR), but eventually both on-site and online texts were only translated into English.

The homepage and the "Collections" page were the most widely chosen by the participants as the three most important pages within their institution's website. Apart from those, different pages were mentioned, including different types of content, i.e. "Information", "Exhibitions", "Activities", "News" and "About". Probably due to the small number of participants involved, and the fact that only one participant per institution was interviewed, the data collected do not seem to suggest any common pattern related to the choice of the pages which illustrate the museums' identity.

5.3.4 Theme 4. One-size-fits-all approach to language: which English?

The theme of language was broadly explored during the interviews in order to collect data on the participants' perception of the use of English. The theme is divided into separate sub-themes highlighting different aspects which emerged during the interviews:

- Discussing external communication;
- Conforming to guidelines for writing texts;

- Simplification strategies vs. use of terminology;
- Use of English: one language, different perspectives.

In particular, attention was paid to the description of language and to elements which could point to a use of language which may have been informed by the imagination of a culturally and linguistically diverse audience.

<u>Discussing external communication</u>

Among the first questions during each interview, I asked each of the participants whether they have discussed the use of language for external communication with their museum team, without specifically referring either to the local language or English. Interestingly, most of the participants directly refer to the international communication in English. For example, FI assumes that I am referring to English, and explains that they do not talk about this often at the Helsinki University Museum: apparently, being international — also from a linguistic point of view — is part of the museum's nature. Their work is already international and they have always had an English version of the website. In order to underline their international commitment, she then explains that the museum has long been a member of international organisations such as UMAC and Universeum.

> (176) I think not very much because … because we are Helsinki University Museum, it is quite clear that … **what we do is international**. […] it has been one main rule in our work, that **we are international** and that's why we've always had our website also in English. [FI]

HR also refers to international communication from the very beginning, mentioning the pragmatic side of it and the need for serving international tourists from European and Asian countries. DK talks about both the Danish and the English texts: he claims that they "think very much" about the way they use language for external communication when they write "copy for the Danish website", but also in their "offline communication" and in "the communication in the … exhibitions in English".

On the contrary, when asked the same question, IT refers to "museum communication" in general and describes a series of seminars they have organised in the past around this theme with French experts in museology and museography, with one seminar which specifically focused on "textual communication in museums". According to IT, during these seminars they have only discussed "communication in Italian", stressing that the focus was on "communication for Italian museums": she

seems to assume that Italian museums do not need to discuss communication in English or in other languages, as this may not be felt as a priority to them.

<u>Conforming to guidelines for writing texts</u>

Some participants mention the use of guidelines in relation to the website, while others explicitly say they do not have written guidelines. FI explains that they follow the university's guidelines (cf. Section 5.3.2) for the creation of online contents: according to them, texts need to be "quite short" because users access them from "mobile devices", and this is probably thought to improve usability, although she does not make it explicit. FI also claims that they are "easy to understand and accessible", as well as "not too complicated".

> (177) […] this university Communications and Community Relations […] they have made very good … **guidelines** for … for this content creators. […] but I don't think there are so exact amount of words or … characters and so on. But it is the general rule that texts in the website … because **many people read them from mobile devices**, it's good that they are **quite short** and very … **easy to understand and accessible** in that kind, not … **not too complicated**. [FI]

HR argues that they do not have explicit guidelines for writing texts, but rather for how to show information on the website, referring to "the size of the text" and the fact that "the text must not be justified". Although this seems to partially refer to web writing guidelines in terms of typography — e.g. non-justified text may be easier to read — he exclusively connects these guidelines with the needs of people with visual impairments. He thus shares the need for presenting information on the website in a way which is supposed to facilitate reading for a certain group of people, i.e. blind or partially sighted people. This seems to be underpinned by the assumption that people who do not have visual impairments do not benefit from these guidelines, but also that the museum is not required to follow different guidelines for improving reading.

> (178) Well … not for the texts themselves, but how they're … presented on the website. The colleague of mine said: "no, we have to use this." You know, **the size of the text** and … **the text must not be justified**, things like that. She said there are rules of writing text on the website because of **people with different … disorders**, so that they can read easily. [HR]

On the contrary, DK admits that they do not have a written style guide for writing texts on the website, but they have guidelines on how to use social media. However, as they are going to start "a branding process" at the museum, DK acknowledges that they "need a brand" and "need guidelines" defining it. He elaborates on the idea of a brand on different occasions during the interview, by stressing that it

has to do both with "the visual" aspects of communication and with "tone of voice", i.e. writing style. However, he especially emphasises visual aspects related to how the museum wants to "look like", such as "logo", "signs" and "colours", rather than other possible textual features such as stylistic choices, which are not described.

(179) We don't have strictly speaking **a writing guideline**. We have some guidelines on how we use **social media**. We've set that down saying what we do and what we don't do. … But … a writing guideline, we don't have as such. [DK]

(180) […] we will start a branding process, where we will fundraise for … so, **we need a brand**, **we need guidelines**, we need perhaps a new logo, we need … maybe perhaps a new name … we don't know. But we need … a set of guidelines that say: "this is our brand." [DK]

Simplification strategies vs. use of terminology

As was noticed in the UK-EN data, there seems to be a general trend toward simplifying texts in order to make them easy to understand. For instance, FI claims that a good rule is to be "simple enough", but unfortunately, she does not elaborate on this idea. She also mentions that writing "simple texts" is good for people who cannot understand English very well because they come from specific countries — perhaps meaning countries where English is not an official language. However, she does not make explicit how they try to write simple texts.

(181) It's good to be **open and available** and … **simple enough**. [FI]

(182) And also this accessibility is very important today. […] It's good to have **simple texts** that … if you are for example from some … **from some country where you can't understand very well English**, it's good that the text is **simple**. You can read it. And, as I said, if you have some other difficulties for understanding. [FI]

DK talks about the need for simplifying a text and "dumb[ing] it down". According to him, if they did not make it simpler "people wouldn't read it": his assumption seems to be that texts which look difficult are not read by visitors at the museum or online users.

(183) […] there's an exhibition or an activity that has a basis in something that our researchers are doing, we would have to … I'm afraid to say, but we would have to **dumb it down** some, right? Because otherwise … **people wouldn't read it**. They would just look at it and think: "what is this?" Right? […] [DK]

DK comments the effort of making texts that are "not too difficult". He does not provide a complete answer on strategies for simplification, although he mentions the importance of calibrating "sentence structure" and "vocabulary". Here he is talking

about how to make texts "not too difficult" when translating, thus implicitly assuming this may be different from making texts easier in Danish.

> (184) P: […] But, to the best of my knowledge, we have … we have sought to make sure that … the text that we write … is **not too difficult**.
>
> I: So, in general, how do you think you try to make texts less difficult?
>
> P: Well, first of all, that depends on who's writing, right? If it was me, then I would … well, let's get back to me. If it was a translator, then … I assume would be something about **which words you use**, I mean, help me here … I don't … well, if it was me, it would be something with **sentence structure** and … and … and **vocabulary**, of course. And I think that would be **the same for a translator**. [DK]

In addition, DK mentions the use of LIX, i.e. a readability test to "rate a text on its difficulty", saying that they use this as a method to assess whether a text may be considered too complex according to specific metrics, such as the use of "difficult words".

HR also points to simplicity when he claims that the texts in English of the botanical garden are "quite simple and understandable", as they tried to use "simpler and shorter sentences". Apparently, simplicity is achieved mainly through a simple syntax and a short length. Therefore, both DK and HR implicitly refer to the importance of syntax.

> (185) So, yeah, I think they're aimed at someone who can speak English but also I think the texts are **quite simple and understandable**. From my viewpoint at least. [HR]
>
> (186) […] we wrote them in general, but we did try to use … **simpler and shorter sentences** and so on. [HR]

Not only does extract 187 stress that the texts on the website about the collections — which were taken from a paper booklet — are "not too complicated", but also reinforces the idea that those texts are written for visitors.

> (187) […] I think it's **not too complicated** to understand and it guides you through the whole Arboretum […] [HR]

HR further argues that their texts are "not scientific texts", but "popularly scientific": although the content is scientific, he thinks they can be understood by "anyone who finished high school". At the same time, he describes them as "professional texts", thus assuming that they are specialised and reliable. As far as

terminology is concerned, texts on the website of IT's and FI's museum do not include a lot of specialised terms.[6]

DK seems to acknowledge the importance of some terms which he defines as "essential" to tell the story about a specific exhibition. However, DK, who is in the Communications & Marketing team, also recognises the need for using words in ways that "don't … alienate people". According to him, the online texts about their exhibitions need to be somewhat changed, although he finds it difficult to define how this will be done: he first mentions the texts will be "toned down", but then corrects himself by saying that this is not the case, as this means that texts would be "less … intelligent", which is not their objective. He claims that "academic words might be dry", which seems to imply that they will try to reduce the amount of academic, scientific words within the exhibition-related texts on the website.

(188) Then, we do think about … **wording our texts so we don't … alienate people** because they don't understand what we write. Absolutely. [DK]

(189) Definitely, when we'll create … well, perhaps partially the 1.5 website … we will definitely take a look at the texts for our exhibitions to see if we could get them … **toned down**. No, that's the wrong word, because that might mean that it's less … intelligent. But that's not it. It means that … well, you know, **academic words might be dry**, right? So that's probably what we'll do, and definitely in the 2.0 version. The complete reboot will be … with **a complete new tone of voice**. [DK]

In addition, DK says that he is among few people at the museum who support the shift from a "strictly business-type" to a more "fun approach" to language, in particular on the museum social media profiles. Yet, he makes it clear that the style on the website is definitely academic, and he does seem to suggest that this should change.

(190) I have been one of the few people here […] sort of advocating for a more … **fun approach**, you know? But because this has been a research-driven university museum for so long … it's difficult for people whose life has been spent researching […] So, for many years it has been **strictly business-type**. Not business as business but strictly business, you know […] we have tried … sort of once in a while to interject some sort of … **more fun, less academic** … message, especially in our social media, but not in the exhibitions and of course not in any … I mean … and also **not on the website**. Not at all. That's academic. And looks academic. [DK]

On the contrary, HR, who works with collections, prioritises technicality: he argues that they need to include "Latin words" within their online texts, and further adds that some institutions do not use them, which may be a problem. He makes the case of a

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[6] Unfortunately, we do not have actual information on the use of technical terms on the museum's website from the text analyses, as the latter did not focus on this issue.

user from another country, e.g. China, who is trying to explore the garden's collection: according to him, if the garden does not use "Latin names" — which are the scientific terms to refer to the plants — people are not going to find what they are looking for (see extract 108 in the UK-EN interview analysis, cf. Section 5.2.5, where MW3 shares a similar idea). As such, he assumes that most people visiting their website from abroad are familiar with the scientific terminology related to botany, which implies that their online texts on the collections are written for a specialised audience, not just for a general audience (cf. Section 5.3.1). HR also stresses that they aim to maintain "a certain professional level" by using scientific terms. The priority seems to be given to technical accuracy, probably to increase reliability and "spread the knowledge" by providing "professional information".

> (191) Well … basically, when you write texts about that, **we have to use Latin words**. I see that some gardens are not using them, but … that's problematic, because if **someone from China** is trying to find out about the Garden collection, you know, **without Latin names is going to be a problem** for them. So, we did decide to maintain **a certain professional level** and **not to simplify the text**. [HR]

> (192) […] we thought it's more important to provide **professional information** […] [HR]

<u>Use of English: one language, different perspectives</u>

Data also offer different perspectives on the English language as it is used in the texts for the museums' international website: participants define it in different ways, but they all point to the native speakers' paradigm to a certain extent. FI clearly states that they are required to use "British English" by the university. Likewise, HR explains that they aimed to write in "real English", clarifying that he means the English spoken by native speakers. On the other hand, DK more generally describes the way in which they wrote the texts as "grammatically correct", which seems to suggest that they followed the grammatical standards of the English language.

IT makes a different comment on the language use for their international version, claiming that it is the product of a translation process. She adds that these texts were not written with "a non-English audience" in mind: her assumption seems to be that these texts are translations, so no thought was put on their intended readers. Her comment makes it clear that the museum staff only asked to translate the texts into English, without any specific requirements.

(193) *L'inglese è **un inglese di traduzione**, non [un inglese scritto] pensando a un pubblico non inglese.* // [The website] English is **a translated English**, not [an English version that was made] thinking of a non-English audience. [IT] (my translation)

According to IT, the aim was to translate the texts into "the best possible English". Unfortunately, she does not elaborate on this concept, but we may assume that this is a "correct English", i.e. an English which resembles the most to the native speakers' use. Furthermore, there seems to be a contradiction in her comment: although they have data from their visitors' book suggesting they get international visitors from different countries (especially France), the texts in English on the website were not written for that intended audience. Apparently, the fact that they know they have French visitors coming to the museum did not affect the production of the texts in English — e.g. no attempt was made at simplifying them.

(194) *Ma è stato pensato per ... **tradurre nell'inglese migliore possibile i testi**. Ma senza pensare: "abbiamo un pubblico anche spagnolo, di madrelingua spagnola, o un pubblico che viene sempre più dall'est." Lo capiamo ... dal libro dei visitatori.* // But it was designed to … **translate the texts into the best possible English**. But without thinking: "we also have a Spanish audience, native Spanish speakers, or an audience that comes more and more from the East." We understand this … from the visitors' book. [IT] (my translation)

DK also refers to the "level of English" that they employ, which he describes as "accessible to all", not only "very very proficient native English speakers". He suggests that they may have talked about this with the translators, but he does not seem sure about it. In general, he seems embarrassed because he understands the point being made about the possible need for addressing native and non-native speakers of English at the same time, but says that they have never thought this through and never put it into a written guideline, reinforcing the idea that this does not seem to have had a real impact on the texts translated into English.

(195) No. We haven't […] first of all, that's a very good question, and second of all, that's a very very good point … which I will actually make sure to bring. We need to sort of … set **a level of English** that is **accessible to all**. Not just … **very very proficient native English speakers**. … I think perhaps … **we might have mentioned it** in passing when sending out to translate. [DK]

On different occasions, HR expresses his own perception of language use, defining it as "okay". However, he acknowledges that there may be "mistakes" or "weird combination" in the texts in English written by him. Unfortunately, data do not provide further details on what HR means by "weird combinations", but we could reasonably assume he means combinations which are not common and standard among native speakers of English.

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(196)   […] some things I just showed because **I felt my English was okay** […] [HR]

(197)   […] 99% of the texts is **okay in English**. But of course, it's possible there are some **mistakes** or … some **weird combinations**, yeah. [HR]

Similarly, IT recognises that the museum staff have received some negative feedback about mistakes in the English texts, although they have never looked at those texts thoroughly. IT admits once again that the English version needs to be improved. She also explains that the poor quality may be due to the fact that the translation was carried out at the very end of the process, as the final step after finalising the Italian texts. The underpinning idea is that the creation of the English version was a totally separate step from the creation of the texts in Italian: the English version thus may not be of a good quality due to the limited time dedicated to it.

Finally, all participants were asked if an evaluation of how English is used on their museums' website was carried out. Apparently, all the participants claim that no formalised evaluation has been conducted.

Interim summing up

Although language may be a central focus for the participants and their own team, data seem to suggest that discussions about the use of English is not very high on their agenda. Guidelines for writing texts for the website may not be commonly used, but most of the participants seem to somewhat agree about the importance of having them (DK, FI, HR). Simplification seems to be a general strategy adopted to improve text comprehensibility, which results in interventions on syntax (DK, HR), text length (HR) and vocabulary choice (DK). As far as terminology is concerned, DK and HR express contrasting views, which are probably the product of their own role within their institution: on the one hand, DK seems to be worried about not alienating readers, and generally prioritises simplification; on the other hand, HR advocates for technical accuracy in order to ensure expertise and professionalism. This may imply that DK is more concerned with meeting the needs of the general audience, while HR is focused on an educated and at least partially expert audience. Finally, considerations about language use suggest that participants embrace the native-speaker paradigm: it may be assumed that the texts were written aiming to imitate the standard use of language as adopted by native speakers. Furthermore, if to some extent language use distances itself from what is conceived as "the norm", participants feel the need of confessing the possible "mistakes" or irregularities that may be found in the texts. Overall, language

use does not seem to be informed by the thought of a culturally and linguistically diversified audience.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Overview of the chapter

The present thesis set out to investigate the extent to which audience-oriented approaches are adopted by university museums in their communication in English on their websites. In particular, the aim was to a) examine the extent to which university museums have committed to the use of English on their websites, b) understand whether English-version websites of university museums reflect an audience-oriented approach to communication by analysing the textual relationship between author and intended readers, c) identify the intended readers for their web-based texts in English, and d) consider the museum staff's awareness of the possible need to address a linguistically and culturally diverse audience and its effect on text production. A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches provided the methodological framework for this research. Results have been presented and discussed at length in Chapters 4 and 5.

The present Chapter draws some general conclusions: it first synthesises the research outcomes (Section 6.2) and discusses the impact and contribution of the research within the broader context of the existing literature (Section 6.3); finally, it reflects on the limitations of the research design and suggests possible directions for future work (Section 6.4).

6.2 Research outcomes

The research included different methods, corresponding to different research steps. Firstly, a survey of European university museums' websites was carried out to assess how many of them provide an English version. Secondly, two types of text analyses were undertaken on a selection of pages from 20 of the websites having an English version, ten from the UK and ten from other European countries. The first one, i.e. the web writing analysis, investigated whether a corpus of texts displayed features which were attributable to web writing guidelines. The second one, focusing on stance and engagement features, looked at the construction of the author-reader relationship within the same texts. Finally, the fieldwork of this research included semi-structured interviews with staff members from a selection of university museums, involving thirteen participants in total, i.e. nine participants from two museums from the UK-EN group and four participants from four museums from the EU-EN group. During the

interviews, several themes were discussed, such as the intended audience of university museums' websites, the writing process involved in the creation of the web-based texts in English and the awareness of the possible need to address a linguistically and culturally diverse audience through such texts. The combination of these methods has resulted in a range of outcomes.

The survey of European university museum websites showed that almost half of the examined websites provide an English version: in particular, the majority of the websites with an English version belong to university museums which are based in countries where Germanic or Ugro-Finnic languages are spoken as official languages, while countries where Romance languages are spoken display fewer university museums with an English-version website.

The two text analyses generally revealed an audience-oriented approach to communication, with a few differences between the UK-EN and EU-EN group. The former seems to be more strongly committed than the latter to structure texts for readability, convey a specific institutional stance and create engagement with the readers. EU-EN museums make use of layout features (i.e. headings, words in bold and lists) more than UK-EN museums, apart from links. On the contrary, UK-EN museums' web pages display more syntactic features related to web readability (i.e. short paragraphs, short sentences and active voice verbs). The analysis seems to suggest that UK-EN museums tend to arrange different information on different pages of their websites, while EU-EN museums' websites generally have a smaller number of pages, each one providing a wide range of information. The results pertaining to the UK-EN group seem to be supported by comments from the interviews, as some participants (i.e. MW1, WG1, WG2, WG3) mentioned the fact that the Manchester Museum and the Whitworth have many pages on their websites: according to the participants, navigating through them may be difficult, as users may have to visit a lot of pages before finding the information needed. On the contrary, this aspect does not seem to emerge from the EU-EN interviews, as only one participant (HR) reported complaints from visitors about not finding specific practical information for the visit but claimed that the latter is available on the site: this may reveal that the page containing it is either hard to find within the website or very dense of text, and thus potentially difficult to read.

The stance and engagement analysis showed that UK-EN pages are richer in both stance features (i.e. attitude markers, boosters and self-mentions) and engagement

features (i.e. reader mentions and directives), apart from hedges and questions. In general, stance features, which are used to establish authority and foster credibility, are more frequent in the corpus than engagement features, and are employed to highlight the presence of the intended readers within the texts. Attitude markers — most of them with a positive value — were the most common feature in UK-EN and EU-EN texts, followed by self-mentions, while reader mentions and directives were the most common engagement features. These results reflect two different but related trends on museum websites, which are stronger in the UK-EN group than in the EU-EN group: on the one hand, websites present the institution by stressing the significance of its collection and the museum's textual authority; on the other hand, the museum creates a textual space for its intended readers in order to establish a relationship with them, and indicates what they need to know or do by suggesting actions for them to perform. Furthermore, UK-EN websites, in particular their "Information" pages, display a specific use of hedges, attitude markers with a negative connotation and directives introducing cognitive acts, which are sometimes found in clusters (e.g. "please *be aware* that parking in Cambridge city centre *can* be *expensive*"): these features seem to be used to prepare readers to "the worst case scenario" and suggest possible actions to prevent it from happening. This use is not present in the EU-EN group, and may thus be the expression of a cultural preference, as the UK-EN is a low-context culture (Hall 1976: 91), in which readers require and expect in-depth background information in order to understand what is being said and what they need to do without feeling unwary.

"Information" pages are the richest in most of the examined features from both analyses. These pages are written for people who are planning a visit to the museum and are looking for practical information, such as location, opening times and accessibility. "Information" pages tend to display web writing features, which indicate they may be written with an online user in mind. They also tend to be very interactive, in that they rely on engagement features such as reader mentions and directives to position their intended readers within the text and guide them to perform specific actions, e.g. booking a group tour or following certain rules during the visit. "Information" pages were not commonly mentioned by UK-EN and EU-EN interview participants within the top-three most important pages of each museum website. Nonetheless, most of the EU-EN participants (DK, HR and FI) highlighted the centrality of "Information" pages within the website, and UK-EN participants seemed to suggest that the "basic" and "useful" information that the website is supposed to convey is related to the visit — a

type of content which is normally included on "Information" pages. A lot of attention is thus paid to writing for visitors, who seem to be the main intended audience of the analysed websites.

The analysis of the interviews suggested that UK-EN university museums aim to engage with a vast, heterogeneous audience, but the latter seemed to be vaguely defined, especially concerning their website. EU-EN university museums tend to focus on "the general audience", and especially on visitors; foreign audiences mentioned include international tourists (IT, DK and HR), researchers (FI and IT) and international students and lecturers (FI). The reader mentions found through the stance and engagement analysis of texts seem to point in the same direction. The selected university museums mainly mention the "general" reader/visitor on their website, followed by specific groups of readers, such as students from schools and universities, people with disabilities, families with children, academics and staff. "Visitors" is one of the most common impersonal reader mentions in the UK-EN texts, while "the public" and "the general public" are among the most common in the EU-EN texts. Overall, the production of texts in English does not seem to be informed by the idea of a specific intended audience: the only aspect which is commonly considered seems to be the readers' prior knowledge, as interviews pointed to a general attempt to make texts appropriate for specialists and laypeople alike. During the UK-EN interviews, some participants (MM3, MW3, WG3) also seemed concerned about writing texts for specific age groups, which seems to be a possible strategy for improving text accessibility at all levels.

Although all interviews (apart from FI) suggested that museums in both contexts do not adopt shared guidelines for web writing, a general effort for simplification seems to guide text production. Comments from both UK-EN and EU-EN interviews seemed to indicate that participants advocate the use of simple syntax and sentence structure, simple vocabulary and short sentences. This is reflected in the analysed texts from both groups, which display a high percentage of syntactical features which can be related to text simplicity, i.e. short sentences, short paragraphs and active voice verbs. Nonetheless, some participants — especially those from collection teams — seemed to be worried about the risk of oversimplification, especially at the lexical level, and stressed the importance of maintaining specialised terms to provide academics with technical information. Contrasting opinions thus emerged during the interviews about

the use of terminology, probably as a result of the participants' role within their institution: staff members who work in contact with visitors (e.g. MW1) preferred avoiding scientific terms; on the contrary, curators and people who work with the collections (e.g. MW3 and HR) argued that researchers need technical terms to identify an item.

Some UK-EN participants also referred to style and stance, whereas EU-EN participants did not specifically discuss these aspects. In particular, interviews with the Manchester Museum staff included contrasting comments regarding formality: some participants claimed that texts on the museum website are "not overly formal" (MM1), while others argued that such texts are "more formal" than other texts, e.g. texts posted on the institutional social media profile. Some participants also seemed to be aware that texts — especially on "Collection" pages — may be "very neutral but also quite clinical and cold" (MM2), which is in contrast with the "lovely language" and the "caring way" of talking suggested by others (MW1).

Writing is generally a collective effort which involves different teams of each museum. In the UK-EN museums, multilingual people may be involved in writing, although not systematically. In the EU-EN context, texts in English on the website are the product of a translation process, which was either outsourced (FI and IT) or carried out in-house (HR), or a combination of the two (DK). The majority of the EU-EN participants (DK, HR and IT) further stressed the need to involve a native speaker in the production of the texts in English, which confirms the relevance of the native speaker paradigm (cf. Section 2.4.2). There does not seem to be an internal discussion regarding the English used in each museum's website, nor on the translation process itself.

Finally, one of the most significant results to emerge from the interviews is that people involved in writing online texts in English do not show awareness of the possible need to write for a linguistically and culturally diverse audience. Museums do not seem to be concerned with addressing native and non-native speakers of English, nor do they seem focused on writing for a specific foreign audience (e.g. French visitors in the case of IT). Furthermore, UK-EN museums do not think of a multicultural audience in terms of linguistic and communicative needs when producing texts for the website: they seem more worried about engaging a multicultural audience by co-producing exhibitions or through audience representation within the collection — the latter echoing the idea that other cultures may be represented in the collection through a form of "translation"

(Sturge, 2007). These strategies for inclusion are partially reflected in the web texts by the use of first-person inclusive pronouns and possessive adjectives which refer to the museum heritage and collections: even though this use is limited, it is part of an effort for creating a sense of heritage community and belonging. Therefore, text production in both contexts does not seem to be affected by the intention of engaging with people displaying different linguistic skills and levels of fluency in English.

6.3 Research impact and contribution

This thesis contributes to current research in different fields in several ways. Three potential areas of research impact may be identified: the first concerns the conceptualisation of museum audiences; the second deals with the study of museum communication, in particular with the adoption of audience-oriented approaches in online museum communication; finally, the third is related to the use of English as an international language.

Firstly, this thesis contributes to existing knowledge of museum audiences, with special regard to university museums. Building on the idea that museums exist for people (Weil, 1999) and that the museum audience cannot be considered as a single, integrated group (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000c), this thesis has sought to investigate the intended audience of university museums. Drawing on studies on stance, this research has proposed a framework to examine how the audience is conceptualised, as well as the relationship between museum and visitor/user within the texts. In Section 2.3.1 it was suggested that a text needs to show the writer's awareness of their intended readers in order to be successful (Hyland, 2008). By adding impersonal reader mentions such as "visitors" as a further feature to Hyland's framework (2008), the analysis of the marked presence of the intended audience allowed to identify the discourse participants, and thus the representations of the museums' intended audience. This analysis provided evidence of different representations of the intended audience realised through different reader mentions. The results of the text analysis, which seem to be confirmed by the interviews, suggest that university museums aim to serve a broad audience beyond the academia, as indicated in the literature (Lourenço, 2005). Nonetheless, although language and cultural background may be considered among the personal factors affecting the visitor's experience (Falk & Dierking, 2013), users' linguistic skills and communicative needs do not seem to be a common concern among museum

professionals to connect with the museum's intended audience, as suggested by the UK-EN and EU-EN interviews.

Secondly, this interdisciplinary research positions itself within a broader research context investigating museum communication. In particular, the thesis has aimed to observe the extent to which audience-oriented approaches to museology have affected the representation of the audience, and thus the communication adopted by university museums. As discussed in Section 2.3, several fields of research have highlighted the importance for the author of a text to consider their intended readers. Nonetheless, the text analyses carried out during this research have only partially shown an audience-oriented approach to communication, while the interviews have revealed a scarce awareness of the intended audience.

This thesis has presented the first attempt at analysing language use online through the filter of web writing theories, as well as the first attempt at bringing together the web writing framework and the stance and engagement framework adapted from Hyland (2008). The thesis contends that the writing guidelines discussed in the literature, which share several aspects with the guidelines emerging from museum studies, are reflected in the museum practice: several insights were gained through the web writing analysis concerning the use of short and simple sentences, active verbs and paragraphs breaking up the text, as advocated by Ekarv (1994). Besides, the need to write concise texts (Ambrose & Paine, 2006) emerged from the UK-EN interviews. Concerns regarding, on the one hand, the need to simplify the message and on the other hand the risk of over-simplification (Blunden, 2006) were also discussed in the interviews. Finally, in Section 2.2.3 it was argued that jargon should be avoided (Ambrose & Paine, 2006), but that avoiding technicality may compromise accuracy (Ferguson et al., 1995): the results of the interviews suggest that the same tension exists among the museum staff, as curators and people directly dealing with the collections tend to prefer to keep technical terms, while other staff members — e.g. from the visitor team or the learning team — are more worried about text accessibility, and thus prefer to simplify the message.

Although the literature in museum studies suggests to think of L2 speakers of English and use simple words and sentences without subordinate clauses (P. McManus, 2000), this does not seem to be reflected in the museum practice: text production does not seem to be informed by the conceptualisation of a linguistically diverse audience,

either in the UK-EN nor in the EU-EN context. While the literature (cf. Section 2.2.2) promotes the museums' social commitment for inclusion, the latter does not seem to have an impact on the communication adopted, as strategies for inclusion at a linguistic and communicative level seem to be limited to the use of a clear, simple language. Museums seem to use strategies to simplify texts, such as short sentences, in order to facilitate reading for *all*: participants from the interviews did not mention the possibility that these strategies may facilitate Anglo-Saxon readers but may not be appropriate for others. The fact that visitors with different cultural backgrounds may have different responses to the same communicative approach (Guillot, 2014) does not seem to be taken into consideration. Similarly, some interview participants (e.g. WG1) discussed the use of explicitation to make messages clear and unambiguous, without considering that this strategy may probably be appreciated more by certain readers, i.e. people from low-context cultures: "low-contexting" may result in "talking down" to readers belonging to high-context cultures (Hall, 1976). Overall, interviews suggest the intention of making texts simple and easy to read for all, no matter the reader's cultural background, thus not accounting for potentially different communicative needs as a result of different cultural systems.

In addition, the text analyses seem to confirm the claim by Bondi (2009), according to which websites serve a twofold purpose: on the one hand, they aim to promote the museum collections by stressing their value and invite readers to visit them; on the other hand, they hope to establish a relationship with the intended audience by offering the information which is deemed necessary (especially for the visit). Therefore, texts on museum websites combine an informative, descriptive and evaluative function (Samson, 2012).

Finally, this thesis builds on burgeoning literature relating to the use of English as an international language or a lingua franca (ELF). Prior to this thesis, research regarding the use of English to address a linguistically diverse audience had scarcely touched the domain of museum communication (Petry, 2017). A study on whether museums in the UK-EN and the EU-EN contexts produce texts for an intended audience comprising both native and non-native speakers of English was crucial due to several factors including the multicultural composition of our societies, the emerging use of English as an international language and the museums' social responsibilities regarding audience engagement and inclusion.

The thesis is the first attempt to survey English-version websites of museums in order to investigate the use of English as an international language and create a corpus of such websites including different micro-genres. The text analyses of the present research have enabled us to highlight differences between EU-EN and UK-EN texts in the use of web writing features and stance and engagement features. For some of the latter, however, small differences can be seen, revealing a certain homogeneity between the two contexts, which may partially confirm the results from Palumbo's research (2015), who claimed that the distance between the native and non-native varieties of English investigated in his study was shorter than expected, especially in terms of use of stance and engagement features. Furthermore, interviews in both contexts seem to indicate that there is a lack of awareness of the possible need to adapt online texts for an international audience, as was suggested by Pisanski Peterlin (2013).

EU-EN interviews have also revealed that English texts on EU-EN museums' websites are mainly the product of a translation process in which the native speaker paradigm is still dominant: the traditional prescriptive approach to translation is reflected in the practice, as EU-EN interview participants show a preference for involving native speakers of English in the creation of the English-version website. EU-EN museums tend to stick to native language norms by striving to provide texts which are "grammatically correct" (DK) and reflect the "real English" (HR) or "the best possible English" (IT) used by native speakers. As a consequence, they consider "deviations" from native language norms in texts written or translated by non-native speakers of English as "mistakes" (HR, IT) or "weird combinations" (HR), which may be the product of the translator's native language, as suggested by Mollin (2006). The priority for EU-EN museums seems to be imitating native use of English so that their texts can look like those produced by UK-EN museums. My claim is that although the context of this study could be defined as an ELF scenario, results from the interviews seem to point to the idea that ELF, as it has been conceptualised until now, cannot appropriately describe this phenomenon. While literature on ELF prioritises "communicative effectiveness" (Hülmbauer, 2007: 5) and "cross-cultural comprehensibility" (Stewart, 2013), the practice in this context seems to suggest that linguistic accuracy is prioritised: this is probably a result of the need to reinforce museum credibility and cultural authority in institutional communication through the use of a so to speak traditionally recognised variety of English.

Finally, although no attempt was made at analysing the original texts in other languages on EU-EN museums' websites, EU-EN interviews seem to indicate that websites were not localised for a specific market, but were rather internationalised in English for people who cannot speak the local language, corroborating the claims by Fernández Costales (2012) on the process of standardisation of university websites.

6.4 Limitations and future research

As much other research, the present thesis has, of course, a number of limitations, which need to be borne in mind. Some concern the selection of museums and the design of the corpus, while others are related to the text analyses and the interviews. By acknowledging these limitations, the thesis hopes to provide the basis for further research.

First of all, the choice of the EU-EN countries involved in the study was limited to the existence of university museums with an English-version website. As indicated by the survey of websites carried out at the beginning of this research, a small percentage of university museums in some countries, e.g. Belgium, France and Germany, have contents in English on their website. In countries such as Belarus, Bulgaria, Slovenia and Ukraine, no university museums' websites at all were found which offered an English version. Furthermore, among the websites having information in English, few of them had several pages in English characterised by different textual micro-genres.

The specific locations of the museums chosen may have affected the research results: divergent research outcomes might be obtained if studies were carried out in other European countries, due to different museological approaches and linguistic and cultural contexts. Further studies may investigate the phenomenon of the use of English as an international language on museums' websites from a larger number of European countries, including countries which were not examined in the present research. Furthermore, only one museum per country was included in the EU-EN group, which cannot be a representative sample of the situation in each country. No attempt was thus made at highlighting trends regarding linguistic families due to the limited number of university museums per country. Future research may consider more museums from each country: such study could yield different results and contribute to shed light on the extent to which text production in English is affected by the cultural and linguistic

background of each country. It may also provide more fine-grained data regarding possible similarities or differences between linguistic families.

Three specific micro-genres were chosen, i.e. "About", "Collection" and "Information". For each museum website, three pages per micro-genre were manually sampled, resulting in a small corpus. On the one hand, the disadvantage of using such a small corpus is that it does not provide a very representative set of data, and may be too small for patterns to emerge. On the other hand, an advantage of such a specialised corpus is that it focuses on specific micro-genres, ensures homogeneity across the texts and allows the manual analysis of the data, which may include a qualitative analysis. All in all, the corpus constructed was deemed suitable to address the questions of the present research and make relevant contributions.

Another limitation, which is directly related to the scope of this research, is that only university museums were analysed, as they were considered as a specific type of museums to be examined in their own right. A comparative study including university museums and museums which are not affiliated to academic institutions may reveal more thought-provoking details about the peculiarities of academic belonging and its real impact on online communication.

Furthermore, the present thesis only examined texts in English, without considering the translation process and the relation of such texts with their own potential source texts, e.g. by analysing the latter through the same analytical framework. A comparative approach may be adopted to analyse source and target texts to understand the relationship between them. This study could reveal to which extent the process of translating from a source text leaves a trace on the target text, e.g. in terms of lexical density. Such analysis would take the research in a new direction, and could provide insights on whether features characterising the EU-EN texts in English are also displayed in the source texts — thus being a product of a specific cultural context.

This research considered websites as a reflection of the institutional identity of the university museums selected and of the institutional language employed in order to appeal to diverse audiences. Other forms of institutional communication, such as posts on social media profiles, were not taken into account due to practical reasons: few European university museums regularly publish posts in English on social media, as the

majority of them tend to use the official language of the country where they are based. Although the importance of websites may be undermined by the emergence of social media in the future, websites still seem to be spaces used to provide reliable information for the visit, while social media may tend to be used to attract new audiences, i.e. people who do not normally visit (university) museums. Other directions in which this work could be extended include investigating the extent to which museums use English to interact on institutional profiles on the main social media. This would also allow to analyse how people react to museums' social media posts.

Also, attention was only paid to texts on museum websites, and thus images, videos or other visual or multimedia elements (apart from the layout-related features considered typical of web writing) were not the objects of this study. This may be a limitation, especially when one considers the importance of visual communication in the online environment. A content analysis of the images used on museum websites, and possibly on social media as well, could provide interesting data on the visual illustration of cultural values and on audience representation, which seems to be a common concern, especially for UK-EN museums.

The interviews carried out also had some limitations. Among them, it was though that the interviewer's background could affect how the participant responded and behaved during the interview: in particular, I expected that the participants might be a little nervous about my background as a linguist and translator, and thus responded in a "defensive" way while talking about language-related issues. For this reason, I tried not to use linguistic terms which were not supposed to be commonly understood, and tended to give the participants space and time for elaborating their thoughts, tolerate silence and pauses and show interest in what they were saying, no matter if the answer was central to the question asked.

Finally, an aspect which was not considered by this research was text reception by a multicultural audience, i.e. how people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds react to the same texts in English from university museums' websites in the UK-EN and EU-EN groups. For instance, an online survey could be carried out to measure text comprehensibility and level of lexical or grammatical complexity. Such study may allow observing whether people from different cultural groups react in different ways to the web writing features and the stance and engagement features and show a preference for some of them (e.g. short sentences over long ones), thus

highlighting different communicative needs as a result of different cultural backgrounds. This may also reveal whether web writing guidelines, as well as guidelines from studies on museum communication, are appropriate for a linguistically diverse audience.

The findings of this study have important implications for future research. Several questions remain unanswered in this domain and different directions may still be taken, but it seems to be clear from this thesis that research may significantly benefit from an interdisciplinary dialogue between museum and heritage studies on the one hand and linguistics, intercultural studies and translation studies on the other hand.

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Appendix A

Interview guides

INTERVIEW GUIDE
Name of the participant, Role, Institution, City

Introduction

Briefly present yourself and this research.

Thank the participant for taking part in this research.

State why the museum has been chosen.

Before starting

Remind the participant that the interview will take around an hour.

Ask them to read and sign the consent form.

Ask a confirmation of permission for recording and switch on the recorder.

Explain that quotes will be anonymised to be used for publications.

Add that you may want to take notes during the interview and prepare a notebook.

At the end of the interview

Ask to fill in a short demographic questionnaire.

Clarify that you are happy to share the results of this research when ready.

Invite them to send you comments if they think of other points they would like to make.

Ask if you can contact them in case material comes up in the transcript which is not clear.

Thank them for the time and energy committed to this research by undertaking this interview.

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS	
Age group	20-24 / 25-29 / 30-34 / 35-39 / 40-44 / 45-49 / 50-54 / 55-59 / 60-64 / 65-69 / 70-74 / 75-79
Gender	
Educational background	

UK-EN Questions

Theme	Question	Follow-up
Intro	Could you give me an overview of your role here?	How long have you been working here?
Intro	Have you as a team ever discussed how you use the English language for external communication?	
Website	I would like to focus on the website now. What do you think its main aims are?	What is the image you want to create of the museum through your website?
Website	What are the three most important web pages that you think capture what the museum is about?	To what extent do you consider your homepage to be a central, important page within the website?
Website	Who is involved in the process of writing texts for the website?	Are there multilingual members of the staff involved in the writing process?
Website	What is your involvement in the writing process?	In what occasions do you contribute texts? (e.g. a new exhibition?)
Website	What are the steps taken in writing texts for the museum website?	How is the final editing step carried out?
Website	For exhibitions, you have both printed and online material. What are the steps taken to create them?	How are the online texts about exhibitions created?
Language	Does the museum follow any web writing guidelines?	Do you adopt a particular tone of voice? Do you have a limit for text length? Do you adopt any SEO strategies?
Language	These guidelines for exhibition texts were written a few years ago by the museum staff. They also mention "reading on-line". Are they adopted for texts on the website as well?	
Language	(MM) I know that a few years ago the museum has carried out an exercise on brand where members of the staff had to imagine the museum as a famous person or a high street shop. Do you remember this?	How do you think this has informed the way language is used on the website?
Language	(WG) I noticed you use a few words related to the concept of "story" on the "About" page (for example "chapter", "history", "story", "tell"). What has been the thinking behind this choice?	Is there a list of key phrases you are required to use on the website for any particular reasons?
Language	(MM) I noticed that on the website you use both scientific and non-scientific terms, e.g. "entomology collection" and "collection of bugs". Why have you decided to use both terms?	(MM) However, on the page about the "money" collection you don't employ the scientific term "numismatics". What has been the process behind that choice?
Language	Have you undertaken any evaluation of the way language is used on the	

	website?	
Language	Do you feel that the language used on the museum blogs is different in any way from that used on the website?	
Audience	How do you imagine and categorise the audience for whom you write texts on the website?	Do you use web statistics to understand who visits the website?
Audience	How do you think of language when you think of your online audience?	How does your understanding of your audience inform the way you communicate to them?
Audience	How do you try to engage with a multicultural audience on the website?	
Audience	(WG) You have had an exhibition on South Asia. On the pages about it (e.g. Apna/Memories of Partition), are you speaking to communities from South Asia or are you speaking *about* South Asia to *other* communities?	(WG) Representation and cross-cultural understanding are two different issues. How do you represent specific communities and talk to specific communities?
Audience	Do you think that the website has specific web pages addressing multicultural audiences?	(WG) There is one page about English Corner on the gallery website. Who have you written that page for?
Audience	I know about English Corner and other activities you organise to engage with new, different audiences and create a "safe space", open to different groups of people for different purposes. If we treat the website as an online space, how does the language used in that space reflect this notion of "safe space" online?	To what extent do you think that the tone of voice and the word choice adopted on the website reflect this idea of "safe space"?
Uni museum	How does being a university museum affect the language you use and the pages you publish on the website?	Are you required to adopt any university policies or guidelines to write texts on the website?
Final	Do you speak other languages apart from English?	
Final	Is there anything else you would like to mention that might be relevant to this topic?	

EU-EN Questions

Theme	Question	Follow-up
Intro	Could you give me an overview of your role here?	How long have you been working here?
Intro	Have you as a team ever discussed how you use language for external communication?	What about the English language in particular?
Website	I would like to focus on the website now. What do you think its main aims are?	What is the image you want to create of the museum through your website?
Website	What are the three most important web pages that you think capture what the museum is about?	To what extent do you consider your homepage to be a central, important page within the website?
Website	Who is involved in the process of writing texts for the website?	What is your involvement in the writing process?
English contents	I would like to focus on the English version of the website now. Who was involved in the process of writing texts in English for the website?	What kind of expertise and background do they have, e.g. communication or disciplinary background? Are the people involved L1 or L2 speakers of English?
English contents	What were the steps taken in creating the English version of the website?	How were the texts in English created (i.e. translated from original texts or written ad hoc/in parallel)? When and why did you decide to create an English version?
Audience	How do you imagine and categorise the audience for whom you write texts in English on the website?	Do you think of L1 or L2 users? Do you aim a certain age group? Do you think about tourists, international students, people who have moved to the country or online users in general?
Audience	Do you use web analytics to understand who visits the website?	How does your understanding of your audience inform the way you communicate to them?
English contents	Have you looked at any other museum websites with contents in English? (from where?)	Have you undertaken any evaluation of the way English is used on the website?
English	Do you also offer other materials in English, e.g. onsite exhibition contents	Have you ever thought of translating contents into other

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contents	such as panels, brochures, etc?	languages?
Language	I noticed that the texts on your website … [specific question on one/more text(s)]	
Language	Does the museum follow any web writing guidelines?	Do you adopt a particular tone of voice? Do you write in Plain English? Do you adopt any SEO strategies?
Uni museum	How does being a university museum affect how you use language and how you publish content on the website?	Are you required to adopt any university guidelines to write texts on the website?
Final	Is there anything else you would like to mention that might be relevant?	

Appendix B

Information sheet

An audience-oriented approach to online communication in English:
the case of European university museums' websites

Participant Information Sheet

You are being invited to participate in a research study as part of a PhD thesis. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to participate. Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?

Chiara Bartolini, PhD Student (University of Bologna, Department of Interpreting and Translation)

Subject of the Research

Research on online communication by European university museums addressing a multicultural audience.

What is the aim of the research?

The purpose of this research is to get a better understanding of the processes underlying the creation of online contents in English produced by a series of European university museums selected as case studies, including the [museum]. In particular, my objective is to investigate:

- whether the museum staff display linguistic and cultural awareness of the need to address a multicultural public, i.e. visitors with different levels of proficiency of the English language who come from different cultural contexts;
- if evidence of such need arises, to what extent it influences the way in which texts in English on the website are written.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as part of the [museum] staff.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?

You would be asked to talk about the [museum], starting with general questions and then moving on to more specific information concerning how the [museum] as a cultural institution uses the English language to cater for a multicultural audience and what is the process for writing texts in English on the website. The interview will be in English.

What happens to the data collected?

The data collected will be audio-recorded, transcribed and used to get information on the process of online content creation.

How is confidentiality maintained?

Confidentiality of the name of the participants will be maintained: transcriptions will contain only coded initials. Every effort will be made to ensure that the data provided by the participants cannot be traced back to them.

What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself

Will I be paid for participating in the research?

You will not receive any payment for participating in the research. However, the museum will hopefully benefit from the results of this study as far as communicative practices and multicultural audience engagement are concerned.

What is the duration of the research?

The interview will take approximately an hour.

Will the outcomes of the research be published?

All or part of the content of your interview, in the form of excerpts or quotations, may be used in my PhD thesis, as well as in books, academic papers, presentations or on other feedback events.

Contact for further information

If you have questions or concerns about your rights or anything else about the research project, you can contact:

Chiara Bartolini, PhD Student (c.bartolini@unibo.it)

University of Bologna, Department of Interpreting and Translation

Home academic supervisor: Dr Adriano Ferraresi (adriano.ferraresi@unibo.it)

Academic supervisor at the University of Manchester: Dr Kostas Arvanitis (Kostas.Arvanitis@manchester.ac.uk)

Appendix C

Informed consent form

**An audience-oriented approach to online communication in English:
the case of European university museums' websites**

CONSENT FORM

If you are happy to participate please complete and sign the consent form below

Please initial box

1.	I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.	
2.	I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment/service.	
3.	I understand that the interviews will be audio-recorded.	
4.	I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.	
5.	I agree that any data collected may be passed as anonymous data to other researchers.	

I agree to take part in the above project

_____	_____	_____
Name of participant	Date	Signature
_____	_____	_____
Name of person taking consent	Date	Signature

Appendix D

Manchester Museum guidelines for writing accessible text

(Interpretive Strategy BP May 2009)

Manchester Museum Guidelines for writing accessible text

The starting point is always identifying who we are writing for and the circumstances under which they will be reading the text (passing through a gallery, standing up, sitting down, on the wall, on paper, on-line etc.) It is vital to keep those readers in mind the whole time. Clear writing follows from clear thinking: if the message isn't straight in your head you won't be able to convey it intelligibly.

- Use familiar, everyday language
- Adopt a conversational tone: allow your paragraph to "speak" to the reader (a good way of is to read your paragraph aloud to someone else)
- Use an 'active' voice (i.e. "Archaeologists discovered the shield" rather than "The shield was discovered by archaeologists"
- Employ short sentences and avoid subordinate clauses (i.e. "Archaeologists discovered the shield in the 1920s. It is decorated…" rather than "Discovered in the 1920s, the shield is decorated…"
- Avoid technical terms and jargon where possible. Explain them if they are essential.

This is not "dumbing down": it is perfectly possible to convey complex concepts and information in simple language; it just takes more effort. The majority of museum visitors are non-specialists who have very little time or patience for deciphering complicated text. It is not patronising to write simply and clearly: quite the opposite; it is empowering for the reader. Consider the following:

> A triumvirate of murine rodents totally devoid of ophthalmic acuity was observed in a state of rapid locomotion in pursuit of an agriculturalist's uxorial adjunct. Said adjunct then performed a triple caudectomy utilizing an acutely honed bladed instrument generally used for subdivision of edible tissue.

If that makes you feel a little foolish then you can appreciate how many museum visitors feel trying to read labels full of jargon, technical terms and assumed knowledge.

There are lots of tools that can help you check the 'readability' of your writing. You could start with Flesch and Kincaid which are embedded in Word software under the spelling and grammar facility. Once you've checked spelling and grammar, the software will provide readability statistics for the selected piece of writing.

This part of the Spelling and Grammar check (in the tools menu). Make sure the readability box is ticked (find this in Tools/options/Spelling and Grammar tab).

Here is a key to the statistical analysis:

Flesch reading ease
90-100 = easily understood by an 11-year old
60-70 = easily understood by 13-15 year olds
0-30 = easily understood by college graduates

Flesch-Kincaid grade level
1(age 5-6); 2(6-7); 3(7-8); 4(8-9); 5(9-11); 6(11-12);
7(12-13); 8(13-14); 9(14-15); 10(15-16); 11(16-17); 12(17-18)

In terms of reading ease we should aim for the 70-90 range and grade level 7-9. I am not suggesting relying solely on these tools – it can lead to writing that is rather lifeless and mechanical – but they are a useful guide to remind us who we are writing for.

Final wording will be signed off jointly between the curator concerned and Head of Learning & Interpretation. This then acts as the 'master' which the designers will use for proof checking.