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EU INSTITUTIONAL DISCOURSE: ENGLISH AND ITALIAN BROCHURES IN A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

In the last few years, studies on the informative publications made available to a wide audience by the European Union have shown that the EU institutions and bodies notably draw upon a variety of different discursive practices and genres to appeal to their citizens (Caliendo 2009; Caliendo and Piga 2014; Magistro 2007a). Although critical research focusing specifically on EU informative documents is still at an early stage, the above-mentioned trends have been widely documented from many perspectives, highlighting instances at a micro-textual level, as well as larger-scale discursive and visual elements. This paper intends to broaden investigation of the communicative strategies adopted by the EU to gain consensus and promote its institutional project, but it aims to do so from a cross-cultural perspective. Attention is called to the discursive devices and structures employed in EU brochures of a comparable nature in different cultural backgrounds and using as a means of expression two different languages: Italian and English. It is assumed that, despite the relative uniformity of EU brochures established by the requirements of the genre, there might be a significant contextual and intercultural variation in the rhetorical strategies adopted by the European Commission. The aim is to analyse to what extent the two different national contexts and languages influence the strategic features of EU informative material. In particular, focus will be placed on the Representation of Social Actors (van Leeuwen 1996) and on the concepts of 'personalization and humanization' of EU institutions in the Italian and English versions of EU brochures, along with the social impact of such communicative strategies discussed within the framework of CDA.

1. Introduction

The "democratic deficit" (White Paper on a European Communication Policy 2006: 9) thesis affords one of the most incisive critiques of the contemporary process involving European integration. The European Union is perceived to be critically lacking in authentic democratic legitimacy which ought to entail the full participation and involvement of all European citizens, who currently continue to identify their political

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* Although this paper has been jointly planned, Michela Giordano is responsible for Sections 2, 4, and 5.1, and Antonio Piga is responsible for Sections 1, 3, and 5.2. The Conclusions are a joint effort.

rights within the borders and parameters of their own nation states. As a result, there is little or no legitimacy accorded through direct democratic procedures at a European level of decision-making processes; therefore, governance fails to be both steered by and accountable to the peoples of the EU through direct relations with them as EU citizens.

One of the upshots of this widespread and pervasive lack of public support has been the radical change in strategy and in modes of interaction put in place by the European Commission through a series of discursive practices that intend to be more "socially constitutive" (Fairclough 1992: 64; Fairclough and Wodak 1997; Wodak *et al.* 1999), since they act in such a way as to forge redesigned and modernized communication bonds that tie European citizens to a Community. In line with this view, considerable attention has been devoted by Caliendo and Piga (2014), Caliendo and Napolitano (2008), and Magistro (2007a and 2007b) to some of the pragmatic and rhetorical traits that characterize the creation of a common European identity in the general process of legitimation and endorsement of European institutions.

Focusing on the interwoven set of relations between linguistic devices and EU identity shaping, Magistro (2007a and 2007b) and Piga (2013) have documented style-shifting trends from Eurojargon to a 'layperson's language', a conversation-like type of discourse as well as traits of slogan-like writing typical of promotional discourse. One chief aspect to emerge is how EU identity is one of the "public goods" (Rutherford 2004: 144) being promoted by the European Union in order to gain greater consensus and foster popular participation in support of the EU construction process. In addition, it has also been demonstrated (Caliendo and Piga 2014; Caliendo and Napolitano 2008) that endorsement also seems to 'appeal' to the eye of EU citizens through forms of motivation based on economic factors, that is, all of those features of a pragmatic character related to tangible achievements (i.e. affluence, prosperity, better living standards, etc.). The European Union is therefore increasingly advertising its self-portrayal as a provider of a renewed supranational identity, by giving the positive idea of promoting initiatives, services and tangible goods that are 'advertised and sold' as the pragmatic results brought about by EU membership. What is more, it has also been documented that the attempt to build a sense of social congruency between EU members is not only based on economic factors and utilitarian grounds, but also on noble and deeper values such as history, common roots, a common heritage of values, and humanistic ideals (Piga 2013). This proliferation of morally loaded terms is noteworthy in itself; it indicates that there is considerable concern over EU institutions: the absence of a real community in Europe and a genuine sense of "social identity" (Herrmann *et al.* 2004: 5) among its citizens. In order to deal with this lack of 'empathic attachment', a strategy widely adopted by EU institutions has been to stress the common roots and common heritage of values among its citizens.

In previous studies of EU informative materials, it has been documented that diverse linguistic strategies were employed for self- and 'other' forms of representation, that is to say, EU self-referentiality and citizen-representation respectively. These linguistic strategies have served a number of different purposes, such as strengthening roles, conveying agency and accountability (Magistro 2007a, 2007b) by exploiting linguistic devices at a macro- and micro-level of language. However, in the brochures and booklets previously examined, as far as self-representation and other-representation is

concerned, no reference was made to other versions of the materials written in any of the other existing official languages of the EU.

Against this background, the current work intends to broaden the investigation into the linguistic communicative strategies adopted by the EU to gain consensus and promote its institutional project, but it aims to do so from a cross-cultural perspective. Attention is paid to the discursive devices and structures employed in the brochure *Europe in 12 lessons* in two different cultural backgrounds, and using two different languages: Italian and English. It is assumed that, despite the relative uniformity of EU brochures established by the requirements of the genre, there might be significant contextual and intercultural variation in the rhetorical strategies adopted by the European Commission. The objective of this work is to explore to what extent the two different national contexts and languages influence the strategic features of EU informative material. In particular, focus will be placed on the Representation of Social Actors (van Leeuwen 1996) and on the concepts of 'personalization and humanization' as a strategy for the EU's self-representation of EU institutions in both the Italian and English versions of EU booklets.

2. Theoretical framework

As already indicated in the Introduction, this study draws upon several sources which explain how EU institutions utilize discursive practices and genres to address and to appeal to their citizens. Starting from the assumption that language and discourse are socially constitutive (Fairclough 1992; Fairclough and Wodak 1997), fundamental source for this investigation is represented by some previous research which looks at the pragmatic and rhetorical traits of European documents aimed at legitimating and endorsing European institutions, with the objective of creating a European identity (Caliendo 2009; Caliendo and Piga 2014; Magistro 2007a; Caliendo and Napolitano 2008). As Caliendo (2009: 163) explains citing Caliendo and Napolitano (2008: 322), remarkable changes are occurring in the communicative strategies at an institutional level, and these changes are the result of the need to "promote EU values and identity more effectively, while prompting civic participation and popular endorsement". Both Caliendo and Piga (2014) and Caliendo and Napolitano (2008) have analysed the discursive practices enacted by the EU institutions and witnessed the presence of legitimating and new consensus-building strategies in European informative publications.

Piga (2013) focuses on the communicative and persuasive strategies of the European Union institutions by analysing a corpus of promotional and advertising texts. The investigation aimed to illustrate the evolution of such strategies from both a synchronic and a longitudinal perspective (2001-2009). The analysis conducted, both qualitative and quantitative, focuses on restructuring phenomena and contamination of the institutional genre. The longitudinal analysis in particular draws upon Critical Discourse Analysis through a discussion of the "commodification-through-easification" (Piga 2013: 211) of the European Commission's discourse. The transformations of the language patterns adopted by the EU institutions when communicating to citizens are analysed through the lens of interdiscursivity where the main trends are 'democratization of discourse', 'commodification' and 'technologization of discourse' (Fairclough 1992: 200).

Piga (2013) illustrates how the discourse of consumerism through democratization and conversationalization is colonizing EU discourse, which is increasingly promoting and advertising Europe as a 'product', emphasizing the prosperity, benefits and opportunities that EU membership can bring about.

The present study takes into account all of these thought-provoking and insightful investigations and combines them with van Leeuwen's (1996) examination of the role of social actors and the way in which they are represented in English discourse. The two categories of inclusion/exclusion and role allocation devised by van Leeuwen are considered to be particularly revealing of the search for a common European identity, aimed at smoothing the process of European integration. In particular, focus is placed on the concepts of the 'personalization and humanization' of EU institutions in the Italian and English versions of the EU booklets taken into consideration, in order to determine whether and how certain linguistic and communicative strategies can concur in consolidating a European identity.

3. Data and methodology

A look at the EU informative instruments made available to a wide audience reveals the different forms they take, the manner in which they exploit different discourse strategies and how they are tailored to different groups of recipients. The European Union endeavours to guarantee that its message is made accessible to all EU citizens/readers, whatever their interests and their diverse backgrounds, education and culture might be. The result is a multilayered production of documents designed to disseminate information and knowledge about the EU and popularizing their specialist and technical features. This is a multifaceted process of communication devoted to the citizens/readers in which the right of citizens to be informed is paramount.

Communication policy should become an EU policy in its own right, at the service of the citizens. It should be based on genuine dialogue between people and the policymakers [...] *People from all walks of life should have the right to fair and full information about the European Union*, and be confident that the views and concerns they express are heard by EU institutions. The European Parliament, Member States and the representation of European citizens have a special role to play, as peoples' support for the European project is a matter of common interest. (*White Paper on a European Communication Policy* 2006: 4) [italics added].

The authors of the present paper are fully aware that translation of the various official documents is an integral part of the legislative process in the European Union. As Cao (2007: 151) underlines:

as regards drafting, in the EU, as part of the European Community legislative process, a proposal for a particular piece of legislation first comes from the European Commission (EC). [...] the initial draft of a legislative proposal is prepared by the technical department or technical experts for the sector concerned. Drafters must write in either English or French and their choice is determined by the language used in their department.

Cao (*ibid.*) goes on to explain that the second step involves the submission of the draft to the other Commission departments as part of the internal consultation procedure. Later, as a third step, the text must then be translated into all the official languages[1]. This is certainly different from the multilingual drafting experimented at the United Nations (*ibid.*).

Regarding the documents under scrutiny here, we cannot possibly know whether they are considered in the same way as pieces of legislation and whether their drafting follows the procedures outlined above. It is also impossible to know whether the original text was in either English or French, so it would be a bit hazardous to attempt an analysis based on translation procedures, or on the characteristics of the presumed source text and features of the target text. This is one reason why this paper is not going to consider the translation dimension. As previously explained above, this paper intends to carry out a linguistic analysis of two documents which are designed to disseminate information and knowledge about the EU and which consider the right of citizens to be informed as essential and paramount. The discursive features in the booklets will be scrutinized both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to identify differences and/or similarities in the rhetorical and pragmatic linguistic strategies implemented by the EU to promote its institutional projects.

The series of publications made available by the EU to the general public ranges from simple informative leaflets aimed at a wide audience to more specialized booklets addressed to the technically-minded. The full range of publications can be categorized into three different types:

Leaflets: simple informative publications consisting of only one folded sheet of paper.

Factsheets: small paper-covered books made up of just four pages.

Booklets: small paper-covered books with a number of pages ranging approximately from 20 to 200.

The following booklets have been selected as the main core of our corpus:

a) Europe in 12 lessons. The European Union explained, in English;

b) L'Europa in 12 lezioni. Le politiche dell'Unione Europea, in Italian.

These booklets were chosen for two main reasons: a) among all the informative publications, they represent the most detailed overview of the EU addressed to a wide audience; b) since these booklets include a summary of a large number of topics that are developed in greater detail in the other booklets, this has facilitated a synchronic approach of differences and/or similarities in the rhetorical and pragmatic linguistic strategies adopted by the EU in relation to the vast range of topics proposed.

The original publication of the booklet by EU expert Pascal Fontaine has now been revised, and a new version is currently published and available on the EU Law and Publications section of the website https://publications.europa.eu/. The versions analysed here date back to 2014 and both are 44 pages long.

Table 1 below shows the subdivision into sections in the two booklets: topics range from the historic steps which have led European countries to unite in a community

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[1] The equal status of all national languages as official languages within the EU and, theoretically, also as working languages has been constantly discussed since the first EU founding treaties were made public. Indeed, European multilingualism has always been perceived as a crucial component in the building of a European identity (or better still, European identities), and in the maintenance and safeguarding of societal and individual multilingualism.

THE EUROPEAN UNION EXPLAINED Europe in 12 lessons	LE POLITICHE DELL'UNIONE EUROPEA L'Europa in 12 lezioni
1. Why the European Union?	1. Perché un'Unione Europea?
2. Ten historic steps	2. Dieci tappe storiche
3. Enlarging the EU and getting on with the neighbours	3. Allargare l'UE e avere buone relazioni con i vicini
4. How does the EU work?	4. Come funziona l'Unione Europea?
5. What does the EU do?	5. Di cosa si occupa l'Unione Europea?
6. The single market	6. Il mercato unico
7. The euro	7. L'euro
8. Building on knowledge and innovation	8. Conoscenza e innovazione quale punto di partenza
9. What does it mean to be a European citizen?	9. Cosa significa essere un cittadino europeo?
10. A Europe of freedom, security and justice	10. Un'Europa di libertà, sicurezza e giustizia
11. The EU on the world stage	11. L'Unione Europea sulla scena mondiale
12. What future for Europe?	12. Un futuro per l'Europa

Table 1. *The twelve lessons in the two booklets, English and Italian*

(Lesson 2) to the current functions and tasks of the European Union (Lessons 4 and 5). Both booklets include information on the single market (Lesson 6) and the euro (Lesson 7), and then go on to explain how smart and sustainable growth can be achieved through knowledge, innovation, education and the digital society (Lesson 8). The following lessons in the booklets clarify what it means to be a European citizen (Lesson 9), and how EU countries cooperate in the area of justice in order to make Europe safer for its people (Lesson 10). Lessons 11 and 12 consider the European Union in the context of international affairs and negotiations, and what future the EU may have if integration is based on solidarity, common rules, common policies and common interests.

The analysis covers two different areas: in the first instance the discursive representation of the social actor 'European Union' is investigated, in order to ascertain whether a process of humanization of the institutions can be posited. This trend has in fact been praised and further encouraged by the European Commission in its *White Paper on a European Commission Policy:*

Action should focus on […] *giving Europe a human face.* The European Union is often perceived as 'faceless': it has no real public identity. Citizens need help to connect with Europe, and political information has greater impact when put in a 'human interest' frame that allows citizens to understand why it is relevant to them personally.

EU institutions and all levels of government can do more to 'give a human face' to the information they provide (European Commission 2006: 9) [italics added]

The study will also try to show whether and to what extent this discursive representation is achieved through the concept of interdiscursivity or, on the other hand, whether EU institutions employ an institutional language *stricto sensu*. In addition to this, a further level of linguistic analysis is to find out whether the EU adopts the linguistic strategy of 'multivocality', namely linguistic and discursive constituents belonging to a variety of different discursive practices, promotional and institutional at the same time which, as defined by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002: 151), "consists of the delineation of different voices or discursive logics in the text". A Critical Discourse Analysis framework approach is applied to this study: at both stages the intended social effects of the European Union's discursive choices will be examined in order to ascertain what presumed institutional plan can plausibly motivate these discourse strategies.

4. The representation of social actors

In *The Representation of Social Actors*, Van Leeuwen (1996) tries to analyse how social actors can be represented in English discourse. The author endeavours to discover what the choices are within the English language when referring to people (*ibid.*: 32). He draws up a "sociosemantic inventory" of the ways in which social actors can be represented, by attempting to establish the sociological and critical relevance of his categories. He then investigates how these categories can be realized linguistically (*ibid.*). The research question van Leeuwen attempts to answer can be formulated as follows: "What are the ways in which social actors can be represented in [...] discourse?" (*ibid.*). Since the scope of this work lies primarily in self-representation, van Leeuwen's model is applied in order to discover how the European Union, which metonymically is a social actor, represents itself and the others in the texts under scrutiny. Hence, van Leeuwen's research question has been re-contextualized as follows: what are the most significant ways in which the European Union represents itself and others at a cross-cultural level? What choices do the English and the Italian language provide for referring to the social actors in the two different versions of these booklets?

Van Leeuwen's representation includes several categories such as exclusion vs. inclusion, role allocation, genericization vs. specification, association and dissociation, indetermination vs differentiation, nomination and categorization, functionalization and identification, personalization and impersonalization, and, last but not least, overdetermination. In this particular context, exclusion vs. inclusion and role allocation will be considered, in both versions of the booklets.

In van Leeuwen's (1996: 38) words, "representations include or exclude social actors to suit their interests and purposes in relation to the readers for whom they are intended". A distinction must be made between suppression and backgrounding. According to van Leeuwen (*ibid.*: 39), "(i)n the case of suppression, there is no reference to the social actor(s) in question anywhere in the text", whereas "in the case of backgrounding, the exclusion is less radical: i.e. the excluded social actors may not be mentioned in relation to a given activity, but they are mentioned elsewhere in the text, and we can infer with reasonable (though never total) certainty who they are. They are not so much excluded as de-emphasised, pushed into the background." It is assumed here that a quantitative

and statistical analysis can help shed light on a) who the most frequently included social actors are and b) who the most frequently backgrounded or suppressed social actors are in the booklets under scrutiny.

The concept of role allocation refers to the part that the participants or actors in a given discourse event play in order to fulfill the author's communicative intention and objectives. Participants can be "activated" or "passivated": they can be represented as active, dynamic forces in the pursuit of a given activity or simply as the agentless patients of such activity (*ibid.*: 43-44). The grammatical system by which representation is achieved is that of "transitivity" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 44). In transitivity structures, actors are codified as Actors in material processes, Senser in mental processes, Behaver in behavioural processes, Assigner in relational processes, and Sayer in verbal processes (Halliday 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted, with the objective of discovering whether there are any similarities or differences in the types of social actors included in the two booklets, whether the humanization of institutions can be hypothesized, and what types of roles are played by the different actors in the two booklets.

5. Analysis and discussion

5.1. *Inclusion vs exclusion*

The quantitative analysis entailed an intensive reading of the two booklets aimed at identifying the social actors included in the texts. The social actors identified were subdivided into two main categories, INSTITUTIONS and CITIZENS, and manual[2] counting revealed their occurrences and frequency in the two texts, taking into consideration section by section, lesson by lesson in the two languages. Tables 2 and 3 show the results for the most frequent expressions and phrases identifying EU institutions and their citizens.

From a preliminary observation, it can be affirmed that INSTITUTIONS are more frequently cited in both texts, with a wide variety of expressions defining the same body or institution. For example, the European Union is defined as 'the EU', 'the European Union' and 'the Union'. The Member States are defined as 'the Member States of the EU', 'the members of the EU' and the 'Members States of the European Union'. The same occurs in the Italian version. The category CITIZENS is generally represented by rare occurrences of 'people', 'population', 'citizens' and 'EU citizens'.

As can be seen in Table 4, the initialism 'EU' is used much more frequently (237 times) than the corresponding Italian, *i.e.* l'UE (141). Both lexical items 'the European Union' (72) and 'l'Unione Europea' (100) are frequently used in the booklets, though less frequently than 'EU' and 'UE'. The abbreviation 'l'Unione' in Italian occurs much more frequently (58 times) than the corresponding 'the Union' in English (just 9 occurrences in total). "Gli Stati Membri" appears many more times (76) than the corresponding English phrase (40 occurrences), while the English version shows a preference for 'EU countries' (43 occurrences) compared to 'i paesi dell'UE' which is used only 11 times. In

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[2] A machine-readable version of the documents was not available.

	ACTORS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Totals
I N S T I T U T I O N S	(the) EU	19	10	28	30	31	20	6	1	27	22	34	9	237
	(the) European Union	3	4	13	4	7	7	2		13	5	12	2	72
	the Union			3	1	1		2		2				9
	Europe	6	3	2		7	4	8	4	5	3	2	11	55
	(the) Member States	3	3	3	9	5	2			3	3	2	7	40
	EU('s) Member States	1		3	2		3	2	1	1	1	1	1	16
	EU members			1										1
	Member States of the European Union	1		1				1						3
	EU member countries				1									1
	European countries	3		2										5
	EU countries	6	1	1	5	3	7	7		7	6			43
	(the) European Parliament		2	1	10	1		1		5		1	1	22
	(the) Parliament				17					2	2	1		22
	(the) European Commission	1	1	1	4	3	4	1	1	2		1		19
	the Commission				19		5			2		2		28
	(the) European Council		2	2	6	1		3	1	1	1	2	1	20
	the Council				24						2			26
	EU institutions	1			2					4			1	8
	EU governments				1						2	1		4
C I T I Z E N S	people (s)	1			1	2	3		1	8	6		1	23
	population (s)	1			2									3
	citizens	2				1				7	2		1	13
	(the) Europeans	4		1							1			6
	humankind	1												1
	European citizens	1									1			2

***Table 2**. Social actors in "Europe in 12 lessons"*

the CITIZENS category the most striking difference is given by the use of 'EU citizens' in the English version, occurring 12 times, while 'i cittadini dell'UE' is used only once. The Italian language shows a preference for 'i cittadini' (17) and 'i cittadini europei' (5).

Table 4 shows in a synoptic fashion the most frequently occurring expressions in both booklets: an intensive reading and further analysis reveals that the Italian version shows much more variation in the use of nouns and phrases referring to both IN-STITUTIONS and CITIZENS. Even though their occurrences are not very high, their mentioning here does seem opportune.

Other expressions found in the Italian version of the booklet which belong to the INSTITUTIONS category include: le istituzioni europee (2); i paesi d'Europa (1); i paesi dell'Unione (3); i paesi dell'Unione Europea (1); le nazioni europee (1); i paesi membri (1); le istituzioni dell'Unione (1). Other expressions which refer to the CITIZENS category are: la popolazione dell'UE (1); i popoli (1); i cittadini dell'Unione (3); i cittadini

	ACTORS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Totals
I S T I T U Z I O N I	(l') UE	12	7	14	18	16	7	5	1	21	13	22	5	141
	(l') Unione Europea	8	4	25	4	11	11	1		12	3	17	4	100
	(l') Unione	2		4	12	8	1	3		6	13	6	3	58
	(l') Europa	6	1	2		5	4		4	5	1	1	11	40
	(gli) Stati Membri	4	3	8	12	6	8	9		7	7	5	7	76
	(gli) Stati Membri dell'UE		1		2	1	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	14
	membri dell'UE													
	(gli) Stati Membri dell'Unione Europea	2			1			1						4
	(gli) stati membri dell'Unione	1												1
	i paesi europei	2		2			1			1	1			7
	i paesi dell'UE					1	2	4		2	2			11
	il Parlamento europeo		1	1	12					5		1		20
	il Parlamento				12			1		1	2	1		17
	la Commissione europea	1		1	5	2	4		1					14
	la Commissione				18		4	1		1	1	2		27
	il Consiglio europeo			2	6	1		2	1	1	1	2		16
	il Consiglio			1	26		1			3				31
	le istituzioni dell'UE							1		1			1	3
	i governi dell'UE										1	1		2
C I T T A D I N I	le persone					1	6			4	2			13
	l(a)(e) popolazion(e) (i)	1			3	1				1		1	1	8
	i cittadini	3								10	2		2	17
	gli europei	3			1								1	5
	l'umanità	2												2
	i cittadini europei	1		1	1					1	1			5
	i cittadini dell'UE												1	1

Table 3. Social actors in "L'Europa in 12 lezioni"

dell'Unione Europea (2); gli uomini (4); i popoli d'Europa (3). Even if they occur only rarely, they add variety to the texts, giving the drafters the chance to avoid repetition of the expressions in Table 4, which seem to be much more standardized.

The institutions of the EU included in the two booklets are always presented in the third person, in order to explain their tasks within the Union and their commitments before the citizens. The institutions never 'speak' in the first person plural, so no occurrences of 'we/us/our' have been found. Both the presence of the 'inclusive we' and the 'exclusive we' would have shown or created a different correlation between institutions and citizens, or a kind of ambivalence between institutions and citizens, a we-are-in-the-same-boat relationship, revealing the emergence of a certain kind of 'identity' between institutions and citizens. As underlined by Magistro (2007a: 57-58), "One of the first traces of an appealing person-to-person approach is the use of the pronoun 'you' to address the reader(s) and 'we' (exclusive) to refer to the institution. The use of these

		ACTORS	Totals	Totals	ACTORS	
I N S T I T U T I O N S		(the) EU	237	141	(l') UE	I S T I T U Z I O N I
		(the) European Union	72	100	(l') Unione Europea	
		the Union	9	58	(l') Unione	
		Europe	55	40	(l') Europa	
		(the) Member States	40	76	(gli) Stati Membri	
		EU('s) Member States	16	14	(gli) Stati Membri dell'UE	
		EU members	1	0	membri dell'UE	
		Member States of the European Union	3	4	(gli) Stati Membri dell'Unione Europea	
		EU member countries	1	1	(gli) stati membri dell'Unione	
		European countries	5	7	i paesi europei	
		EU countries	43	11	i paesi dell'UE	
		(the) European Parliament	22	20	il Parlamento europeo	
		(the) Parliament	22	17	il Parlamento	
		(the) European Commission	19	14	la Commissione europea	
		the Commission	28	27	la Commissione	
		(the) European Council	20	16	il Consiglio europeo	
		the Council	26	31	il Consiglio	
		EU institutions	8	3	le istituzioni dell'UE	
		EU governments	4	2	i governi dell'UE	
C I T I Z E N S		people (s)	23	13	le persone	C I T T A D I N I
		population (s)	3	8	l(a)(e) popolazion(e)(i)	
		citizens	13	17	i cittadini	
		(the) Europeans	6	5	gli europei	
		humankind	1	2	l'umanità	
		European citizens	2	5	i cittadini europei	
		EU('s) citizens	12	1	i cittadini dell'UE	

Table 4. Overview of social actors referencing in the two booklets

references results in a greater involvement of the citizen and 'personification' of the institution." Just 13 occurrences of the pronoun 'you' have been found in Lesson 9, 'What does it mean to be a European citizen?' in the English version. The author addresses the reader directly explaining what the advantages are of travelling, living and working in Europe:

(1) from the English version
*If **you** are an EU citizen **you** have the right to travel, work and live anywhere in the European Union* (p. 28).

In the second paragraph "How you can exercise your rights as a European citizen", the pronoun "you" is used to explain to the readers what type of political rights they have as European citizens:

(2) from the English version
*As a citizen of the European Union **you** are not just a worker or a consumer, **you** also have specific political rights. Since the Maastricht Treaty came into force, regardless of*

*your nationality, **you** have had the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in local elections in **your** country of residence and in elections to the European Parliament.* (p. 28-29).

The only reference to the citizen(s) as "you" in the Italian version is given by the verbs in the second person "avete" and "potete" in the paragraph "Viaggiare, vivere e lavorare in Europa" (Lesson 9: Cosa significa essere un cittadino europeo?):

(3) from the Italian version
*Il Cittadino europeo ha diritto di circolare liberamente, lavorare e risiedere ovunque nell'Unione. Se **avete** completato un corso universitario della durata di almeno tre anni le vostre qualifiche saranno riconosciute in tutti i paesi dell'UE […] **Potete** lavorare nel settore sanitario, dell'istruzione e in altri servizi pubblici […] di ogni paese dell'Unione Europea* (p. 28).

To sum up, while CITIZENS in general appear to be suppressed or backgrounded in the majority of the sections where INSTITUTIONS are instead foregrounded, in Section 9 they are addressed as travellers, workers, consumers and, last but not least, voters and electors. Lesson 9 is the only one where a person-to-person approach can be found. Throughout the two booklets, as previously stated, the citizens are not involved directly, whereas the institutions are described in detail in terms of what they do and offer as institutional bodies or entities, with no elements of personification or humanization.

5.2. *Role allocation*
This Section is devoted to the roles that social actors play in their assigned representations. As stated above in Section 4, the concept of role allocation refers to the function that the participants in a discourse event are called on to play in order to perform the author's communicative purposes. Participants can be 'active' or 'passive': that is, they can be represented as dynamic forces in the pursuit of an action, or simply as agentless patients of such action (van Leeuwen 1996: 43-44). The grammatical system by which representation is achieved is that of transitivity (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004).
As van Leeuwen (1996: 43) points out, the distinction between activation and passivation transcends the actual grammatical realization of the representation: "there need not be congruence between the roles that social actors actually play in social practices and grammatical roles they are given in the texts. Representation can reallocate roles, rearranging social relations between the participants". This entails that activation and passivation are not bound to what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004: 173) call the "semiotic space" of grammatical features, but primarily relate to the extralinguistic domains that actors actually play in social practices. In this respect, for example, activation can be accomplished by conveying 'participation' of the Actor in processes in which the action is expressed through the use of foregrounding grammatical roles in Material processes:

(4a) from the English version
The European Commission has taken actions to improve worker mobility, and particularly to ensure that educational diplomas and job qualifications obtained in one country are recognized in all the others (p. 22).

(4b) from the Italian version

La Commissione Europea ha adottato provvedimenti per favorire la mobilità dei lavoratori e soprattutto per garantire che i titoli di studio e le qualifiche di uno Stato membro fossero riconosciuti in tutti gli altri (p. 22).

At the same time, Activated social actors are also realized in transitivity structures by grammatical participant roles as Senser in Mental processes:

(5a) from the English version

The EU wishes to promote humanitarian and progressive values, and ensure that humankind is the beneficiary, rather than the victim, of the great global changes that are taking place (p. 5).

(5b) from the Italian version

L'Unione Europea intende promuovere valori umanitari e progressisti e far sì che l'umanità possa beneficiare dei cambiamenti planetari attualmente in corso e non esserne la vittima (p. 5).

Activation is also achieved in the corpus through "circumstantialisation" (van Leeuwen 1996: 44), giving an Actor accountability for a specific action, as can be seen in the following example:

(6a) from the English version

These laws [regulations, directives, and recommendations], along with EU policies in general, are the result of decisions taken by a Council (representing national governments), the European Parliament (representing the people) and the European Commission (a body independent of EU governments that upholds the collective European interest) (p.11).

(6b) from the Italian version

Questi atti legislativi e, in maniera più generale, le politiche dell'Unione, sono il risultato delle decisioni prese dal Consiglio (che rappresenta i governi nazionali), dal Parlamento europeo (che rappresenta i popoli dell'Europa) e dalla Commissione europea (organo indipendente dai governi e garante dell'interesse comune degli europei) (p. 11).

Although "*by a Council […], the European Parliament […] and the European Commission*", as well as "*prese dal Consiglio […], dal Parlamento europeo e dalla Commissione europea*" appear in Rhematic position[3] as a passive-voiced sentence, from a functional sentence perspective both these sentences highlight the dynamic role of EU institutions and bodies, which are represented as active operational forces in the various EU building processes.

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[3] Following the terminology of the Prague School of Linguistics, the Theme is the element which serves as the point of departure of the message, namely it is that which locates and orients the clause within the context. The remainder of the message, that is the part in which the Theme is developed, is called the Rheme (Bazzanella 2001).

In contrast to the previous examples, activation in the texts analysed is also extended to "metaphorical" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 639) representation. Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) distinguish between "congruent" (or non-metaphorical) and "metaphorical" representation. The concept of congruency can be interpreted as appealing to a rather free notion of how events are represented 'as a rule' in the 'unmarked' case; for instance, representing processes as processes, as opposed to representing processes as entities. "Activities" in Example 7 below, for instance, is a grammatical metaphor, namely a process being metaphorically represented as an entity that semantically operates like any other entity. Otherwise stated, some entities, things, are part of the nominal (noun) vocabulary of English or Italian but pragmatically they "belong to a particular sub-category with a special connection with verbs (and thus processes)" (Fairclough 2003: 143; see also Halliday 1985; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). In this regard, a pervasive form adopted in the texts under scrutiny is to realize activation through the use of premodification of these types of process nouns:

(7a) from the English version
The European Union's activities impact on the day-to-day life of its citizens by addressing the real challenges facing society: environmental protection, health, technological innovation, energy etc. (p. 16).

(7b) from the Italian version
Le attività dell'Unione Europea incidono sulla vita quotidiana dei cittadini europei affrontando le sfide poste dalla società moderna: protezione dell'ambiente, salute, innovazione tecnologica, energia ecc. (p. 16).

As can be seen, the English version differs significantly from the Italian version in the form and in the distribution of the NP structure. The English stylistically unmarked structure of the NP is a modifier-head as opposed to the prototypical Italian postmodification head-modifier. However, examples of postmodification also occur in the English version of the booklet, thus indicating that there is no syntactical incongruity between the two systems, as can be noted in the following examples:

(8a) from the English version
That is the purpose of the EU's 'solidarity policies', designed to help underdeveloped regions and troubled sectors of the economy (p. 18).

(8b) from the Italian version
Tale è lo scopo delle "politiche di solidarietà" dell'Unione Europea, concepite per aiutare le regioni meno sviluppate e i settori dell'economia in difficoltà (p. 18).

The other examples of activation that occur in the corpus concern grammatical participant roles of EU institutions (and related bodies), coded as Carrier in relational processes, as can be noted in the following examples:

(9a) from the English version
Europe is proud of its humanitarian tradition of welcoming foreigners and offering asylum to refugees fleeing danger and persecution (p. 32).

(9b) from the Italian version

L'Europa è fiera della sua lunga tradizione di accoglienza degli stranieri e di asilo offerto ai rifugiati in fuga da pericoli e persecuzioni (p. 32).

There are no occurrences in the corpus of activations as Behaver in behavioural processes or as Sayer in verbal processes.

All the activations found in the Processes described are (except for Lesson 9, which will be discussed below) 'institutional' in nature, and what might be grouped together as the "movers" (Fairclough 2003: 145), those that make things happen (EU, the European Union, Europe, the European Central Bank, the European Commission, etc.; l'UE, l'Unione Europea, la Banca Centrale Europea, la Commissione Europea, etc.). 'EU people/citizens' are extensively backgrounded throughout the corpus; they are never 'activated' either in Thematic or in Rhematic position within Circumstance in prepositional phrases. As can be seen from the examples above, where institutional social actors are included and activated, they occur as Material processes, Mental Processes, the Carrier in Relational Processes, and in Process nouns as Premodification and Postmodification. Overall, in the booklets the pervasive inclusion of institutional social actors appears to promote EU self-referential discourse whose focus, albeit promotional, seems to be centred on the institutions and its initiatives and not on the citizens. The positive idea of progressing and promoting initiatives is therefore exclusively related to the EU institutions, without any involvement of non-institutional social actors. Activation, rather than passivation, seems to be the significant strategy adopted in the corpus "Europe in 12 lessons / L'Europa in 12 Lezioni" as the concept of 'being active' is the central message of these texts. The booklets reject the idea that EU institutions and their related bodies are inactive 'passivated undergoers' of EU integration and therefore portray themselves as goal-oriented and hard-working contributors to the building of EU processes.

However, one question still remains open: if, on the one hand, there are those social actors who act as actors in a given process (loosely, the doers of the deeds, or those who make things happen), on the other hand, there are the beneficiaries of these processes (loosely, those affected by processes). According to van Leeuwen (1996: 44), passivation requires a further distinction: a passivated social actor can be "subjected or beneficialised". Subjected social actors in a given representation are treated as direct objects. As activation, they can be realized by "participation" (*ibid.*) in those cases in which the passivated social actor is the Goal in relation to material processes, the Phenomenon in mental processes, or the Carrier in Relational processes (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 294). The Beneficiary, on the other hand, is "the one to whom or for whom the process is said to take place" (*ibid.*: 293). As well as being realized lexically or pragmatically by inferring it from the context, the Beneficiary can take prepositions (for example *to* or *for* + nominal group, etc.) (Halliday 1985), whereas Subjection, being realized as a direct object, does not. In examples (4a) and (4b) above, for instance, "actions/provvedimenti" is the Goal of the Material process 'to take', whereas the Beneficiary is twofold: the first to benefit from the EU actions are virtually all the EU citizens of a working age who are free to live and work in any EU country; the second refers to "foreign qualifications", and construes a "benefactive" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 191) role of the EU in that it portrays the participants that are benefiting from the performance of

the process, namely all European students, whose qualifications are equally recognized all over Europe.

Although 'citizens/people' never occur as actors in the corpus under investigation (apart from Lesson 9), they are pervasively the real beneficiaries of all of these actions. By claiming to position 'the general public' (citizens, employees, workers, students, travellers, etc.) at the centre of the EU benefactive policy – at the heart of the EU – EU institutions are suggesting an act of 'empowerment'; 'citizens/people' have the power 'to move', 'to study', 'to travel', to work' anywhere in Europe. From a semantic point of view, the meaning of 'to empower' is to make someone more confident, responsible and assertive. In other words, 'empowerment' is a process of progress, rising, emancipation and growth.

The situation is quite different in Lesson 9 ("What does it mean to be a European citizen?"), where the number of institutional social actors activated is reduced to just 10 occurrences, whereas the list of active non-institutional social actors includes 19 occurrences, with as many five different social actors (workers, consumers, citizen, people), including the use of "you", especially activated in Material processes:

(10a) from the English version
You can work in health, education and other public services [...] of any EU country in the European Union (p. 28).

(10b) from the Italian version
Potete lavorare nel settore sanitario, dell'istruzione e in altri servizi pubblici [...] di ogni paese dell'Unione Europea (p. 28).

Thus, there seems to be a shift in the focus of EU discourse in Lesson 9 that goes from being highly self-referential in all the other Lessons to more audience-oriented, with the foregrounding of the addressees of the message it conveys. As stated above, this trend towards a progressive exclusion of institutional actors in favour of an inclusion of more non-institutional ones is absent in the others sections. However, the general significance of activation and passivation throughout the texts seems to be transparent: where institutional social actors are mainly activated and their capacity for agentive action that make things happen is highlighted, they act as the 'cause' of all processes, while 'citizens' are the beneficiaries, the ones affected by these processes; on the other hand, where 'citizens' are foregrounded and activated, they act simply as the 'effect' of the actions taken by EU institutions, as if they were now 'empowered to reap all the EU benefits'. For example, since [cause] *"The European Commission has taken actions to improve worker mobility, and particularly to ensure that educational diplomas and job qualifications obtained in one country are recognized in all the others",* [effect] *"You* [one] *can work in health, education and other public services [...] of any EU country in the European Union".*

6. Conclusions

Although our conclusions should be regarded as tentative, since our corpus is small and may not be fully representative, our goal was to ascertain whether the data pointed to

the existence of any differences between the realization of the same genre in two different cultural backgrounds. The analysis would have certainly deserved much more space, but the examples found and the investigation carried out demonstrate that there are no striking differences between the two versions of the booklets (despite some dissimilarities in the grammatical realization of the NP structure in the two languages). In both booklets, institutions as bodies and entities are named and referred to much more frequently than citizens as people of the EU, as workers, consumers, travellers and voters. Therefore, institutions are foregrounded while people and citizens are extensively backgrounded (if we exclude Lesson 9 which is directly addressed to them in both versions of the booklet). Discourse is generally focused on the institutional actors and their initiatives, and the institutions included (the EU, the Council, the European Parliament, the European Commission, etc.) are active bodies engaged in the various processes and actions. European citizens appear as the implicit beneficiary of these actions and processes.

Through these booklets, the EU is actually promoting all those benefits which come from its institutions and affect and improve specific areas of citizens' real lives such as jobs, food safety, social opportunities and even solidarity. The similarities in the two booklets show a common consensus-building purpose expressed through the explanation of actions and processes carried out by the various bodies, without overtly resorting to specific persuasive or promotional features typical of advertising discourse.

Overall, our analysis of the informative material suggests that the humanization of EU institutions does not transpire as evidently as in other informative material investigated in previous research (Caliendo and Piga 2014; Magistro 2007a and 2007b; Piga 2013). There are no aspects of a definite personification conferred to the institutions through, for example, reference to real identities, evocation of personal experiences, or emphasis on people-specific characteristics belonging to EU officials. In both booklets it emerges that the Union and its citizens are no longer described as inclusive and humanized 'we, common Europeans', but as separate entities. Therefore, the previous following equivalences "EU=Europe=*demos*=we" (Piga 2014: 73), which marked the difference between speaking "within' the discourse of the EU and speaking 'about' the discourse of the EU" (*ibid.*: 73), is no longer evident in the texts under scrutiny here. It would seem that the choice of providing no faces and no voices for the real actors in the backstage of the European Union is a formula intentionally used in order not to convey the people-oriented approach of the Union and therefore not to intimately connect the writer and the reader, EU institutions and their citizens. The analysis of these two booklets, thus, throws light on a different communication pattern: the narrating voice now shifts from the institution's 'spokespersons', who are at the same time civil servants, thus ideal intermediaries in the exchange process and in the identification stage, to a self-referential and institution-centred perspective.

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