

9th ADVANCED RESEARCH SEMINAR ON AUDIO DESCRIPTION



TransMedia Catalonia Research Group

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Venue: Residència d'Investigadors

(Hospital, 64, Barcelona)

20-21 April 2023

TABLE OF CONTENT

9 TH ADVANCED RESEARCH SEMINAR ON AUDIO DESCRIPTION	1
TABLE OF CONTENT	2
COMMITTEES, ORGANISERS AND SPONSORS.....	3
CONFERENCE PROGRAMME	6
CONFERENCE PROGRAMME- DAY 1: 20 APRIL 2023.....	6
CONFERENCE PROGRAMME- DAY 2: 21 APRIL 2023.....	8
SOCIAL EVENTS	10
KEYNOTE SPEAKER: SOPHIE FRILLEY	12
PANEL 1. SOUND AND VOICES	13
PANEL 2. AD MODELS AND CHALLENGES	20
PANEL 3. AD ACROSS THE WORLD	27
PANEL 4. ARTISTIC PRACTICES	35
PANEL 5. TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS	47
PANEL 6. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND CERTIFICATION	50
PANEL 7. AUDIO DESCRIBING VIDEOGAMES	56
PANEL 8. MULTIMODALITY AND CREATIVITY	62
PANEL 9. NEW AUDIENCES, NEW APPROACHES	68

COMMITTEES, ORGANISERS AND SPONSORS

ARSAD director: Anna Matamala, UAB.

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- Blanca Arias, Universitat Pompeu Fabra
- Elisa Perego, University of Trieste.
- Eva Espasa, Universitat de Vic.
- Iwona Mazur, Adam Mickiewicz University.
- Lucinéa Marcelino Villela, Universidade Estadual Paulista.
- Nina Reviers, University of Antwerp.
- Sharon Black, University of East Anglia
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- María Eugenia Larreina
- Marina Pujadas
- Mariona González
- Marta Brescia
- Miguel Ángel Oliva
- Pilar Orero
- Sarah McDonagh

This conference is part of TransMedia Catalonia research group activities (2021SGR00077).

ARSAD is also part of AccessCat activities. AccessCat is the Catalan Accessibility Network funded by the Department of Research of the Catalan Government (2021XARDI0007).



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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

#arsad2023

<https://webs.uab.cat/arsad>

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME- Day 1: 20 APRIL 2023

08:30 – 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 09:15	Welcoming words by Anna Matamala (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, UAB)
09:15 – 10:00	Keynote speaker: Sophie Frilley (TITRAFILM). Chair: Federico Spoletti (SUB-TI)
10:00 – 11:30	PANEL 1. SOUND AND VOICES Chair: Anna Matamala (UAB) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Bernd Benecke (Bayerischer Rundfunk). <i>Designing with voices: The challenges of presenting and sound editing in audio description</i> (15')- Brett Oppegaard (University of Hawaii). <i>Is it Art? Or is it Audio Description? Experiments on the boundaries of media accessibility</i> (15')- Roger Johansson, Jana Holsanova, Viveka Lyberg-Åhlander, Erika Sombeck & Tina Rastegar (Lund University/Åbo Academy). <i>Spatiotemporal description of events in AD – the role of cognitive aspects and voice quality</i> (15')- Irene Hermosa (UAB) & Nina Reviere (University of Antwerp). <i>From theatre podcast to audio introductions and back</i> (15') Discussion: 30 minutes

Coffee break (11:30-12:00)

12:00 – 13:30	PANEL 2. AD MODELS AND CHALLENGES Chair: Nina Reviere (University of Antwerp) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Marie Campbell (Red Bee Media). <i>The art of difficult describing: Race, gender, disability and nudity</i> (15')- Marina Ramos & Purificación Meseguer Cutillas (University of Murcia). <i>The role of ideology on the audio description process</i> (15')- Alejandro Romero (Universitat Jaume I). <i>The multimodal configuration of the audio description script. A qualitative content analysis of the meaning codes</i> (15')- Iwona Mazur (Adam Mickiewicz University). <i>Functional priorities in audio description</i> (15') Discussion: 30 minutes
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Lunch break (13:30-14:30)

14:30 – 16:00	PANEL 3. AD ACROSS THE WORLD Chair: Iwona Mazur (Adam Mickiewicz University) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lucinéa Villela (Sao Paulo State University). <i>What makes a Brazilian audio description a Brazilian audio description?</i> (15') - Kulnaree Sueroj & Mariana Lopez (University of York). <i>The challenges of existing Thai audio description guidelines</i> (15') - Soledad Álvarez & Mayte Gorrostorrazo (Universidad de la República). <i>A linguistic study on film audio description in Uruguay: The project "Image and word in motion"</i> (15') - Laura Marra (Università del Salento). <i>"Show or tell". The language of emotions in the Spanish and Italian AD</i> (15') Discussion: 30 minutes
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Coffee break (16:00 – 16:30)

16:30- 18:30	PANEL 4. ARTISTIC PRACTICES Chair: Lucinéa Villela (Sao Paulo State University). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jana Holsanova (Lund University), Vera Suvalo Grimberg (Dance Company Spinn) & Tina Weidelt (Audiosyn). <i>Recorded audio description as an integral part of the live dance performance of 'Miramos'</i> (15') - Alicia Verdú & María Olalla Luque Colmenero (University of Granada). <i>From Labanotation to subjectivity in the audio description of the contemporary dance piece 'Minerva'</i> (15') - Arianna Carloni, Sabine Braun, Dimitris Asimakoulas & Kim Starr (University of Surrey). <i>Watching and listening to dance</i> (15') - Chiara Bartolini (University of Bologna). <i>Cultural accessibility strategies and museum AD in Italy: A (belated) emerging practice?</i> (15') - María José García-Vizcaíno (Montclair State University). <i>Audio description from within: The artist's turn</i> (15') - Karen Seeley (The University of Adelaide). <i>End-user experience of AD for the performing arts: Complexities beyond practice</i> (15') Discussion: 30 minutes.
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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME- Day 2: 21 APRIL 2023

09:15-10:30	PANEL 5. TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS Chair: Pilar Orero (UAB). <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Mereijn van der Heijden (Soundfocus) & Ellen Schut (Earcatch). <i>Pre-recorded AD for live events</i> (15')- Eveline Ferweda (Scribit.Pro). <i>The video accessibility plug-in</i> (15')- María J. Valero Gisbert (Università degli Studi di Parma). <i>Audio description on mobile screens</i> (15') Discussion: 30 minutes
<i>Coffee break (10:30-11:00)</i>	
11:00-12:30	PANEL 6. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND CERTIFICATION Chair: Estel·la Oncins (UAB) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wendy Sapp (Bridge Multimedia). <i>Improving audio description through quality control reviewers who are blind</i> (15')- Joel Snyder (Audio Description Associates, LLC-Audio Description Project of the American Council of the Blind). <i>UPDATE: Becoming a *certified* audio describer</i> (15')- Alicja Zajdel (University of Antwerp). <i>Professional identity profiles among audio describers</i> (15')- Anna Jankowska (University of Antwerp). <i>Pivot templates in audio description: Performance and attitude of translators</i> (15') Discussion: 30 minutes
12:30-13:30	PANEL 7. AUDIO DESCRIBING VIDEOGAMES Chair: Sarah McDonagh (UAB) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Xiaochun Zhang (University College London) & Polly Goodwin. <i>AD4Games: Applying audio description in video games</i> (15')- María Eugenia Larreina & Carme Mangiron (UAB). <i>Audio description and video games – Results from a survey and interviews in Spain</i> (15')- Miguel Ángel Oliva-Zamora (UAB). <i>Audio introductions for video games</i> (15') Discussion: 15 minutes


Lunch break (13:30-14:30) Although lunch is not included, sandwiches will be offered to participants

14:30-16:00	<p>PANEL 8. MULTIMODALITY AND CREATIVITY</p> <p>Chair: Anna Jankowska (University of Antwerp)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aneta Pawlowska & Daria Rutkowska-Siuda (University of Lodz). <i>Tactile architectural drawings as a tool to support audio description</i> (15') - Adriana da Paixao (Centro de Apoio Pedagógico à Pessoa com Deficiência Visual Profa. Cátia Paim). <i>Audio description of illustrated books: A multimodal reading proposal</i> (15') - Marcella Wiffler Stefanini (State University of Campinas, Unicamp). <i>Audio description of "Vinil Verde": Audio describing the horror genre</i> (15') - Gert Vercauteren (University of Antwerp). <i>Creativity in the audio description of non-fictional content. The case of the Flemish documentary 'Beest'</i> (15') <p>Discussion: 30 minutes.</p>
<p><i>Coffee break (16:00-16:30)</i></p>	
16:30-17:45	<p>PANEL 9. NEW AUDIENCES, NEW APPROACHES</p> <p>Chair: Gert Vercauteren (University of Antwerp)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monika Zabrocka (Jagiellonian University Krakow) & Grzegorz Kata (University of Economics and Innovation, Lublin). <i>Accessibility has many names. Audio description has many roles</i> (15') - Yolanda Moreno Montaña (University of Vic – Central University of Catalonia). <i>Audio description: A learning tool for students with cognitive disabilities. A reception study</i> (15') - Matt Kaplowitz (Bridge Multimedia) & Joel Snyder (Audio Description Associates, LLC-Audio Description Project of the American Council of the Blind). <i>Can you see gravity? Audio description and early education</i> (15') <p>Discussion: 30 minutes.</p>
17:45-18:00	<p>CONCLUDING REMARKS</p>

SOCIAL EVENTS

1. Event for speakers, chairs and sponsors

19 April, evening: Speakers' Reception: "[Dark Chocolate, An Evening of Tasty Jazz](#)", organised and sponsored by Bridge Multimedia. An invitation has been sent to speakers, chairs and sponsors.



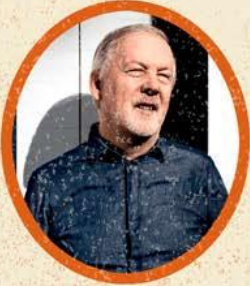
An ARSAD 2023 Event

Dark Chocolate

An Evening of Tasty Jazz

Presented by
Transmedia Catalonia Research Group,
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
& Bridge Multimedia.
Matt Kaplowitz, Producer

Featuring: Ignasi Terraza



19.04.23

Time: 20:00
Venue: Jamboree 3
Plaça Reial, 18
08002 Barcelona

Cash Bar

For Information:
<https://webs.uab.cat/arsad/arsad2023concert/>

2. Event for all participants (free access, registration required)

All participants are invited to a free dinner on Thursday 20 April. An email has been sent to confirm your attendance.

Restaurant Rossini
Plaça Reial, 13
08002 Barcelona

<https://www.restauranterossini.com/>

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: SOPHIE FRILLEY

Sophie FRILLEY is the co-CEO of the French company TITRAFILM. After a career in communication and business, she joined the TITRAFILM family business group in 2005, with the aim of transforming the company from print to digital: TITRAFILM had invented subtitling in 1933 in Paris, when talking films started to make it around the world.

90 years later, TITRAFILM offers a full range of creative and technical services dedicated to high standard media content production, distribution, international sales and theatrical, TV and OTT broadcast.

Its 150 employees are specialized in image and sound postproduction (editing, color grading, recording, sound design and mix), localization (dubbing and subtitling in multiple languages), accessibility (audio description, SDH), lab services (mastering, QC, graphics) and creation of broadcasting material (DCP, media processing).

TITRAFILM is leading the industry by developing online platforms and exchange secured tools dedicated to localization, which have been awarded in 2019 by the Cesar of Innovation.

PANEL 1. SOUND AND VOICES

Designing with voices: The challenges of presenting and sound editing in audio description

Bernd Benecke

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Bayerischer Rundfunk, Munich, Germany

The Audio Description of films holds some challenging problems especially for genres like action or comedy. A good describer may overcome these problems and create a text that covers all the necessary aspects. But very often the success of the description lays in the end in the work of the narrator.

Presenting e.g., a funny text in a neutral way may kill all the fun - whereas a good narrator may change a not-so-funny-text into a funny AD. So, choosing the right woman or man to voice a comedy description is very important. The challenge in this is to catch the comedy in the original without adding too much of your own. The editing and mixing of the AD may support this – comedy is often a question of timing and rhythm, and that's where your sound designer jumps in.

Another possibility in other genres is to present your description with more than one voice. This can be a good idea when the plot is e.g., told on two different time levels (like past/today in "Fried Green Tomatoes") or from two different perspectives (like in the TV series "The Affair") or in two different countries or as a real world/dream world story (like in the German TV movie "Play", available through Netflix). Again, the editing and mixing may support you in this – by e.g. putting effects on your voices and making them sound "ancient" or "unreal" ...

This presentation will focus on case studies on voicing comedy and working with more than one narrator. Examples from different films are shown and the work of the narrators and the sound designers is discussed with the audience.

References

Benecke, B. (2014). *Audiodeskription als partielle Translation: Modell und Methode*. Lit (English summary available, write to bernd.benecke@br.de).

Benecke, B. (2022). In-house training: the course at Bayerischer Rundfunk. In C. Taylor, & E. Perego (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of audio description*. Routledge.

Benecke, B. (forthcoming). Methods and technologies of audio description for film and television. In C. Maaß, & I. Rink (Eds.), *The handbook of accessible communication*. Frank & Timme.

Chion, M. (1990). *Audio-Vision: Sound on screen*. Columbia University Press.

Bernd Benecke, PhD, Bayerischer Rundfunk: Head of Audio Description within the Access Services Department. Lecturer at the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) and at the International University of Applied Languages SDI, Munich. Doctoral thesis on "Audio Description as partial translation" ("Audiodeskription als partielle Translation").

Is it Art? Or is it Audio Description? Experiments on the boundaries of media accessibility

Brett Oppegaard

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University of Hawaii, USA

Through an experimental design-based research project—funded by the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)—this study explored intersections of sound art, mobile technologies, and the accessibility of national parks through the creation of a novel form of audio description. We decided to make this piece of locative sound art—designed primarily for people who are Deafblind, blind, or who have low-vision—at the site of Andy Goldsworthy's four outdoor public art installations within the Presidio in San Francisco. During our design process, we encountered many complexities demanding design attention and forcing difficult artistic choices, including about approaches to the vocal performance, the dualistic proximity of listeners to the artwork (they were either on site or off), and to the quirks of the physical environment, including about how to handle an alleged arson of one of the artworks that happened mid-development and closed the area to visitors. As these complications were revealed, we rejected reductionism and the impulse to solely focus on the content, the medium, or the mobilities. We stuck to the philosophy that all were co-equally important and approached the design development accordingly. We then gathered feedback about this audio description from representative audience members, which included on-site tests with five individuals, facilitated by a research team member. We used a think-aloud protocol, during which participants talked about their responses to the audio files in the

moment. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with the individuals after each visit. In addition, we built an online review system as a part of the support software that allowed other representative audience members to listen to the prototype and answer either open-ended or Likert-like questions remotely. We had 20 volunteers who reviewed both the sound-art and the utilitarian versions via that system. We also hosted a focus group for a mix of the on-site and off-site participants, in which we discussed their experiences with the prototype as a group. While all participants expressed appreciation for the sound-art design, many challenged whether it really was “description” or not, illuminating the contested nature of that label.

Brett Oppegaard, PhD, researches media-production processes and products at intersections of Technical Communication, Rhetoric, Disability Studies, Digital Inequalities, and Journalism. He primarily studies those interests within mobile contexts, including creating novel research tools through interactive mobile media, mobile apps, and mobile technologies.

Spatiotemporal description of events in AD - the role of cognitive aspects and voice quality

Roger Johansson¹, Jana Holsanova², Viveka Lyberg-Åhlander^{3,4}, Erika Sombeck², Tina Rastegar¹

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²Lund University, Cognitive Science Dept., Sweden

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⁴Åbo Academy, Speech and Language Pathology, Finland

To make visual media available to a non-sighted visually impaired audience, a sighted interpreter can provide audio description (AD). AD is a verbal description of visual events, where the spoken information intends to evoke “mental images” and to enhance meaning-making. The goal of AD is to increase the accessibility of visual information and to provide a non-sighted audience with a richer and more detailed understanding and enjoyment of, for instance, films and TV-shows.

The aim of the present study was to systematically investigate how the specificity of describing visuospatial and temporal state-of-affairs influences imageability and understanding for the non-sighted end users of AD, and to scrutinize how this interplay relates to the voice quality of the verbal narrator. For instance, in a visuospatial

description, a woman could be described as either sitting “in front of” or “opposite” a man in a train compartment. The expression “in front of” contains less specified information about the visuospatial state-of-affairs than “opposite”, as it does not reveal whether the woman has her back towards the man or whether she is facing him. Similarly, descriptions of temporal change contain varying degrees of specificity through the manner of motion. For example, a boy can be described as either “entering” the classroom door or as “rushing through” the classroom door. The expression “rushing through” here carries more specified information about the described state-of-affairs.

In our experiment, a group of 21 non-sighted participants (congenitally blind or who lost their sight early in life) and a group of 21 sighted control participants listened to 55 short scenarios describing temporal change or visuospatial relations with varying degrees of specificity. The two groups were matched in respect to verbal working memory capabilities (through the Competing Language Processing Task - CLPT). After each scenario the participants were to evaluate on a scale 1-6 (1) how well they could imagine the content of the scenario; (2) their overall comprehension of the scenario; (3) how effortful it was to listen to the scenario; and (4) how pleasant it was to listen to the scenario. Across the whole experiment the participants listened to an equal number of scenarios narrated in a typical voice and in a dysphonic voice (counterbalanced across specificity conditions).

Results revealed that more specified scenarios of temporal change increased imageability and comprehension for the non-sighted participants, but not for the sighted control group. For the visuospatial scenarios, the overall pattern was less clear. But there was a tendency for more specified scenarios to increase imageability and comprehension, independent of sightedness. Additionally, scenarios narrated with the dysphonic voice were found to increase listening effort and to decrease pleasantness for the non-sighted group, but not for the sighted control group.

Collectively, these results demonstrate the importance of considering fundamental cognitive and psycholinguistic aspects of spatiotemporal description of events for successful AD. They also exhibit an intricate relation to voice quality and how it affects perception, understanding and enjoyment.

Roger Johansson, PhD, is Associate Professor in Psychology at Lund University. His research revolves around cognition, communication and learning, with special focus on the relationship between eye movements, mental imagery, episodic memory and narrative processing. In his research, he has engaged in methodological development for investigating such topics using eye-tracking and

pupillometry techniques. He heads the research project "How the blind audience receive and experience audio descriptions of visual events".

Jana Holsanova, PhD, is Associate Professor in Cognitive Science at Lund University, Sweden. Her research focuses on multimodality, cognition, communication and audio description. She is the author of *Discourse, Vision and Cognition* (2008 Benjamins), *Myths and Truths About Reading* (2010 Norstedts), *Image description for accessibility* (2019 MTM) and editor of *Methodologies for Multimodal Research* (2012 Sage) and *Audio description - Research and Practices* (2016 MTM). Jana is Coordinator of the initiative "Audio Description for Accessible Communication" and Chair of The Swedish Braille Authority at the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media, MTM.

Viveka Lyberg-Åhlander, PhD, is a reg. speech language therapist, Professor in Logopedics at Åbo Akademi University, Turku, Finland and Associate Professor at Lund University. Her research focuses on voice and voice problems within the concept of "speakers' comfort", i.e. how speakers use their voice in relation to the own perception of the room and the listener. This line of research also covers the effect the speakers' voice and communication has on the listener and the listener's effort to process the message.

Erika Sombeck and **Tina Rastegar** work as project assistants in the research project "How the blind audience receive and experience audio descriptions of visual events" at Lund university, Sweden.

From theatre podcast to audio introductions and back

Irene Hermosa-Ramírez¹ and Nina Reviers²

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²University of Antwerp, Belgium

Theatres across Europe are increasingly curating their audiovisual ecosystem outside physical venues. Their audio and video content opens up new frontiers of meaning-making possibilities to develop certain demographics within their audience, to document and archive plays, to explore social media as parallel avenues of creative output, to name but a few (Hadley, 2017). This audiovisual ecosystem includes a wide range of audio content, such as institutional podcasts, interviews, introductions and audio introductions (AI) for people with sight loss. The boundaries between these genres and their audiences, though, are sometimes blurred, giving rise to inclusive introductions that aim to cater for audiences of all abilities. This paper explores

these new types of audio content, and it discusses their potential contribution to extending the existing “cluster” of access services that theatres offer (Roofthoof, 2021) and that contribute to creating an achievement space (Neves, 2020) for all.

A desk review first identified the types of audiovisual and audio-based content published by 10 major European theatres in Belgium, Spain, France, Germany and the UK. Three main categories could be identified: (1) podcasts for mainstream audiences, (2) traditional audio introductions developed with access in mind for people with sight loss and (3) hybrid podcasts that combine mainstream content and access needs. Next, a systemic functional linguistic analysis (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) of four episodes of was conducted to explore their meaning-making potential.

The analysis suggests commonalities as well as significant differences in terms of content, communicative function, style and structure. Mainstream podcasts (1), for instance, focus on talking about the piece, while traditional AIs (2) refer mostly to the specific production. On the other hand, the foreshadowing function common in traditional AIs (2) (Reviers, Roofthoof & Remael, 2021) (disclosing visual elements of a play) is minimised in the mainstream podcast (1) in favour of informative and certain aesthetic functions. Furthermore, mainstream (1) and hybrid (3) podcasts introduce two functions that had previously not been attributed to AIs: a pedagogical function in terms of musicological, historical and literary knowledge, and a marketing function. In terms of style and text structure, the institutional and expert roles of the speakers in the podcasts allow them to introduce poetic language and address the audience more explicitly, sometimes quoting or inviting members of the creative team, in a similar vein to integrated audio description (Fryer, 2018). Unlike traditional AIs, podcasts include music and ad-libs.

Because of their differences in terms of communicative functions and highlighted themes, mainstream podcasts (1) could be framed as a complementary access modality to AIs (2) since they focus mostly on non-visual aspects of the play. Furthermore, the hybrid podcast type (3) (which explicitly targets the general public and an audience with visual impairment), could be an inclusive solution that allows for personalisation and expands on the needs that access services had targeted thus far. To conclude, the present paper hopes to illustrate how all audiences can potentially benefit from a cross-fertilization between the different audio genres in the theatre ecosystem.

Irene Hermosa-Ramírez, PhD in Translation and Intercultural Studies (UAB), is a postdoctoral researcher working for the Erasmus+ ATHENA project (Bringing Accessibility and Design for All into Higher Education Curricula) and a member of the TransMedia Catalonia

research group. Among her latest publications are the articles "The hierarchisation of operatic signs through the lens of audio description" and "Physiological instruments meet mixed methods in Media Accessibility". Irene is the secretary of the Catalan Association for the Promotion of Accessibility.

Nina Reviere, PhD, is a tenure-track professor in Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility at the Department of Applied Linguistics, Translators and Interpreters. She holds a PhD in Translation Studies (University of Antwerp, 2018) in the field of Audio Description, for which she was awarded the EST Young Scholar Prize in 2019. Her research addresses linguistic and multimodal aspects of audio description, computer-aided translation of audio description, integrated access for the (scenic) arts and technology for access. As manager of the OPEN Expertise Centre for Accessible Media and Culture, Nina fosters a close collaboration with stakeholders as a key factor in her research and teaching activities.

PANEL 2. AD MODELS AND CHALLENGES

The art of difficult describing: Race, gender, disability and nudity

Marie Campbell

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Red Bee Media, UK

The skills required to describe physical appearance in audio description have always been key in training describers. Giving blind audiences access to information that non-blind viewers have includes describing personal characteristics such as age, hair, build, clothing or ethnicity. Deciding when someone's race, body shape, sex, gender, disability or physical appearance is relevant or important form part of the skillset an audio describer acquires as part of their training. However, describers often meet with new and interesting challenges as society and language evolves, and as content-makers innovate, and we have to reassess our strategies and editorial guidelines as required. Describing physical appearance comes with many potential pitfalls, never more so than when it comes to describing sensitive subjects.

This paper will present conference attendees with unique insights and invite discussion on the challenges of audio describing sensitive content using case studies from several recent projects. By getting attendees to put themselves in the shoes of an audio describer, and by using real-life AD examples, we will illustrate the questions describers have to ask themselves every day, look at how approaches have evolved over the years, and are still evolving, and how this ongoing dialogue informs our training and best practice.

Using her 20+ years of describing experience, as well as her training expertise across Red Bee Media's English language operations, Marie Campbell will look back at the journey AD editorial guidelines have been on with regards to sensitive content, starting when AD in the UK was in its infancy and the nascent guidelines were predicated on a linear televisual landscape that looked, by default, much more "white" and "male" compared to what we see on our screens today. She will explore how a desire to avoid "othering" led to outdated guidelines that failed to describe the diversity of the world we live in as televisual content started to change and embrace that diversity in a more visual and meaningful way.

We will look at how approaches might vary between fictional and factual content: in fictional content, characters are often portrayed and painted using broad brushstrokes so the AD might follow suit;

but with factual content, when we are describing real people, accuracy is essential. When a programme doesn't give us all the information we need, how can we fill in the gaps without making inaccurate assumptions, while still giving an accurate and fair representation of someone's physical appearance. Moreover, in an industry that is not particularly diverse or representative, how do we mitigate personal bias and avoid subjectivity?

We will look at how the ongoing evolution of language, and how terms that were once acceptable are now offensive, while other terms that are commonly used in society today might be loaded in certain ways, giving describers pause for thought. Finally, we will explore how innovation on the part of programme makers forces innovation on the part of the describer, and how providing access to this content can lead us down interesting and, at times, amusing, paths.

Marie Campbell has been describing for over 20 years and is the lead trainer in Red Bee Media's Audio Description team. She started out in London, helping to set up the BBC's first ever AD department, where she developed editorial guidelines and new bespoke software while integrating the service into the wider, well-established broadcast chain. Marie has described for the majority of UK broadcasters, overseen the describing of 200+ films on the theme of disability for the British Film Institute and been part of the pre-recorded AD team during the Winter and Summer Paralympics. She continues to be at the forefront of AD excellence, developing guidelines and using her expertise to train new scriptwriters and voicers in the UK, USA and Australia, tailoring the service to different English-speaking countries, while integrating workflows, maximising collaboration and providing ongoing support to new AD teams. Marie is currently looking at how e-learning can be used to facilitate audio description training.

The role of ideology on the audio description process

Marina Ramos Caro and Purificación Mesequer Cutillas

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In the last decade, a growing body of research has focused on the cognitive and emotional processes involved in Audio Description, especially in its reception (e.g., Rojo et al., 2021; Ramos, 2015, 2016; Iturregui-Gallardo & Matamala, 2021). However, with a few exceptions (Jankowska, 2021; Ramos & Rojo, 2020) the study of the AD process is still underresearched. Previous studies show that the AD process allows for a great spectrum of outputs and that factors such as expertise might influence the AD product (Ramos & Rojo, 2020). But what other factors are at stake? Might ideology play a role

in the AD process when it comes to describing diversity? With the aim to answer these questions, we analysed the influence of ideology on the AD process.

Ideology has been a key concern of modern translation studies (Tymoczko, 2003, 2007). Existing work mainly focused on theoretical considerations on literary translation (Tymoczko & Gentzler, 2002; Cunico & Munday, 2007), although some studies also experimentally tested the influence of ideology on the translation process (Rojo & Ramos, 2014; Rojo & Meseguer, 2020). But, to our knowledge, the role of ideology in the AD process has not been addressed; therefore, we designed a study where 107 translation students trained in AD were asked to describe 14 images portraying different types of diversities (sexual orientation, gender, functional diversity, racial and ethnical diversity) and sexual violence. Then, participants were asked to complete a political test. Our results show that ideology might indeed influence the AD process, confirm a great variability in the AD product (Ramos & Rojo, 2020), and point to the need to address the description of diversity in reception studies and AD professional guidelines.

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The multimodal configuration of the audio description script. A qualitative content analysis of the meaning codes.

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Multimodality has been a fruitful approach in audiovisual translation allowing scholars to explore the features of the audiovisual text in modalities like dubbing or subtitling. However, this approach has not been equally applied to audio description (AD). In this presentation we seek to examine the configuration of the AD script in terms of multimodality. Thus, in order to fulfil our aim, we applied Chaume's (2004) classification of the meaning codes that compose audiovisual texts through the visual channel (iconographic, photographic, mobility, shot, graphic, and editing codes) and the acoustic channel (linguistic paralinguistic, musical, special effects, and sound position codes). With the purpose of integrating multimodality in AD, we followed the principles of qualitative content analysis (QCA) in a selection of AD excerpts stemming from a corpus of four Netflix series with English AD, namely *Elite*, *Elite: Short Stories*, *Money Heist*, and *Sky Rojo*. The results of our analysis show first that codes from the acoustic channel encompass only 1.04% of the AD script in our excerpts, whereas codes from the visual channel comprise the remaining 98.96%. Moreover, data point at the core of AD scripts consisting of just four visual codes: mobility (44.6%), iconographic (30.11%), graphic (11.41%), and editing (8.65%) codes. In conclusion, after examining AD through the lens of meaning codes and QCA we can state that the multimodal configuration of AD scripts is mainly constituted by visual information, particularly by four visual codes. In this vein, further studies could be conducted by taking this configuration as a starting point, for instance by means of contrastive approximations in more than one language, or reception studies aimed at users. All in all, multimodality based on meaning codes and QCA prove to be an appropriate methodological combination to characterise the configuration of AD scripts while opening at the same time some new research paths to be explored by other approximations and methodologies.

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Functional priorities in audio description

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One of the main approaches in Translation Studies (TS) has been that of functionalism whereby translation is seen as a type of communication involving a number of players and having a specific function. Translation strategies used to produce the Target Text (TT) are thus determined by the type of text and the function it serves in the target culture, taking into account its purpose (*skopos*) as well as the target audience (e.g. Nord 1997; Vermeer 1989 [2000]). The functional approaches in TS have been a point of departure for the development of a functional model of audio description (Mazur 2019), which includes a functionally-oriented typology of audiovisual texts for AD purposes as well as macro- and micro-level analyses of the Source Text (ST) aimed at informing the audio describer's decision-making process in their selection of appropriate AD strategies in order to best fulfil the *skopos* of this type of audiovisual transfer.

In a complex visual scene, a number of elements compete for the attention of the viewer. And while the sighted viewer can absorb a given scene holistically in a non-linear manner, the AD user will have to process the description in a linear way. For this reason, the describer needs to make a selection of the most salient elements. Kruger (2012) distinguishes between visually-salient and narratively-salient elements, while the proposed functional model would rather operate on the basis of functional saliency, i.e., the importance of a given element taking into account the function it has in a given scene or take, or the film as a whole.

The presentation will therefore focus on functional saliency – or 'functional priorities' – in an audiovisual text. Functional priorities can be linked to genres, and expressed through different modes: the visual, the verbal, or the auditory, or a combination thereof. They can be achieved through narrative effects, such as suspense, curiosity or surprise (e.g. Vadaele, 2018), or by invoking particular emotions, such as amusement, awe, fear, or sadness (Cowen & Keltner, 2017). It will be demonstrated how starting with the contextual analysis, through macrotextual analyses (both content- and form-oriented) and ending with a microtextual analysis of a multimodal text functional priorities can be identified (both at the macro- and micro level) and how they can then be properly transferred for the AD target audience in accordance with a text's intended function(s). The proposed functional model is expected to be both a conceptual framework and a practical tool for effective audio description, as it will help detect functional saliency in any multimodal text, on the one hand, and offer methods for reflecting such saliency in the AD, on the other.

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PANEL 3. AD ACROSS THE WORLD

What makes a Brazilian audio description a Brazilian audio description?

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The main goal of this work is to present the results of a three-year research project (2020-2022) focused on women pioneers of Brazilian audio description. At the beginning of 2000, Brazilian volunteers produced the first live narration film sessions for visually impaired people (Villela, 2021). Still, the term audio description was adopted in Brazil just a few years later. Since then, AD has expanded in professional and academic contexts, and women's leadership has been remarkable in both of them, instigating the proposal of a deep study of this subject. In the first part of the project, the researcher interviewed five women from different Brazilian states. They are considered the founders of the first Brazilian companies with expertise in communicational accessibility. Due to the COVID pandemic, the researcher proposed the interviews through online platforms presenting to the audio describers the same questions. The focuses were on their first experiences with AD, the theoretical background, women's role in AD, and their impressions of an allegedly Brazilian audio description, which is the focal point of this presentation. As was expected, all the interviewees believed there is a genuine Brazilian audio description. According to them, its originality is based on various reasons, from Portuguese rhythm, subjectivity, and creativity to the proximity with the AD consultants. However, when we investigated the AD bibliography, we noticed that for years European practitioners and researchers also supported the subjectivity and creativity perspective of audio description (Fryer, 2016, 2018; Remael, 2015) and the active collaboration of users throughout the process (Romero-Fresco, 2019). Objectivity, for instance, is considered "unachievable" in audio description and translation fields (Fryer, 2016). Regarding user participation, the ADLAB Audio Description Guideline (2015) includes the visually impaired and blind collaborators inside the AD production process. And Romero-Fresco (2019) suggests that the pre-production stage should include consultants with sensory impairment. So far, it is possible to conclude that some Brazilian pioneers developed their AD methodology disregarding foreign influences because their background differs from Linguistic and Translation Studies contexts. Still, despite this relevant aspect, they keep supporting the conception of a national AD that runs through the cultural, linguistic

and even phonological elements of the Portuguese language, which are inevitably subjective, unique, and complex.

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The challenges of existing Thai audio description guidelines

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This paper's objective is to explore ways to improve the current Thai Audio Description (AD) guidelines. This study focuses on the document analysis of four sets of Thai AD guidelines including (1) the Thai Audio Description Guideline (The National Institute of the Blind for Research and Development); (2) The Audio Description guideline for Thai television (Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication,

Thammasat university); (3) Guideline for the preparation of Sign Language, Closed Captioning, and Audio Description (The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission); and (4) The Audio Description guideline of Thai PBS (Thai Public Broadcasting Service). Upon release, these AD guidelines were widely shared with television broadcasters, and they were used throughout AD training as well. Additionally, this paper also reflects on the findings of focus groups with Thai audio describers in which they reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of the guidelines for application in practice. The results were analysed using the Reflexive Thematic Analysis method.

According to document analysis, the challenges of Thai existing guidelines could be divided into seven issues: (1) the controversial issue of objective and subjective style in various Thai AD guidelines. This perplexed the audio describers when putting the AD principle from various guidelines into practice; (2) there were very few AD knowledge creators in Thailand. This led to the lack of argument or critical thinking in developing AD principles; (3) disregarding the importance of sounds in original materials. This issue influenced the design of audio descriptions that could preserve the original sounds' functions; (4) the AD principles in Thailand's existing AD guidelines were established through studies of small cases of television programmes. As a result, applying the AD principle in a variety of situations was difficult; (5) several significant informants repeatedly appeared in the existing guidelines. The references in several Thai AD guidelines shaped almost identical results because of using the same studies and informants; (6) a lack of understanding about how blind and visually impaired people interpret sound. This issue led to the ambitious decision to select or omit sounds to describe, and (7) some AD principles in Thai guidelines were heavily based on guidelines from other countries. The guidelines for language usage, or more specific language structures, were impractical in a Thai context.

Additionally, the results from the focus groups with audio describers highlighted three issues with the existing Thai AD guidelines: (1) the contradictions between objective and subjective styles of AD. This led to a debate about the standard of AD writing; (2) the unclear definitions of the principles and guidelines. Participants frequently brought up two ambiguous terms: interpretation and summarising. The subjective style of AD can also be interpreted in a wide variety of different ways, notably about the linguistic families that communicate emotional expressions; and (3) there weren't any definitive rules to guide audio describers to select the suitable language for conveying both comprehension and enjoyments for visually impaired people.

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Describing gestures and facial expressions for visually impaired Thai television audiences. Moreover, she is also a lecturer from the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communication, Thammasat university, Thailand since 2010. She holds a master's degree in Mass Communication from the Faculty of Communication Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand. In 2013, she was offered a chance to be a describer and researcher in a pilot project on Audio Description production for Thais with visual impairment. Then, she is interested in media for disabilities services, and she continuously works on the Audio Description for television programmes in Thailand from 2013 to present. Her scope of Audio Description work in Thailand relates to AD script writing, AD consultation, AD training, and research on AD in several aspects.

Mariana Lopez, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in Sound Production and Postproduction at the School of Arts and Creative Technologies, University of York where she has been working since 2016. In 2013, she completed her PhD at the University of York on the importance of virtual acoustics to further our understanding of the York Mystery Plays. She has also received funding from the British Academy for the project 'The Soundscapes of the York Mystery Plays'. She has a background in music, sound design and acoustics. She is the Principal Investigator for the AHRC-funded project 'Enhancing Audio Description II: Implementing accessible, personalised and inclusive film and TV experiences for visually impaired audiences', a £1m project grant which started in November 2021. At doctoral level, she is supervising work on the Audio Description projects; Audio Description of gestures; Audio Description for live streamed games.

A linguistic study on film audio description in Uruguay: The project "Image and word in motion"

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In Uruguay, audio description (AD) is a recent field of study, which has been increasingly productive in the last decade, when a growing interest in the subject can be observed. Despite this, the number of films that have been audio described during this period does not exceed twenty (Medero, unpublished). At present, practising audio describers in Uruguay have the following two publications as a basis for the creation of ADs: the UNIT-ISO/IEC TS 20071-21:2015 standard and the guideline Guía para producciones audiovisuales accesibles (2017) ('Guide for Accessible Audiovisual Productions'), which is the Spanish translation of a Brazilian document. Although these publications are relevant and serve as a good resource for

professional audio describers, they are derived from foreign standards (Spanish and Brazilian, respectively) and the norms and recommendations they include do not come from considering the local needs and reality.

Taking into account that audio description scripts constitute a new text type (Jiménez Hurtado, 2007), obtaining a description of the most salient linguistic and textual features that characterize language use in film audio descriptions in Uruguay is relevant. In this sense, the study presented here is an empirical research which aims to explore language use in audio descriptions of Uruguayan fiction films based on a multimodal corpus specifically compiled for this purpose. The corpus is made up of eleven Uruguayan audio described fiction films and their corresponding audio description scripts. A quantitative and qualitative analysis of this corpus is conducted with the aim of uncovering the linguistic and textual patterns of the audio description scripts and their interrelationship with other multimodal aspects of the audiovisual products.

In this presentation, we will be showing quantitative information regarding frequency word lists, usual collocations and concordances in the audio description scripts compiled. Corpus analysis software AntConc is used for term extraction and to obtain the recurring syntactic and lexical patterns. Moreover, with the aim of interrelating these lexico-grammatical features with the broader meaning system of the audio described movies, MAXQDA qualitative analysis software is used. In this way, we focus on identifying relationships between linguistic patterns that occur in the language of audio description scripts and aspects of the film narrative and cinematic language, particularly with the categories of perception, movement and emotion, in line with the studies of Jiménez Hurtado et al. (2010), Jiménez Hurtado y Martínez Martínez (2021) and Chica Núñez (2021).

In Uruguay, where the professional audio description practice, its academic research and the training of professional audio describers are just emerging as areas of interest, there are no previous studies with this purpose and methodology design. This is why it is expected that the results of this investigation contribute both to the audio description research field and to the audio describer's professional and training field (cfr. Jiménez y Seibel, 2010; Perego, 2018).

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"Show or tell". The language of emotions in the Spanish and Italian AD

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This presentation enquires into the strategies that are adopted in Audio Description (AD) to deal with the expression of emotion. The study focuses on a descriptive analysis of the Spanish and Italian ADs of a selected corpus of 53 scenes from six drama films.

To carry out the analysis, the characters' non-verbal behaviour was examined through Ekman's (1972) taxonomy of universals in facial expression of the six basic emotions (anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise). Then, the verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs adopted to verbalize emotion related content in the compared ADs were investigated by taking into consideration their contribution to the prevailing communicative aim of the scene.

The research hypothesis is that the content of the scenes that move the story forward can be adequately enhanced by giving priority to the description of the visuals in AD, as is advocated by Snyder's (2007: 12) "What You See Is What You Say (WYSIWYS)" approach. Nevertheless, when the audiovisual narration makes characters' features salient or unveils the implicit and symptomatic meaning of a film (Bordwell et al. 2017), the adoption of a narrative approach to AD could lead to verbally perform the function associated with the visuals, providing more suggestive renderings. Hence, the linguistic

analysis of AD focused on the potential for the lexical and syntactic structures to enhance the layer(s) of meaning expressed in the scenes.

Results show no significant association between the types of emotions detected in the audiovisual text (Zabalbeascoa 2008) and the linguistic patterns adopted in AD; yet, the examined objects of investigation reveal that, in some cases, the unambiguous nature of the characters' feelings allows for more interpretive approaches to verbalization in the audio described text. Furthermore, the analysis of the lexico-semantic features of the Italian and Spanish ADs will shed light on prospective strategies for enhancing the communicative functions of the scene. Assuming that emotions play a pivotal role in the film genre in question, lexical items in AD have been investigated in the light of their ability to make the visuals accessible, while drawing attention to the characters' temperament in highly tense phases of the movie.

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PANEL 4. ARTISTIC PRACTICES

Recorded audio description as an integral part of the live dance performance of *Miramos*

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There is growing interest in making dance performances accessible for individuals with visual impairment and blindness (BVI) (Bläsing & Zimmermann, 2021), to strengthen cultural participation of a non-sighted audience in aesthetic experience of dance and to elicit positive emotional reactions (Karkou et al., 2017). One way is to provide live audio description (AD) that enhances mental imagery (Holsanova, 2021; Johansson, 2016) and gives BVI audiences means to engage with the work of art and immerse in the mood and feelings that the artwork evokes (Perego, 2019). Apart from locomotion (movement dynamics, spatial direction, body shape and attitude) (Geiger, 2005), dance is also a part of a narrative (Fryer, 2009). There is therefore a call for an enriched AD (Neves, 2016) that includes description of facial expressions, glances, gestures, body postures, emotions and uses a visually intense poetic language (Margolies, 2015). All these aspects create a better context not only for understanding and imagination but also for empathy, engagement and aesthetic emotions in the experience of choreographic performances (Fertier, 2017).

In our project *Miramos*¹ (2020-2021), we developed a novel method for an inclusive and accessible live performance of dance via recorded AD. The aim was to offer AD at every performance and improve accessibility for a larger group of BVI audiences. The first AD script was written on the basis of a filmed performance. The audio describer was invited to rehearsals, and the team – the audio describer, art director, choreographer and performers – started an intense, open and permissive dialogue. The challenge was to create a balance between the story and the form of artistic expression: i.e., to preserve choreographic details which constitute the dance performance and to offer narrative summaries so that the recipients

¹ The *Miramos* performance (35 minutes long) is a magical and playful journey beyond time, among colors, shapes and fantasy. The audience meets four imaginative creatures who are on a temporary visit on our blue-green planet. Curious and wondering, they explore the world. Premiere of the recorded AD in connection with a live performance of *Miramos* was at the World Culture Museum in Gothenburg in September 2021.

can create inner images, interpret the story, and create their own aesthetic experience of the performance. By reading and processing the script together, the team was able to identify vague places and decide how to improve them. The synchronization of music and AD was then created in QLab software via 123 cues.

Feedback from the BVI reference group was important in the process. The collaborative efforts resulted in a final version of the script with visually intense language, rich vocabulary, vivid descriptions of movements, facial expressions, emotions, gazes and narrative elements. Apart from that, the teamwork also led to changes in choreography, changes in wording and formulations (as suggested by the reference group), and to addition of choreographic details (as reliable cues for AD). The artistic experience has been further enhanced and the dancers have become clearer in their expressions after taking part in the process of recorded AD.

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From Labanotation to subjectivity in the audio description of the contemporary dance piece *Minerva*

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The field of audio description for live performances is attracting more and more academic attention (Giovanni, 2018; Fryer, 2018; Barnés, Bernstorff & Vilches 2021). One of the subfields is audio description for dance performances, which is also increasing (Brand, Kirkland & Van Uchelen, 2019; Snyder & Geiger, 2022) and present in many theatres around Europe. In this presentation, we address a practical project, where the choreographer of *Minerva*, a modern dance piece (Verdú, 2021), and a researcher apply the Labanotation system in the creation of the audio descriptive script. Based on this methodology, we also apply models of subjectivity, such as the auteur description (Szarkowska, 2013) or the introduction of metaphors (Luque, 2021) to adapt to the performance.

Labanotation is a system created by Rudolf von Laban (Barbacci, 2002) that analyzes and registers human movement. It is a complex system that requires time and patience if we use it with its first purpose, but if we focus on the structure of the system, we have in our hands a specific guide that can serve the audio describer as the base to achieve an objective description of the physical representation. Therefore, it can help the audio describer understand what information should be included in the audio description, while the audio describer's job would be finding the right words that can collect as much information as possible in the most compact way. This would make the process easier and the result simpler to be more accessible. On the practical side of audio describing dance, we want to address the focus on the notation. Its structure is based on four parts: body, effort, shape and space (Barbacci, 2002). We can follow it as a guide to create an objective audio description. When observing the movement happening on the scene, we should analyse the body part we are going to mention, followed by the effort, specifying the flow (relaxed/forceful), the speed (extend/sudden), the weight (controlled/loose) and the space (direct/indirect) of that same movement, followed up by the shape (size) and the space (direction and height). Not every movement phrase contains all of these characteristics, but it is suggested that the audio describer compiles several characteristics in one action, creating in some way a 'movement syntax method' that can help them make simple but complete sentences. This objective approach is completed with the comprehension and knowledge of the choreographer in order to create a subjective and creative audio description and experience.

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Alicia Verdú Macián is a performer, researcher and choreographer. After graduating from the Professional Dance Conservatory of Valencia, she moved to the Netherlands to continue her training at the University of ArtEZ (Arnhem, The Netherlands), where she carried out a research project on The use of associative images within a choreographic process. In addition to teaching dance at various training centres and schools such as Korzo (NL), Theater Zone 1380 (NL), Khelkuud (India) and Arcademia (IT), she is the assistant to Keren Levi; she teaches and directs the research programme in the Dance and Choreography Degree at ArtEZ (Arnhem, The Netherlands). She is also Rakesh Sukesh's production assistant in the development section of intAct-Method. She holds a BA in Translation and Interpreting and her research work is based on audio description. Currently, she is part of the new dance production, KABUL, by Rosáñeles Valls in Valencia.

María Olalla Luque Colmenero, PhD, is a lecturer at the Department of English Language, University of Granada. She is the president and co-founder of Kaleidoscope Access, a non-for-profit organization. As such, she has designed and implemented multisensory guided tours for blind and partially sighted people at several museums and monuments in Spain, including the Alhambra monument and its temporary art exhibitions, the CajaGRANADA Museum, the National Archeology Museum, and the the Sorolla Museum. She holds a PhD in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Granada. In addition, she completed a yearlong research stay at the Imperial College of London to study the access programmes of some of the most important museums in the United Kingdom. Her research focuses on the role of deliberate metaphor as

a tool for accessing knowledge in audio descriptive guides for people with visual impairment in art museums.

Watching and listening to dance

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Most academic research on AD to date focuses on AD for televisual and filmic material (Perego, 2018), although this type of audiovisual translation is highly relevant to many artforms, both live and recorded. As recently acknowledged by Barnés-Castaño et al. (2021), a particularly under-researched area is AD for dance – despite its widespread use in live dance performances, as well as dance clips available through online streaming platforms. The increasing attention given to diversity and inclusion in sports and the arts makes this a particularly fitting time to further our knowledge of dance AD. By exploring the practice systematically and raising awareness of it, it is hoped that demand and offer will also be increased – both crucial steps towards making dance truly inclusive and accessible to all.

This presentation reports on a PhD project that addresses the dance AD research gap through a two-part study. The first part of the project focuses on the linguistic aspects of dance AD, and aims to identify recurring strategies, patterns and characteristics evident in the descriptive language that is currently used to convey dance movements, techniques and narrative. The second part focuses on the reception not only of dance AD, but also of dance itself, reporting the views and reflections of both sighted and sight-impaired audiences in relation to selected dance and dance AD material. The dual-aspect research design acknowledges the complex, multi-faceted and highly subjective experience of dance interpretation (Butterworth, 2012; Rochelle, 2015 among others), an observation supported by the researcher's personal experience as a dancer and consumer of dance productions.

The first part of the project is based around a small, purpose-built multimodal corpus of dance AD compiled from dance scenes from described feature films, online clips and AD scripts from past live performances. The corpus was analysed from a lexical and semantic point of view, and recurrent features such as figurative language and dance-specific terminology were observed and annotated in order to collate and systematise current descriptive strategies. For the second part of the project, sighted and blind/partially sighted participants were shown identical dance clips without and with AD

respectively, and took part in semi-structured interviews focussed on their engagement with and understanding of the clips. Data collected from the sessions were then analysed and compared, in order to explore and identify the differences between the experience of watching dance and that of listening to its AD in terms of construction of meaning, engagement, enjoyment and aesthetic appreciation.

The presentation will give an overview of the rationale and methodological approaches adopted in this project and report on initial findings, with a particular focus on the reception study.

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Arianna Carloni is a postgraduate research student at the University of Surrey, UK (School of Literature and Languages). In 2013 she completed a Masters in Audiovisual Translation at City University (London, UK) with a dissertation on audio description for dance. After working in the audiovisual translation industry both as a project manager and as a subtitler, she changed careers to pursue her passion for dance and started working for inclusive dance education charities. This rekindled her interest in dance accessibility and led her to start a PhD to explore the topic of audio description for dance in further depth.

Cultural accessibility strategies and museum AD in Italy: A (belated) emerging practice?

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Within the framework of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) and Media Accessibility (MA), museum audio description (AD)—also known as “descriptive guide” (Neves, 2015) or “verbal description” (Giansante,

2015)—has been now recognised as an AD sub-genre that is worth investigating distinctly with respect to other (still more common) types of ADs, such as screen AD, as well as more general museum audio guides. Now that the newly approved definition of ‘museum’ updated by the International Council of Museums (ICOM, 2022) remarks the “public, accessible and inclusive nature” of such institutions, appreciating the value and extent of accessibility practices in the cultural heritage sector seems to be even more urgent.

A substantial body of literature has addressed some of the main issues and challenges connected with museum AD in different lingua-cultural contexts (e.g., the UK, the US, Spain and Portugal), focusing on different aspects, such as linguistic and grammatical features (Perego, 2018), different traditions and guidelines (Randaccio, 2020), objectivity vs. subjectivity (Hutchinson & Eardley, 2020), the use of metaphors (Soler Gallego, 2019), multisensory approaches (Neves, 2012), “guided looking” for non-sighted and sighted visitors (Hutchinson & Eardley, 2021), audience reception (Barnés Castaño & Jiménez Hurtado, 2020) and AD training (Perego, 2021). However, less attention seems to have been devoted to museum AD in the Italian context, with only a few examples (Pacinotti, 2018; Spinzi, 2019; Taylor & Perego, 2020).

The present contribution seeks to investigate the state of the art of museum AD practices in Italy—a country where AD more broadly has arguably experienced a later development. A survey is designed to explore current practices and workflows (also from a multilingual perspective) geared towards diversity and accessibility issues in Italian museums, with a special focus on museum AD as a seemingly emerging phenomenon in this country. After mapping AD provision along with other access tools such as tactile exploration, a small corpus of museum ADs made available by Italian cultural heritage institutions and related to different types of objects (such as artworks, installations and archaeological artefacts) is analysed with respect to currently existing guidelines for the creation of museum ADs, both at an international (Neves, 2015) and a national (Descrivendo, 2021) level.

By combining quantitative and qualitative insights, this contribution hopes to shed light on accessibility practices in the Italian museum scenario and ultimately try to draw cautious conclusions that may be relevant also to other cultural contexts. These may span from the need for more guidance (e.g., in the form of museum-specific shared standards) and for a professional figure specialised in arts accessibility, as well as the call for greater cooperation between museum experts and professional translators/describers, in line with the concept of “expertise anxiety” (Neather, 2012, p. 261).

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Chiara Bartolini, PhD, is a Postdoc Researcher and Adjunct Professor in Translation Studies at the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures of the University of Bologna, Italy. She holds a PhD in Translation, Interpreting and Intercultural Studies. Her thesis, also drawing on the field of Museum Studies, is forthcoming as a monograph with the title “How do university museums communicate online? Intercultural perspectives on museum discourse”. She is currently responsible for a research project entitled “Ways of Seeing: museum audio description for all”, which sits at the intersection of museum translation, audiovisual translation and media accessibility. She has worked as translation and communication expert with various Italian museums and is a member of the European Society of Translation Studies (EST), the International Association for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS) and the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

Audio description from within: The artist's turn

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This study draws from the notion of ocularcentrism and its predominant role in the arts. According to this perspective, sight becomes the main tool to obtain knowledge and enjoy an artistic work. Following the lead of many scholars who confront the idea that visual strategies are the only way to understand and experience art to the fullest (Cachia, 2013; Chotin & Thompson, 2021; Eardley et

al., 2022; Kleege, 2018), the aim of the present study is to challenge the supremacy of the sighted interpretation voice in art museums or galleries. In particular, my hypothesis is that partially sighted artists will approach the description of their art pieces in a non-visual fashion that can actually elevate the artistic experience of the visually impaired visitors by producing a more meaningful and empathic perception of the art work both from a cognitive and an affective standpoint.

In order to explore this idea, I have started a pilot project with the Fundación ONCE's Bienal de Arte Contemporáneo (Madrid, October 25, 2022 to January 29, 2023), consisting of examining the descriptions created by the visually impaired artists themselves about their own pieces against the audio guides created by an external professional company in five art pieces of the Bienal exhibited at the Centro Ayuntamiento de Madrid. A group of voluntary visually-impaired participants will visit the Bienal and will be exposed to both types of descriptions for the same pieces. Afterwards, interviews to these visitors will be conducted to find out the emotional impact and reactions provoked by these two different descriptions. Based on their responses, we will identify what distinctive elements in each type of description have triggered those reactions to see whether descriptions provided by visually-impaired audio describers actually enhance and enrich the art experiences of visually-impaired visitors when compared with audio guides made using sight as the only tool to describe art.

This study invites us to conceive audio description as a creative and artistic genre in its own right, rather than a mere service provided by the sighted to the non-sighted. This in turn make us rethink the role of inclusion, rather than accessibility, in museums and galleries and their current curatorial and exhibition practices.

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María José García Vizcaíno, PhD, is the Chair of the Department of Spanish and Latino Studies at Montclair State University (New Jersey, USA). She is also an Associate Professor teaching undergraduate and graduate courses on translation and audio description for the Certificate Program in Translation and Interpreting in Spanish. Among her most recent publications are "Getting the Full Picture in English and Spanish? Audio Described Characters in Netflix's *Élite*" (Journal of Audiovisual Translation) and "Audio description for all: Serving the low vision Spanish-speaking community in the US." (Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement). She is currently doing research on audio description for more inclusive curatorial practices in art museums and galleries.

End-user experience of AD for the performing arts: Complexities beyond practice

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End-users have been central to much audio description (AD) practice and research. That research has largely focussed on understanding end-user experience in as much as it informs practice, where it is assumed that end-user engagement can be addressed by professionalising AD practice to improve AD quality. However, the underlying premise that higher quality AD will deliver better end-user engagement, is challenged by this new research which aims to be sensitive to the complexities of individual contexts, and how those contexts in turn enable or constrain AD end-user engagement with the performing arts.

This presentation draws on scholarship across the fields of audio description, audience studies, and disability studies to investigate how socio-cultural, practical, and political contexts shape end-user contexts which in turn shape AD experiences of end-users in UK, Singapore, and Adelaide.

Karen Seeley, as a professional audio describer and researcher, draws on her more than 25 years' experience in broadcast media. She has described in many live performance and tourism settings. Karen undertook professional AD training in 2015 with Access2Arts in Australia, and completed the ACB/ADP Audio Description Institute, in 2018 in USA. She has also delivered AD training nationally and internationally. Karen contributed a chapter entitled 'Audio Description in Australia' in The Routledge Handbook of Audio

Description edited by Christopher Taylor and Elisa Perego (2022).
Karen is currently a PhD Candidate at the University of Adelaide, in Australia, where her thesis compares end-user experience of AD for the Performing Arts in the UK, Singapore, and Adelaide.

PANEL 5. TECHNOLOGY AND TOOLS

Pre-recorded AD for live events

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Since 2015 the mobile app Earcatch has offered pre-recorded audio description for films and series. People with sight loss appreciate the system for its accessible user interface and permanent availability (it works anytime, anywhere). But above all, it enables them to enjoy film and TV completely independently. This form of flexibility and accessibility is now available for theater and live events as well.

A first project was run during the Eurovision Song Contest 2021. Live AD was supplemented with pre-recorded AD. This made it possible to simultaneously create different AD's for three applications: audience at the venue, linear TV broadcast, video on demand. In 2022 a newly developed theater system was released. It ensures that pre-recorded audio description remains fully synchronized throughout the performance. The AD is permanently available and theatergoers no longer need to book tickets for a special event.

Furthermore, the platform offers the user audio introductions, accessible teasers, practical information about the theater. Earcatch also offers the possibility to share user experiences with each other.

In collaboration with Stage Entertainment and the Disney Theatrical Group, the system is now operational in several countries in Europe.

Mereijn van der Heijden is managing director of Soundfocus, a media production facility specialized in Localization and Media Accessibility. He is chairman of the Audiovisual Accessibility Foundation in The Netherlands and founder of Earcatch; the award-winning audio description app for cinemas, theaters and broadcasters. Mereijn holds a BMus (Hons) in Composition and Music Production by the HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, an MA in Sound and Music Technology by The Open University of London and an MMus in Sound Design by the HKU University of the Arts Utrecht. Research interests: Audio related accessibility solutions, Audio subtitling and Adaptive audio description.

Ellen Schut holds a master's degree in Translation (Spanish and English) from the University of Antwerp. After having worked as a translator and subtitler for a couple of years, she is currently working as a project leader for Earcatch in the Netherlands.

The video accessibility plug-in

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Scribit.Pro launched the open-source Video Accessibility Plugin project in April 2022. This free to download browser extension makes it easy and safe for everyone to automate the play-out of captions/subtitles and audio description as a preferred setting in your browser.

Scribit.Pro has developed the Video Accessibility Plugin for people with audio- or visual impairment. At the user's request, this free plug-in automatically turns on the subtitles or audio description for online videos if they are available. The plug-in works for most commonly used browsers and video players and can be installed on the computer with one click. The Free Video Accessibility Plugin:

- ✓ Automatically searches for and plays audio description and subtitles
- ✓ Works on browsers of PCs or laptops
- ✓ Works on all popular video players including YouTube, Vimeo and JW Player
- ✓ Is safe, one click to install
- ✓ Does not collect any personal information
- ✓ You only have to install it once and never have to worry about it again

The Video Accessibility Plugin has been created with support of SIDN fund and Bartimeus fund. <https://accessibility.video/en/>

Eveline Ferwerda came in contact with Accessibility working as a project manager for Bartiméus Foundation, a Netherlands-based NGO which focuses on furthering social participation and inclusion of people who are blind or partially sighted. With her background in the cinema industry, Eveline strives to incorporate people with various visual limitations into the cinematic experience to the fullest extent possible. Eveline studied Media Management at the University of the Arts in Utrecht obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2009 as well as her Master's degree in Management in Media from The Open University in Milton Keynes. Since then, Eveline has participated in numerous cinematic projects for various companies, including the Dutch Cinema Association, Eye Film Institute, Cinema Digitaal and MACCS International. Her work at Bartiméus Foundation allowed her to unite her passion for cinema with her objective of helping people. She created the scribit.tv platform in 2018 and found funds to evolve Scribit into a successful social enterprise. In 2020 the Scribit.Pro product was launched and in 2021 the start-up reached break-even.

Audio description on mobile screens

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The increasing development of technology applied to mobiles and the creation of cultural and/or accultural content, which is increasingly disseminated through small screens, is arousing the interest of research focused on translation. AD has been developed mainly in the field of film. It is now being extended to many other areas (museums, live performances, video games, etc., Taylor/Perego, 2022). Recently, mobile applications, capable of providing accessibility to different contents that reach us through small mobile screens, have been proposed by the market.

The case we present here is the mobile application ENVISION AI, developed by a group of researchers of different nationalities. The application performs different functions, including reading written text or barcodes. However, the function on which we will focus this work is the intersemiotic translation of images, i.e. the verbalisation of the image. The application is localised in different languages and allows the user to select the language of interest. For this function, i.e. the translation of the image, the creators of Envision warn that it is not finished and that, therefore, the description is approximate.

In this paper we propose to study the type of verbalisation provided by the app as a translation. Firstly, we are interested in the solutions it proposes for the translation of the image into a linguistic code, the level of grammatical correctness and linguistic expression in relation to its intelligibility. Secondly, what these descriptions suggest in the mind of the listener. To conclude, our aim is to study their level of enjoyment, the problems that arise and to suggest possible solutions. For this, we will count on the collaboration of the UICI (Unione Italiana Ciechi e degli ipovedenti - Parma section).

María J. Valero Gisbert, PhD in Linguistics by University of Valencia (Spain), teaches at the University of Parma (Italy) in the Dept. of Discipline Umanistiche, Sociali e delle Imprese Culturali (DUSIC), Area di Lingue e Letterature Straniere de la Università degli Studi di Parma, where she teaches Audiovisual Translation in the final year of the BA. She coordinates the online MA in Audiovisual Translation: <https://elly2020.postlaurea.unipr.it/course/index.php?categoryid=48>. Her research interests are Lexicography, Hispanic Phraseology, Audiovisual Translation, Audio description.

PANEL 6. PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND CERTIFICATION

Improving audio description through quality control reviewers who are blind

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Audio Description Quality Control Reviewers (QCR) are an integral component in the creation of high-fidelity audio description and have a positive impact on audio description provided to audiences. This presentation will define the role of a Quality Control Reviewer, explain how the QCR fits into the workflow of audio description production, discuss the potential impact of QCR on audio description and offer a model of QCR that also serves as a vocational training opportunity for young adults who are blind.

Role and workflow: Quality Control Reviewers (QCR) are people with extensive knowledge and understanding of audio description who provide feedback at one or more stages of development of audio description. Just as audio description writers, narrators, directors, and editors all have roles in the production of audio description, QCR play a role that should not be ignored. People who are blind bring a critical perspective to this position as not only experts on audio description but also as regular users of audio description. Depending on the project and the workflow, a QCR could review a project during one or more stages of development including before audio description writing begins to offer guidance on unique features of a program, after a script is written to evaluate its clarity and comprehensiveness, after recording and mixing to evaluate content and audio quality, and after completion of the project to provide feedback for future efforts.

Impact on AD: While all media projects should incorporate various levels of quality control, audio description quality control is unique in its emphasis on content, artistry, and technical components. Because the majority of professionals and volunteers working in audio description do not have visual impairments, without quality control reviews description sometimes begins to drift from the standards that most benefit the viewer who is blind. Audio description Quality Control Reviewers provide a continuous and iterative review that promotes not only the adherence to standards but also the evolution of better standards and higher quality audio description.

Model for Developing Quality Control Reviewers: Bridge Multimedia has employed audio description Quality Control Reviewers (QCR) who are blind since the company began producing audio description in the

early 2000s. In 2021, we launched a new model through which we partner with a local high school to hire, train, and employ young adults who are blind or have low vision as QCR. Our model educates people about high quality audio description and offers support in developing critical vocational skills to the young adults who are blind and who apply for the program. The insights and reviews of the QCRs improve the quality of our audio description, and the QCRs learn skills that will benefit them if they continue to work in the field of audio description and which can transfer to other careers they choose to pursue.

Wendy Sapp, PhD, has directed since 2013 four US Department of Education Office of Special Education Audio Description grants held by Bridge Multimedia, producing over 3000 hours of audio description. She has also led additional accessible technology teams for Bridge Multimedia, including projects creating four award winning accessible educational games available for free from PBS Kid and a free accessible STEM app for families of children 1-5 years old with integrated audio description. Dr Sapp frequently presents on innovative approaches to audio description developed and implemented by Bridge Multimedia. Dr. Sapp serves on the Certified Audio Description Committee of the Academy for the Certification of Vision Rehabilitation and Education Professionals, which is developing certification standards for Audio Describers and on the US Federal Communications Commission Disability Advisory Committee. Dr. Sapp holds certifications as a teacher of students with visual impairments and an orientation and mobility specialist.

UPDATE: Becoming a *certified* audio describer

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Over the last twelve years, the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and its Audio Description Project have established consumer-focused audio description guidelines or best practices. The product of this effort is a compilation of criteria gleaned primarily from description procedures and guidelines followed by description professionals in the United States, the UK, in Europe and in Canada—it is, essentially, a “guideline of guidelines” developed with significant input from and endorsement by users of description.

These best practices are the foundation upon which a certification process for audio describers is nearing completion.

ACB's partner in this effort—the Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals (ACVREP)—manages well-established certification programs designed to offer professionals the means to demonstrate critical knowledge and skills that promote the provision of quality services and ethical practice.

But what will be the process used to grant certification? How will that "measurement" be taken? Would there be different criteria for describers of media vs those working in the performing or visual arts? Will an examination or proof of past experience be required? Should those certified be required to complete a certain course of study/training? The process includes the review of how blind audio description writers can be accommodated in the certification review in ways that are equitable for all applicants.

At this presentation, Dr. Joel Snyder, co-chair of the effort's Body of Knowledge subcommittee will offer an update on the progress of the certification process.

Joel Snyder, PhD, is known internationally as one of the world's first "audio describers," a pioneer in the field of Audio Description. Since 1981, he has introduced audio description techniques in over 40 states and 64 countries and has made thousands of live events, media projects and museums accessible. Most recently, Dr. Snyder was named a Fulbright Scholar to train audio describers in Greece over a four-week period in 2019.

In 2014, the American Council of the Blind published Dr. Snyder's book, "The Visual Made Verbal – A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description," now available as an audio book and in Braille from the Library of Congress, in screen reader accessible formats, and in English, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Chinese print editions; a version in Italian is planned for 2023.

Professional identity profiles among audio describers

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Who are audio describers? Are they translators or writers? One thing we know for sure is that they are a heavily under-researched professional group, and since demand for quality AD is growing, it is time to learn more about the people behind the task. We know from previous research that audio describers come from a variety of fields, generally ones where "the use of language, voice, and writing skills is central" (ADLAB PRO, 2017). Our recent survey of 168 describers has

also shown that they use a wide range of job titles, such as “AD author,” “AD script writer” or “audiovisual translator” (Zajdel & Jankowska, forthcoming). But how exactly is the profession perceived by describers themselves and those hiring them?

The concept of professional identity has been applied to the study of translators (see Contreras et al., 2020; Farahzad & Varmazyari, 2018; Kapsaskis, 2011; Öner, 2013; Salo et al., 2020; Singer, 2021), yet this topic has not been studied in the context of audio description. Building on our survey on job satisfaction and professional image of audio describers, this study explores the theme of identity in more detail by means of an online content analysis of LinkedIn profiles and personal websites of audio describers, as contrasted with job advertisements found online. Which skills and competencies do audio describers highlight in their online profiles? Does this depend on their educational and/or professional background? And how does this compare to the profiles sought by service providers? By looking at inside and outside perspectives on audio description, we might be able to better understand the different identity profiles among these professionals and their possible implications on the working process.

Alicja Zajdel is a doctoral researcher at the University of Antwerp, where she is a member of the TricS (Translation, Interpreting and Intercultural Studies) research group. She is currently conducting translation process research in audio description, which aims to examine the decision-making processes in AD script writing. Her other research interests include media accessibility, machine translation and literary translation. She is the Secretary to the Editorial Board for the Journal of Audiovisual Translation.

Pivot templates in audio description: Performance and attitude of translators

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As noted by Remael and Vercauteren (2010), whether and how culture references are rendered in audio description largely depends on the encyclopedic knowledge of the describer and their ability to recognize and identify the culture reference in question. In other words, unless a describer is able to single out and name a culture reference, it might be labeled incorrectly or ambiguously if not altogether omitted. In this sense, López Vera (2006, p. 9) argues that translating AD might prevent cultural loss both because “an original AD gives the appropriate cultural background and accordingly is more informative than the AD for the same film done from scratch” and

because “translators are better trained to address culture references and to adapt them to the target audience”.

This presentation explores the feasibility of using pivot templates in the AD-translation workflow to avoid cultural loss. Data was collected in a study where five audiovisual translators were asked to translate audio descriptions for five Spanish clips from a pivot English template into Polish. The recruitment criteria were as follows: a minimum of two years' experience in audiovisual translation (Polish > English), not knowing Spanish and unfamiliarity with Spanish culture. Experience in audio description was irrelevant, meaning that both participants with and without such experience were accepted. Participants received financial remuneration for taking part in the study. Three participants completed some audio description training – two as part of their studies, and one attended a vocational AD course organized by one of the NGOs in Poland. The remaining two participants heard about audio description but had no AD training nor AD practice.

Following best subtitling practice, the templates were time-coded and culture references were not localized but explained in annotations. Three types of data were collected: screen recordings of translators, scripts translated into Polish and post-task interviews.

Overall, the results of this study show that using pivot templates can contribute to preventing cultural loss in audio description. Quantitative analysis of the scripts revealed that the translated scripts retained the majority of culture references and, on average, transferred 94% of the references from the pivot template and that translators used tactics for rendering culture references known from subtitling. Analysis of the post-task interviews revealed that the participants were very aware of the importance of culture references and the need to find a balance between domestication and foreignization. It also showed that participants' decision-making was primarily guided by time constraints and evaluation of their own and the audience's frame of reference, but they also considered how helpful the tactic might be in visualizing culture references. While the participants found culture references to be the most difficult part of the task, they considered the task feasible largely because of identification and explanation of culture references which they considered to be the main advantage of pivot templates.

Anna Jankowska, PhD, is a Professor at the Department of Translators and Interpreters of University of Antwerp and former Assistant Lecturer in the Chair for Translation Studies and Intercultural Communication at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland). She was a visiting scholar at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona within the Mobility Plus program of the Polish Ministry of

Science and Higher Education (2016-2019). Her recent research projects include studies on audio description process, mobile accessibility and software. Anna Jankowska is the Editor-in-chief of the Journal of Audiovisual Translation and member of the European Association for Studies in Screen Translation (ESIST). Website: <https://www.uantwerpen.be/en/staff/anna-jankowska/>.

PANEL 7. AUDIO DESCRIBING VIDEOGAMES

AD4Games: Applying audio description in video games

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Video gaming has evolved into one of the world's most favourite forms of entertainment over the past few decades. There are 2.7 billion active gamers in the world who generate \$174.9 billion in revenue for the gaming industry in 2020. However, most video games are not accessible or fully accessible for people with disabilities, who account for 15% of the world population (WHO, 2018). Game accessibility for players with sight loss is especially challenging due to the visual and interactive nature of games. Making games accessible for blind and visually players requires all visual elements to be represented by means of auditory or haptic feedback. Audio description can be one of the solutions to improve game accessibility (Mangiron & Zhang, 2016).

So far, AD has been applied in video game trailers and live game streaming, where gamers/streamers record themselves playing video games to a live audience online. This presentation introduces the AD4Games project, which investigates how AD can improve game accessibility by working with professional audio describers, game developers, and visually impaired participants. We use the game *Before I Forget*, developed by two of our partners, to conduct a few experiments, testing ways AD can enhance game accessibility. The AD4Games project first investigates how AD can be applied to game streaming by producing and seeking feedback on three types of AD: 1) recorded AD of a game playing video; 2) live AD of a game streaming session; 3) live AD of an audio describer playing the game, acting both as audio describer and game streamer. Secondly, the project explores the feasibility of AD-assisted game playing. Visually impaired participants are invited to play the game with audio describers who describe visual elements in the game live based on the players' actions. Based on feedback and data collected from interviews, surveys, focus groups, workshops, and observation, the team will co-adapt the game into a more accessible version and test it with visually impaired participants. This presentation will report the research outcomes of this project and discuss the pending issues in game accessibility.

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Polly Goodwin is a freelance Audio Describer working across the genres for a variety of clients and audiences internationally. Specialising in AD for screen, she has also described for galleries, fashion shows and fitness content. She runs the Benefits of Audio Description in Education in Australia initiative to encourage children and young people to engage critically with audio description. She is currently developing the Audio Description unit for the suite of vocational education and training certificates that provide competencies in the Expanded Core Curriculum to be recognised nationally throughout Australia. She is currently involved with Dr. Xiaochun Zhang's AD4Games' project, exploring the potential for audio description to enhance gameplay for players who are blind or have low vision, and is writing a chapter on a videogame that features a protagonist who is blind for an upcoming publication on screenwriting. Previous research projects have explored the potential and challenges of audio describing silent film, and the ethical position of the audio describer and their relation to the end user.

Audio description and video games – Results from a survey and interviews in Spain

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The interactive nature of video games poses accessibility barriers for persons with disabilities in terms of receiving the game's stimuli, cognitively determining the relevant response, and physically providing input to progress to the next action (Yuan et al., 2011). For persons with visual disabilities, audio description (AD) could be particularly useful for accessing the visual information conveyed by the game. So far, this idea has only been put into practice commercially in the non-interactive sequences of "The Last of Us Part I" (Naughty Dog, 2022) and, more experimentally, in the gameplay of "Before I Forget" (3-Fold Games & Plug-In Digital, 2020).

Given the promising potential of game AD, there is much to be explored about user needs and preferences moving forward. Are players interested in using AD in video games? How do they imagine this type of AD? How may it impact the gaming experience? These are some of the questions the RAD Project (Researching Audio Description: Translation, Delivery and New Scenarios) aims to answer.

This presentation unveils the results of a survey and semi-structured interviews carried out with adults with visual disabilities living in Spain about their opinions on game AD as part of the RAD Project. The survey collected the responses of 106 participants, both video game players and non-players. An overwhelming majority of the full sample (89.6%) was interested in game AD, including AD users and non-users, players, and non-players. Participants reported that game AD would improve their comprehension of the action, scenarios and characters, their socialization with other players with and without disabilities, and their interaction with the game.

After completing the survey, 15 participants volunteered to take part in an interview about improving game accessibility through AD. Key themes include the type of information conveyed by AD (participants differentiated between essential and additional information), automatically or manually triggering AD, and combining AD with other accessibility features, notably a screen reader for the text in menus and the user interface. Participants agreed that accessibility should be considered from the design stage of the game and that its quality should be tested with potential end users.

In short, this study is an exploratory snapshot of the preferences of a sample of persons with visual disabilities in Spain regarding game AD. Although the number of participants is limited, results suggest that game AD is worth exploring due to its potential to overcome accessibility barriers and to contribute to making entertainment more inclusive.

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María Eugenia Larreina-Morales is a predoctoral researcher at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain) working on video game

accessibility, particularly on the potential of game audio description for players with visual disabilities. Supported by the FI grant from the Catalan Government, her research is linked to the Researching Audio Description: Translation, Delivery and New Scenarios (RAD) project. She is a member of the TransMedia Catalonia research group. Her research interests include media accessibility and audiovisual translation.

Carme Mangiron, PhD, is a senior lecturer and a member of the research group TransMedia Catalonia at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB). She was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award at UAB in 2022. She is the Director of the MA in Audiovisual Translation and has extensive experience as a translator, specializing in software and game localization. Her research interests include game localization, game accessibility, audiovisual translation and accessibility to the media. She has published extensively in international journals, participated in several research projects and is one of the principal investigators of the Researching Audio Description: Translation, Delivery and New Scenarios (RAD), funded by the Spanish Government. She is co-author of "Game Localization: Translating for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013), and the main organiser of the Fun for All Conference, about game translation and accessibility, which is held at UAB every two years.

Audio introductions for video games

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Audio introductions (AI) are a form of accessibility still tied to their origin as a companion to audio descriptions (AD) in performing arts [1], but their use to describe the characters and the plot of video games for blind or partially sighted users has recently been suggested [2]. Even more, if combined with an Easy to Understand (E2U) language, they would become Easy to Listen [3], which is an accessibility hybrid modality that could also be helpful for neurodivergent people, and it is important to address cognitive accessibility in video games, since it has received less attention than other kinds [4]. At present, accessibility for both people with visual disabilities and people with cognitive disabilities takes the form of various recommendations that companies and experts have made available to developers [5, 6, 7]. AD is among them and the clarity of language, which seems to share the purpose with E2U language, is also mentioned. In this context, AIs would emerge as a cross-modality service that could be used in video games to add an extra layer to its accessibility.

As an exploratory study, it has been decided to implement an audio introduction to the video game *Gris* [8]. This game has been chosen, among other factors, due to its short duration and its lack of in-game narrative. To begin with, a template for a typical opera AI [9] will be examined to see if all of its categories could be reused. Secondly, the inclusion of new categories will be considered because of the differentiated nature of these audiovisual products, since they are characterized by their interactivity [10]. Thirdly, in order to address as many gamers with disabilities as possible, a standard version and an E2U version will be developed. Finally, an AI template specifically tailored to video games will be suggested. Due to the scope of the research, this should be considered a preliminary study. The adequacy of these AIs would need to be assessed in future research by performing a reception study. This paper aspires to show that audio introductions can broaden their scope to a different audience (people with cognitive disabilities) and a different media (video games), which will help them to finally emerge as a multimode accessibility service.

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Miguel Ángel Oliva Zamora holds a BA in Translation and Interpreting from the University of Granada (UGR) and a MA in Audiovisual Translation from the Barcelona Autonomous University (UAB). Thanks to the PhD grant he has been awarded with, he is now able to research video game accessibility and the implementation of easy-to-understand languages. Before joining the research team in UAB, he was working as project manager and copywriter in SEAT for the online applications of the vehicles' radio from 2019 to 2022.

PANEL 8. MULTIMODALITY AND CREATIVITY

Tactile architectural drawings as a tool to support audio description

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Projects carried out by the University of Lodz at the Institute of Art History dedicated to the issues of accessibility of art for visually impaired people have been conducted since 2013. In recent years, under the leadership of Prof. Aneta Pawłowska, the project: 'Łódź art against the background of European art. Excluded/Included' (2019–2022), and work is currently underway under the programme 'Friendly City. Supporting the independence of visually impaired people in the use of the public transport network in Łódź, including an application for locational information and local architectural monuments' (2021–2024). On the basis of the experience gained during these years, we would like to present various methods and forms of using tactile architectural drawings as a tool supporting audio description.

We will present experiences gathered so far from a group of more than 650 visually impaired people from the Łódź Voivodeship. The cross-section of respondents includes people with various degrees of sight loss (also with simultaneous presence of other dysfunctions, e.g. motor dysfunctions). The group of beneficiaries included school-age children, adults of working age, as well as older people, whose number will increase in Poland in the coming years due to demographics.

Architecture is one of the most difficult art fields to capture in an audio description. Also, the number of objects developed within the framework of accessibility for visually impaired people is much smaller than the objects of painting or sculpture accumulated in a small exhibition or gallery space.

Visually impaired people have considerable difficulties in moving around and visiting the city on their own. As a result, they often give up their full independence, reducing the aesthetic experience of the urban space.

It is important to reflect on the possibilities of tactile architectural drawings and to approach their form and use differently. Thanks to oculographic research (eye tracking), we are able to determine which elements of architecture should be given more attention in the

description being prepared and which elements are worth including in a tactile architectural drawing showing, for example, the plan, elevation, detail, and interiors of rooms. The use of appropriately prepared architectural tactile drawings within the descriptive framework can be a much cheaper and better-perceived solution compared to previously popular models of buildings, e.g., cast in bronze, and therefore more common for use in historic buildings.

Aneta Pawlowska, PhD, professor at Lodz University; art historian. Since 2016, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and History at the University of Lodz. Her research interests focus on the history of art of the 19th and 20th centuries, and the problem of audio description of works of art. Co-author of a publication on the problems of creating audio descriptions of works of art—Audio description of works of art - methods, problems, examples, Łódź 2016. Laureate of awards such as LUMEN (Leaders in University Management 2017), Łódzkie Eureka 2017, Idol 2018, INTARG 2020. Author, co-author, and editor of several books and dozens of scientific articles. Grant holder of several grants related to making artworks accessible to people with disabilities.

Daria Rutkowska-Siuda, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of History of Architecture at the Institute of Art History, University of Lodz. Graduated in art history, specialising in 19th century architecture. Graduated in pedagogical studies—education through art and editing.

Audio description of illustrated books: A multimodal reading proposal

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When we read an illustrated book, we perceive different arrangements between text and image, which, in the audio description, needs to be connected so that the target word receives the pictorial information and connects it to the text they read. This text, in the file and doctoral research, aims to present some relationships between text and image in the construction of audio description scripts for illustrated books. To this do so, topics such as audio description, its concepts and key points were addressed; brief concepts about illustrated books and text-image from Semiotics. As a reference, we consulted texts of authors dedicated to the study of images, the text-image and audio description, such as Santaella, Nikolajeva, van Linden, Nascimento and Perdigão. As a research methodology, you are presented with rich points about image, text-

image and audio description. From the locution and distribution of the script, both in digital and printed form, it was possible to work multimodally from pedagogical workshops. Thus, it was possible to reflect on the existing relationships within examples of illustrated books and the audio descriptions that can be made, so that future proposals for audio description of this type of publication, which coordinate text and image, can bring even more the visually impaired public in the context of formal and non-formal spaces of reading.

Adriana da Paixão Santos. Graduated in Vernacular Letters with English from the Catholic University of Salvador. Teacher of the Center for Pedagogical Support to People with Visual Impairment (Prof. Cátia Paim). Experience in teacher training for braille system teaching and mathematics teaching through Soroban. Master's degree in Professional Master's Program in Letters — PROFLETRAS from the University of the State of Bahia - UNEB, Campus V (Santo Antônio de Jesus - BA), dealing with reading comprehension in the area of visual impairment. PhD student at the Graduate Program in Language and Culture, Federal University of Bahia.

Audio description of *Vinil verde*: Audio describing the horror genre

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Genre study is important for audio description (AD) practice, as stated by Busschaert (2014). Therefore, this paper, which is an excerpt from my ongoing doctoral research, aims to investigate how the visual horror elements can be translated into verbal horror elements, relating theories on film language and intersemiotic translation, such as Plaza (1987), Torop (2003), and Aguiar and Queiroz (2013, 2015). In order to do so, the AD process of *Vinil verde* (Green Vinyl, 2004), a short film co-written by Kleber Mendonça Filho and Bohdana Smyrnov, will be presented. *Vinil verde* tells the story of a mother who gives her daughter a box full of vinyl records. Every day the mother tells her daughter that she can listen to any of the vinyls, except to the green one that stands out. However, the daughter disobeys her mother and, as a result, something strange happens to the mother whenever the daughter plays the green vinyl, causing horror in the audience. The AD process will be prepared with a visually impaired person—an AD consultant—and the paper will highlight both the negotiations resulting from this collaborative process and the elements of the short film that provide a horror atmosphere (Santos, 2018). I will explain how these have been

translated and, in order to identify the main characteristics of the studied genre, I will draw on the book *Genre and Hollywood* (Neale, 2000), on philosophy of horror (Carroll, 1999), and on a guide regarding horror cinema (Cherry, 2009).

Marcella Wiffler Stefanini is currently a PhD student at the Postgraduate Program in Applied Linguistics (PPG-LA) at the State University of Campinas (Unicamp), in the research line Languages, Transculturality and Translation. She has a master's degree in Applied Linguistics (2020) and a degree in Letters - Portuguese Language (2017), also from Unicamp. As a PPG-LA student, she is a member of the research group "E por falar em tradução", which has a translation project of texts related to Translation Studies. Since graduation, she has studied audio description (AD) from the perspective of Translation Studies and today, in her PhD research, she turns to the study of AD as an intersemiotic translation and its possible associations with cinematographic language. Her research interests include Translation Studies, Audiovisual Translation, Audio Description and Cinema.

Creativity in the audio description of non-fictional content. The case of the Flemish documentary 'Beest'

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Audio description (AD) of non-fictional content is far from new, witness the high number of documentaries on Netflix that are audio described or the many major (international) events that are made accessible to persons with sight loss. And while OFCOM (2021) states that "not all programmes lend themselves for audio description" (p. 6), the former ITC guidelines (2000) do include non-fictional programmes such as nature documentaries or sports and other live events in the categories of content that can be described. However, the observation made by Cámara & Espasa (2011) that guidelines "devote much more attention to fiction than to non-fiction" (p. 418) still holds true and a lot of questions about how to describe documentaries and other non-fictional content remain. One of these questions relates to creativity in the audio description of non-fictional content. Based on the premise that documentaries are predominantly informative in nature, scholars in the field of AD (e.g. Kruger, 2010; Palmer & Salway, 2015) use the genre as a typical example of content that is described in a more factual way, with limited creativity and/or interpretation of the information shown on screen.

On the other hand, film scholars (e.g. Bordwell & Thompson, 2013; Bruzzi, 2006; Nicchols, 2017) have shown that documentaries can and do use the same creative and narrative principles as the ones used in fictional content. Based on this observation, a small-scale experiment was set up in which three different audio descriptions were created for selected fragments of the Flemish documentary *Beest*. The documentary follows a former Belgian strong man, who speaks in a strong Flemish accent, on his bike journey through Belgium to visit a statue that was created to celebrate his achievements. The first AD was a factual one, describing what is seen on screen in an as neutral as possible way in standard Dutch. In addition, two more creative ADs were created. The first of these adopted a more narrative approach and wanted to tell the story, more than to present the facts; the second one used a first-person AD and told the events that were shown from the point of view of the protagonist himself. In addition, both these last two ADs were voiced in the accent spoken by the protagonist, rather than in standard Dutch. These three versions were shown to 10 people with sight loss who were then asked to fill out a questionnaire gauging both their preference and understanding of the different versions.

The present paper will give a concise account of the study described above. After a short introduction in which the theoretical framework is presented, a methodological part will explain how the ADs were created and how the experiment was set up. Next the results of the study will be analysed and discussed, and, based on the findings, some suggestions for further research will be presented.

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Gert Vercauteren, PhD, is a tenure track professor at the Department of Applied Linguistics of the University of Antwerp where he teaches media accessibility and translation technology. He holds a PhD in Translation Studies and his research focuses on narratological and cognitive approaches to audio description. He is a member of the University of Antwerp's TricS research group and the OPEN expertise centre for accessible media and culture, and has been involved in various European projects in the field of media accessibility, including ADLAB and ADLAB PRO.

PANEL 9. NEW AUDIENCES, NEW APPROACHES

Accessibility has many names. Audio description has many roles

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As a pre-recorded verbal commentary describing visual (as well as unclear sonic) elements of audiovisual products of culture, Audio Description (AD) is primarily dedicated to audiences with sight loss. This talk, however, is aimed at presenting a different kind of accessibility provided by AD. It discusses the results of the project focused on AD's potential for speech therapy for sighted children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD), which may be brought to life by acquisition of information through visual and aural channels at once. The project—funded by the Jagiellonian University's MiniGrant POB Heritage (1st ed.)—was conducted in 2022-2023 in Poland, Kraków and Lublin.

On the basis of the tests conducted with young participants—aged 5-12—with ASD (test group) and without ASD (control group), all sighted, the research team were able to determine (A) to what extent an specifically constructed AD track may increase or change a children's visual attention with respect to the broadcast content, and (B) whether it results in their enhanced understanding of that content; (C) if AD has a potential to increase young viewers understanding of emotional states, behaviours, social-communicative interactions and cause-and-effect relationships. As a consequence, the obtained results help to decide in what contexts AD is the most effective, which may result in using AD as an accessibility and compensatory tool for children with ASD.

In the study the data was collected by using both an eye-tracking tool and semi structured questionnaires; the answers obtained from participants were compared to the recordings from the eye-tracker. The interdisciplinary aspect of the project is also worth mentioning—the project combines both knowledge and techniques of translation studies (specifically: functionalist Skopos Theory and media accessibility) with psychology of attention, special education as well as speech therapy.

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Audio description: A learning tool for students with cognitive disabilities. A reception study

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Audio description (AD) is primarily aimed at people with visual impairment, but it can offer benefits well beyond the purpose for which it was created. In this regard, Garman's statement about AD is very illustrative: «ramps for wheelchair users are helpful for prams or baby buggies. Captions and audio description are a metaphorical ramp and provide a different kind of value to people on the autistic spectrum» (2011, para. 2). Along the same lines, Braun and Starr (2020), Jankowska (2019), and Walczak (2016) have conducted studies that show that, in addition to benefiting people who are blind or visually impaired, AD can benefit other collectives, such as foreign language learners, senior citizens, or persons with autism.

In our case, we are going to present the results of a reception study conducted with secondary school students with intellectual disabilities at the Josep Sol Special Needs Education School, Catalonia, to analyze whether the AD of films can become a learning tool in this context. To test this hypothesis, we worked with 20 students who watched the first 25 minutes of the Spanish version of the film: A Shaun the Sheep Movie: Farmageddon, with or without audio description. Students had different profiles (autism spectrum

disorder, Down syndrome, and moderate intellectual disability) and our two experimental groups were formed according to their cognitive levels. One group had a literacy level similar to the first grade of primary school, and the other had already reached a minimum literacy level like that of the third grade.

Our findings point to a higher need for AD in students with lower cognitive levels. On the one hand, students with a higher level of cognition did not register a significant improvement with AD. On the other hand, for students with a lower cognitive level, AD served as a support tool in helping them contextualize and understand the images in the films.

In this presentation, we will first detail the experimental design: audiovisual material, group composition, data collection, and analysis methods. We will then expose the results obtained and the conclusions drawn, before pointing to further research possibilities.

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Yolanda Moreno studied Audiovisual Communications at the Open University of Catalonia. In 2021, she completed her Master in Specialized Translation at the University of Vic - Central University of Catalonia. She is currently investigating media accessibility for people with cognitive disabilities.

Can you see gravity? – Audio description and early education

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Audio Description uses words that are succinct, vivid, and imaginative to convey the visual image that is not fully accessible to a significant segment of the population—in the United States alone, over 32 million people are either blind or “have trouble seeing even with correction” (American Foundation for the Blind, 2019). This presentation focuses on the fundamentals of audio description and their applicability to building literacy of all types and employment.

Audio description and literacy development: Finding words—we all deal with that, just about every moment of our waking lives. But children or people with learning disabilities have particular needs that might be addressed usefully through the use of audio description. Consider picture books—these books rely on pictures to tell the story. But the teacher trained in audio description techniques would never simply hold up a picture of a red ball and read the text: “See the ball.” He or she might add: “The ball is red—just like a fire engine. I think that ball is as large as one of you! It's as round as the sun—a bright red circle or sphere.” The teacher has introduced new vocabulary, invited comparisons, and used metaphor or simile—with toddlers! By using audio description, these books are made accessible to children who have low vision or are blind *and* help develop more sophisticated language skills for all kids. Is a picture worth 1000 words? Maybe. But the audio describer might say that a few well-chosen words can conjure vivid and lasting images.

Audio description and science learning: Beginning at 16-36 months, children develop the ability to understand the world around them, including mathematical and scientific concepts¹. For children born blind, vivid and imaginative audio description, combined with “hands on” experiences offers a way to understand science concepts and abstract elements. What does gravity look like? What does the wind look like? Audio description can offer answers that stimulate more questions and inspire further exploration—by sighted and blind children alike. How can practitioners as well as parents and family members use 0-5 age-appropriate language to help blind children understand science concepts?

1) McRel Compendium of Academic Standards.

<http://www2.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=38&standardID=4>

Matt Kaplowitz is President and Director of Technology and Innovation for Bridge Multimedia, the largest producer of audio description for network and cable TV in the United States. Matt is an Emmy, Peabody, and Grammy Award-winning producer, composer, and sound designer, as well as an assistive listening systems engineer and A/V systems integration specialist for ADA-compliant installations for public spaces. Matt served as a member of U.S. State Department's delegation representing the U.S. in establishing technical global standards for high-definition television. Matt also served on the U.S. Access Board's 508 Standards and the Telecommunications Act Guidelines Subcommittee for Software, Web, and Content. Matt currently serves on the Executive Board of Chimes International, a disability services and behavioral health organization that serves more than 20,000 people with disabilities.

Joel Snyder, PhD, is known internationally as one of the world's first "audio describers," a pioneer in the field of Audio Description. Since 1981, he has introduced audio description techniques in over 40 states and 64 countries and has made thousands of live events, media projects and museums accessible. Most recently, Dr. Snyder was named a Fulbright Scholar to train audio describers in Greece over a four-week period in 2019.

In 2014, the American Council of the Blind published Dr. Snyder's book, "The Visual Made Verbal – A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description," now available as an audio book and in Braille from the Library of Congress, in screen reader accessible formats, and in English, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Chinese print editions; a version in Italian is planned for 2023.