From theatre podcast to audio introductions and back
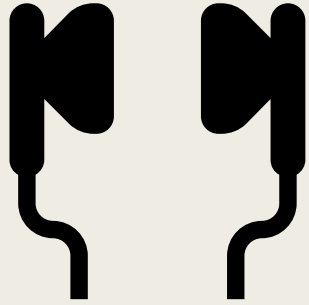
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TricS | Translation, interpreting & intercultural Studies University of Antwerp | OPEN | UAB

Aims of the study

What is the role of **Podcast Audio Introductions** in theatre and opera houses' **access provision** and **audiosphere?**

■ Describe the **types of theatre podcasts** cultural venues in Europe offer and their content and context.

■ **Contrast** traditional Audio Introductions with mainstream theatre podcasts.

■ Evaluate the **potential** of theatre podcasts as an access service.
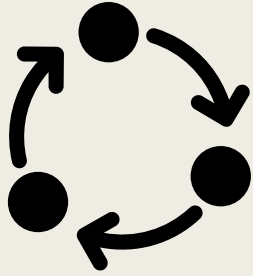
Methods

What is the role of **Podcast Audio Introductions** in theatre and opera houses' **access provision** and **audiosphere?**

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- **Contrast** traditional Audio Introductions with mainstream theatre podcasts.

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Desk review (Belgium, France, Germany, Spain and the UK)

Systemic functional linguistic analysis of three podcast

expert interviews
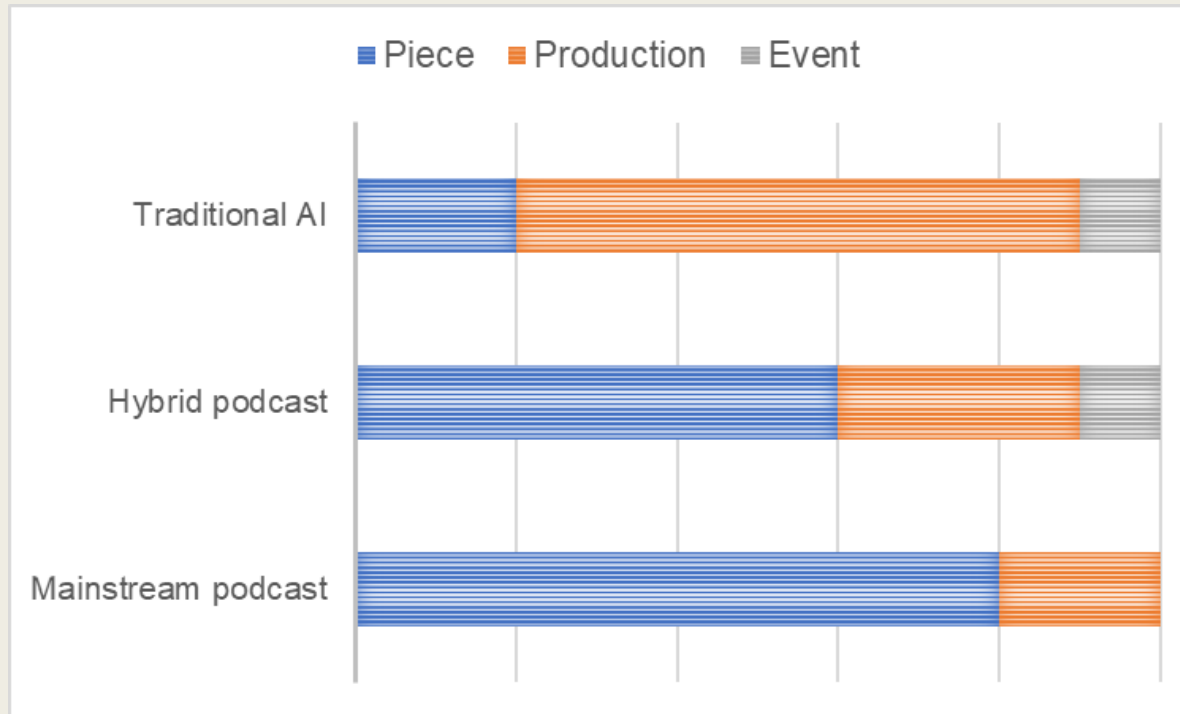
Spectrum of PAIs:

Mainstream podcast ----- Hybrid podcast ----- Traditional AI

Similar distribution channels:

YouTube, Soundcloud, Spotify, Appel/google podcast, venue websites, etc.
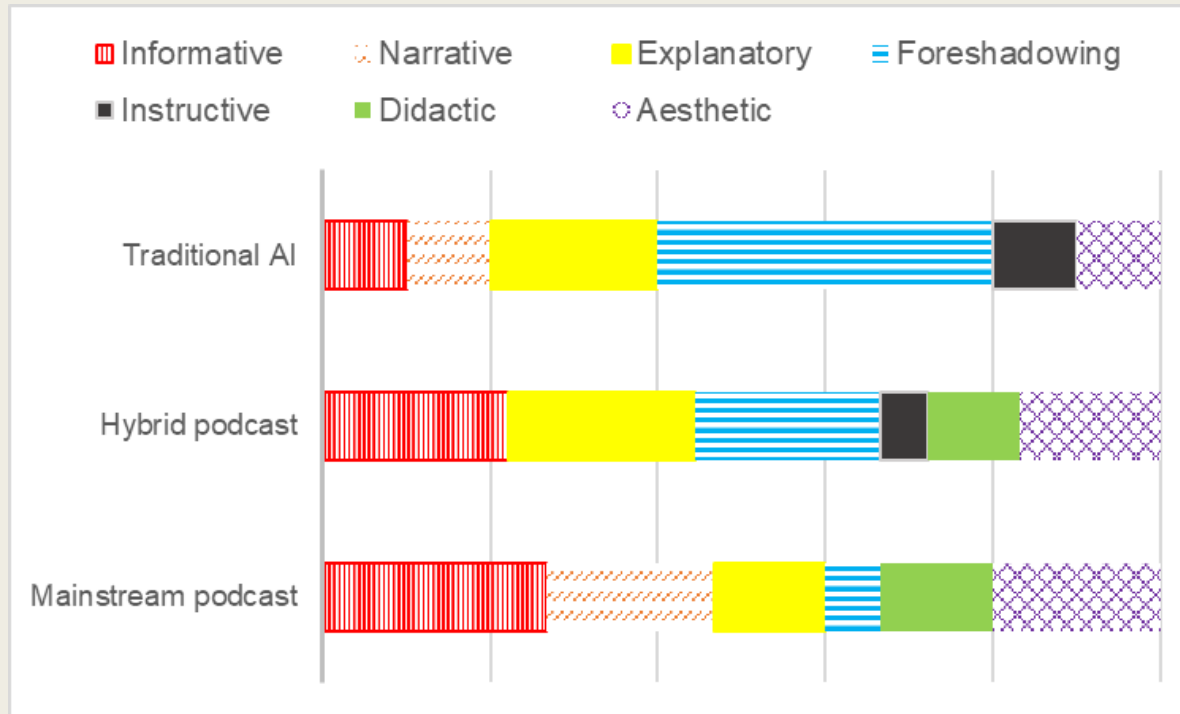
Discussion

Podcast Audio Introductions (PAI)

Discussion

Experiential function:

types of content

Discussion

Experiential function: communicative functions

How are these functions realised?
Some strategies

Explanatory function (focus on explaining themes): *"The poor jester arrives at the same time, and he is subject to a bad joke, as they make him an unsuspecting accomplice without him realising" (example from La Previa).*

Explanatory function (focus on explaining visuals): *"It's almost as if the tableau is lit by a flash of lightning, with deep darkness all around". (ROH)*

Aesthetic function (focus on narrative aesthetics): *"Rigoletto does not lack anything. It is a story full of betrayals, pathetic deaths, sexual trafficking, abuse to women, disdain for the weak, arrogance and lust. Sordidness reigns supreme, as is often the case in Verdi's operas, but this play surpasses all". (example from La Previa).*

Aesthetic function (focus on literary style): *Als wij, de grote mensen, moe zijn// Van het praten// Van het praten// Van het praten met elkaar// Gaan wij de tuin in en verzwijgen ons// In de kat, in het gras, in het kind. (Poem recited in the PAI of Toneelhuis)*

Discussion: interpersonal function

Mainstream podcasts

More and different voices, with authorship acquiring a central role.

- Audience addressed as "aficionados"
- Empathetic third person and first person in plural

"What does an opera need to excite us and to lure us into it? A section of the audience seeks the passion of love, impossible romance, even sex."

Hybrid podcasts

Difficult to differentiate between two audiences

- AD audience addressed and identified explicitly
- Second person plural

"What follows is a visual description of Zeg aan de kinderen dat wij niet deugen. This description is intended especially for the blind and visually impaired as a preparation for the visual aspects of the performance."

Discussion: textual function

Mainstream podcasts & Hybrid podcasts:
- Several voices, but **monologic** (pretended interaction)
- Soundbites and music as meaning-making resources

Traditional AIs:
- One voice, truly monologic
- Potential of introducing musical/sound/dialogue prompts

Conclusions

- **Inclusive practices** (Di Giovani; Fryer, Romero-Fresco; Greco)
  - *Coexistence* and *complementarity* of AI and introductory podcasts

- **Access clusters/Achievement Spaces** (Roofthooft, 2021; Neves, 2020)
  - *PAIs allow for personalisation and expand on traditional access services*

- **"art over access"** (Fryer, 2018) in terms of content and distribution.

NOTHING FOR
EVERYONE
SOMETHING FOR
EVERYBODY

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Thank you!

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