

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### III ADVANCED RESEARCH SEMINAR ON AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
24-25 March 2011

The TransMedia Catalonia Research Group and the DTV4ALL project are organising the III Advanced Research Seminar on Audio Description, to be held at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in March 2011. This international two-day seminar, sponsored by SubTi, aims to bring together practitioners and researchers in order to map the current status of Audio Description (AD) profession and research.

This year's seminar will include six panels, chaired by two practitioners or researchers who propose various topics and questions to be addressed in 20-minute papers.

#### **Panel 1. Merging modalities (Aline Remael & Gert Vercauteren)**

Interdisciplinarity has long been a buzz word in Translation Studies and it still is, even though the very concept of interdisciplinarity worries those who fear that the common ground of TS as a discipline is becoming increasingly difficult to define. Today, with the multiplication of text types, dissemination modes and hybrid communications forms, the challenges are only becoming more formidable, especially in AVT where developments appear to pick up speed more than in most other subfields. Audio description, itself a relative newcomer in AVT, is feeling the pull of today's growing diversification and interaction of audiences, accessibility legislation, the incessant development of new technologies and the concomitant diversification and multilingualism in audiovisual productions. The aim of this panel is to cast some light on the challenges of AD for productions aiming at foreign audiences and multilingual productions for the internet, the theatre, film and dvd on the one hand, and AD for live productions on the other. The challenges come from many different quarters and some of the questions we would like to see our panellists address are:

- What solutions are on offer for an effective and accessible integration of AD and audio subtitling (AST) from the point of view of recording, text production, audience design, etc. How can the validity of the solutions offered be tested?
- Does the need to make AD with AST work as one integrated text that is itself part of the film it elucidates, lead to more active intervention/story-telling on the part of the describer and/or voice-talents, i.e. to an AD that is close to a new narrative voice in the film?
- Is AST another 'new' text form or does it bear resemblance to existing ones, and can expertise from other, related (AVT) fields such as voice-over be applied?
- How does AD with AST work for different media, including live performances, and do media-bound, delivery-bound or carrier-bound factors influence the form the texts take (in terms of content, quantity, recording method, voice talent techniques, etc.)?
- What are the (mutual) influences between the text as written and as spoken: can the AD script/the audio subtitles anticipate the part to be filled by the speaker (intonation, accent, etc.)?
- Is there a limit to what AD with AST can achieve and, if so, is there a way of determining this limit?
- To what extent is research into AD with AST being done in interaction with the industry that has to deliver the product and the translators/writers who have to deliver the texts?
- Might the development of AD with AST have an impact on the AVT landscape in different countries, e.g. on the development of AD with dubbing rather than AD with AST, or on the development of different AD guidelines, the training of translators...

- What is the relation between (increased) demand for/production of AD and demand for/production of AST and /or SDH; are orders often combined, how does that impact the work flow and its organisation
- Where are the developments most marked: internet, dvd, theatre? Does the development of one influence the other?
- What specific aspects need to be covered when training describers for live events (voice talent techniques, interpretation techniques,...)?
- What can insights from interpretation studies (and real-time subtitling) learn us with regard to AD of live events? What is the relation between the live event comments and live event AD?

### **Panel 2. AD sound and delivery (Mereijn van der Heijden & Andrew Holland)**

During the audio description production-process, there are two transformations being made. Besides capturing visuals into words (the AD-script), there is the second step of converting these words into audio. Although both stages have a great influence on the eventual user experience they do not always get the same amount of attention. Audio description needs to allow its visually impaired audience to experience something “here and now”, instead of being told about something that’s happening ‘somewhere else’. To achieve that goal there are two important factors which are the main topics for this panel:

- (a) The delivery of the audio description script, because it can be the link between the two production-stages (text and sound)
- (b) Attention for sound quality, because the experience is mainly auditive.

In this sense technology plays a crucial role, since the final process of mixing soundtracks may have a decisive impact on the reception of a long creative process.

We would like to see our panellists focus on issues related to:

- AD delivery live and recorded
- AD interaction with music, sound and silence
- Vocal skills and prosody
- Training in AD delivery
- Technical aspects of recording AD
- Technical aspects of real life delivery of AD
- Hardware and software solutions for real life AD
- Reception of AD related to delivery
- Effect of delivery in audience
- Emotions and AD delivery

### **Panel 3. Theoretical aspects (Sabine Braun & Jan Louis Kruger)**

In this panel we would like to take stock of some of the most important and prevalent theoretical approaches that apply to AD. These approaches are necessarily taken from translation studies, film studies, linguistics, multimodal discourse analysis, and narratology. Whereas initial research tended to have a practical bias, the mode of AD has become the object of incisive theoretical probing over the past five years. What we are particularly interested in here is the insights gained from the fields of cognitive narratology and psychonarratology, cognitive approaches in film studies, cognitive approaches to analysing multimodal discourse, and philosophical translation theories. According to Bordwell in his 1989 *Making meaning: Inference and rhetoric in the interpretation of cinema*, “Critical interpretation... chiefly consists of a ‘covert’ or tacit conventionality ... The concept of tacit convention seeks to capture both psychological and social dimensions of the interpretive activity. Psychologically, interpretive conventions rely upon reasoning practices. Most generally, human beings possess broad inductive skills which govern everyday sensemaking” (1989:7). We would like this panel to engage critically with theory and with the way people make sense of film on more than just the basis of tacit conventionality, and with the way this impacts on the mode of AD or audio narration. Possible topics might include:

- Showing and telling pictures, the challenge of verbalisation from the perspective of narratology
- The cognition of film – laying the foundation for reception studies
- Psychonarratology as a theoretical frame for AD
- Multimodal discourse processing approaches as cognitive framework for film analysis and AD
- Any contribution that starts from a solid theoretical basis in translation studies, narratology, discourse studies or film studies and that makes a contribution to our understanding of film and film access in the context of AVT.

#### **Panel 4. AD in practice: theatre, opera, cinema and TV (Bernd Benecke & Joel Snyder)**

The aim of this panel is to get an overview how Audio Description developed in its many fields all over the world and to discuss the pros and cons of different approaches. This includes e.g. the following topics:

- Opera: Audio Description vs. Audio Introduction
- Theatre: One Audio Description event vs. constant Description over a longer period
- Cinema: Open Description vs. Headphone delivered Description
- TV and DVD: Audio Description and Audio Subtitling, Creating Description in a team
- Translating of Descriptions (e.g. English to Spanish), Adapting of Descriptions (e.g. German to Swiss German)

Everyone from the practical field of Audio Description is invited to present his way of working and share his experience with the co-workers all over the world.

#### **Panel 5. Perception/reception (Agnieszka Chmiel & Iwona Mazur)**

This panel focuses on perception of visual material and reception of AD. These research areas can directly contribute to the quality of AD. Studies on perception of visual stimuli by sighted viewers can help audio describers better reflect this perception in audio description, thus offering the blind equal access to visual arts. Reception studies focus on the target audience of audio description and help collect feedback on various AD strategies and solutions. By learning the blind and partially sighted viewers' preferences, AD authors can more satisfactorily meet their expectations. Possible topics might include:

- perception of visual material by sighted viewers (using eye-tracking and other technologies)
- reflection of perception in AD
- reception studies on audio description (including surveys, interviews, comprehension tests)
- differences in preferences of the blind and the partially sighted

#### **Panel 6. Linguistic and cultural aspects (Elena Di Giovanni & Andrew Salway)**

This panel will look at audio description as a linguistic product, as a means of storytelling, and as a cultural artefact. Broadly speaking, we are interested in research that explores theoretical frameworks within and outside the field of audiovisual translation – the application of which can lead to the enhancement of both audio description research and practice. We expect that such research will analyse samples of audio description, or elicited verbal descriptions of moving images, in terms of prominent linguistic features and/or narrative properties, which may involve a detailed analysis and close reading of text samples, or a statistically-based corpus analysis. We therefore encourage interdisciplinary approaches to the empirical study of audio description, so as to promote AD research as a scenario in fields such as audiovisual translation, multimodality, linguistics, cognitive science and narratology. We would also favour applied research approaches that seek to inform audio description practice, e.g. through the development of guidelines for its creation, revision and overall production, in Europe and beyond.

Contributions to this panel could focus on the following questions:

- Is it possible to identify universal, cross-cultural guidelines for audio description?
- Is the translation of audio description scripts viable?
- Can audio description translation convey linguistic-visual relationships across cultures?
- What parts of narrative theory are most applicable to the analysis of audio description and to the specification of audio description guidelines?
- Can we compare audio description corpora in different languages?
- How do the linguistic characteristics of audio description map to its function?
- To what extent can actual audio description practice be determined through a corpus-based analysis?

### **Proposals**

There will be a maximum of 5 papers in each two-hour panel session, and there will be time for discussion between speakers and with the audience. Proposals for papers should be presented on the abstract proposal form which can be downloaded from the website ([jornades.uab.cat/arsad](http://jornades.uab.cat/arsad)). Abstracts should be sent to [anna.matamala@uab.cat](mailto:anna.matamala@uab.cat). Then, panel convenors will be asked to review the proposals and make the final selection.

### **Practical Information**

The seminar will take place at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. English will be the official language. More information on the venue and accommodation can be found on the website.

### **Summary of Deadlines**

- Abstract submission: 30 September 2010.
- Notification of accepted papers to participants: 30 November 2010.

### **Registration Fees**

	Early registration fee before 15 December	Fee after 15 December
Participant	150 euros	250 euros
Student concession	50 euros	100 euros

### **Scientific Committee**

Bernd Benecke  
Sabine Braun  
Agnieszka Chmiel  
Heidrun Gerzymisch-Arbogast  
Elena Di Giovanni  
Joan Greening  
Jan-Louis Krueger  
Iwona Mazur  
Aline Remael  
Gert Vercauteren

### **Organising Committee**

Cristóbal Cabeza, Nazaret Fresno, Maija Hirvonen, Carme Mangiron, Anna Matamala, Pilar Orero and Anna Vilaró

### **More information:**

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