



IO1 REPORT | UAM

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1. Output objectives

This Intellectual Output assessed current AD training practices. It included an overview of existing university courses, their duration, the modes of AD they focus on, the competences they develop, the materials and pedagogical approaches they use and evaluation methods. It also probed into and assessed AD training practices implemented by AD providers. The scope of this IO was to cover training that focuses on various forms of AD, not only recorded AD, but also live AD, AD provided in museums and galleries, as well as AD of visuals present in teaching materials to be made available to visually impaired learners/students.

This output created a snapshot of the current situation, which will serve as a starting point for obtaining a clear understanding of what is common to all training programmes and what is still required in the provision of a professional curriculum for an audio description expert. The aim of this phase was to study the problematic areas involved in the definition of the professional profile and in the development of a curriculum.

This IO had a quantitative and a qualitative part. The quantitative survey had been prepared as an online form distributed among AD trainers in academic and non-academic institutions across Europe (including Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, the UK, Poland and other). We collected information about the quantity and length of training, types of training, group sizes, teaching modes, the amount of theory and practice in the course and assessment techniques. We probed into competences and learning outcomes, with a special focus on both hard and soft (transferrable) skills desired from learners completing the courses.

Following this quantitative analysis, we undertook a qualitative overview of the state of the art that included an in-depth analysis of course materials provided by AD trainers from partner organisations. We analysed in detail existing curricula, theoretical materials, audiovisual materials, types of exercises and teaching/learning modes in accordance with the latest approaches to translator training. We also conducted in-depth interviews with selected teachers to gain more insight into their teaching approach. We worked out a course assessment methodology on the basis of Laurillard's (2012) ingredients of an effective course (that should include elements of learning through acquisition, inquiry, discussion, practice and collaboration). We also analysed to what extent the courses include elements of project-based and situated learning, which enhances the learning processes by making students use their knowledge and skills in action. According to Kiraly and his emergentist model (2000, 2003, 2005), teaching translation should be based on situated learning and should develop transferable (soft) skills, i.e. such skills that are not closely linked with one particular profession but instead can be transferred to other jobs and workplaces. The premises of the emergentist model of translator pedagogy, according to which the translator's competences emerge due to a combination of teacher-centred instruction, scaffolded problem-based teaching, facilitated project work, internship and workplace experience, can easily be transferred to training audio description professionals.



2. Methodology and terminology

The methodology was twofold as the IO included both a quantitative and a qualitative stage. For the quantitative part of the IO, a detailed questionnaire was prepared probing into the basic information about training programmes (duration, target group, group sizes, types of training, teaching modes, the amount of theory and practice, trainer profile, entry requirements, pedagogical approaches, number of graduates), their content (AD modes, types of materials, quantity of materials) and evaluation. The questionnaire also elicited information about competences trained throughout a particular course/programme. The questionnaire was sent out to potential respondents (AD teachers and trainers) by project partners.

The qualitative part included a detailed analysis of course materials provided by project partners followed by in-depth interviews with selected teachers based on a pre-prepared interview structure.

Although we are aware of the shift from the word “student” to the word “learner”, which accompanied the shift from the idea of “education” to that of “learning” (Labaree [no date], as quoted in Bull 2015: online), we tend to use the traditional terms “student” and “teacher” in a university context and “participant” or “learner” versus “trainer” when teaching AD in a non-academic context. However, it should be noted that sometimes we use all of the terms interchangeably, especially if they refer to teaching AD in general, irrespective of course type. Also, it

is important to stress that whenever we use the word “academic” we refer to a university situation (rather than research, for example), whereas “non-academic” is used for contexts outside of a university.

3. The quantitative part

3.1. The approach

The quantitative part of the study was based on a questionnaire developed in collaboration with all project partners who commented extensively on its subsequent versions (Appendix 1). The questionnaire focused on how audio description is taught and how audio describers are trained across Europe. Separate sections were devoted to teaching AD as part of university programmes (such as bachelor’s, master’s or post-graduate) and training audio describers in the form of workshops and various vocational courses that do not form part of formal academic training programmes. For each type of programme up to three courses could be discussed, which means that one respondent could provide information for at least one course and the maximum of six courses. The questions referred to the last three years.

The questionnaire consisted of several parts. In the instructions, the questionnaire’s general structure was described and time for its completion estimated (from 10 to 25 minutes, depending on the number of courses taught). This was followed by a set of eight general questions about the teacher, such as who they were (a researcher, a university teacher, an audio describer, a representative of a non-profit organisation, etc.), how long they had taught AD, if they cooperated with visually-impaired persons and what kind of AD they taught (film, theatre, museum, etc.).

The next section concerned academic (university) courses. The information elicited here related to course type (level), i.e. BA, MA or post-graduate; course form (whether separate or part of another course); teaching mode (in-class instruction, remote learning, blended learning), course duration, average group size, skills and activities focused on during the course, and completion requirements.

Similar questions were asked as regards non-academic courses (with the exception of teaching mode and course level). Possible course forms included a workshop, a vocational course, in-house training and one-to-one instruction. The question about course completion requirements was replaced with one concerning certification.

Towards the end of the questionnaire there were two general questions concerning the importance of specific competences and soft (transferrable) skills in AD training. There were also questions asking the respondents to estimate the total number of people who had participated in the respective course types (academic vs. non-academic) in the previous three years.

The English version of the questionnaire was distributed online via Instantly (<https://www.instant.ly/>). The questionnaire was anonymous, however after its completion the respondents were given the option to provide contact information for the purposes of possible further collaboration on the project. Where necessary, translations into the respondents’ mother tongues as well as an accessible version of the questionnaire (as a Word document) were provided. Prior to distributing the questionnaire to respondents, its pilot testing was performed by selected partners. What is more, each partner was responsible for distributing the survey among their respective respondents (coming mainly from their countries, i.e. Belgium, Italy, Poland, Spain, Slovenia and the UK). However, it should be noted that AD teachers from other countries (such as Germany or Portugal) were also approached (for details see the Results section). The fact that the partner countries were well-represented in the study, while other were poorly represented or not represented at all could be considered a limitation of this



study. Admittedly, the study would be more comprehensive, if it covered all European countries, however this was not feasible in the case at hand (time limitation, no contact persons in other countries, etc.). This however should not be construed to mean that AD is not taught in other countries, it simply means that we had no means of collecting the relevant data.

The obtained data were then analysed separately for academic and non-academic courses and then, where appropriate, in a comparison mode. Also, where relevant, statistical analyses were carried out for selected results.

3.2. Results

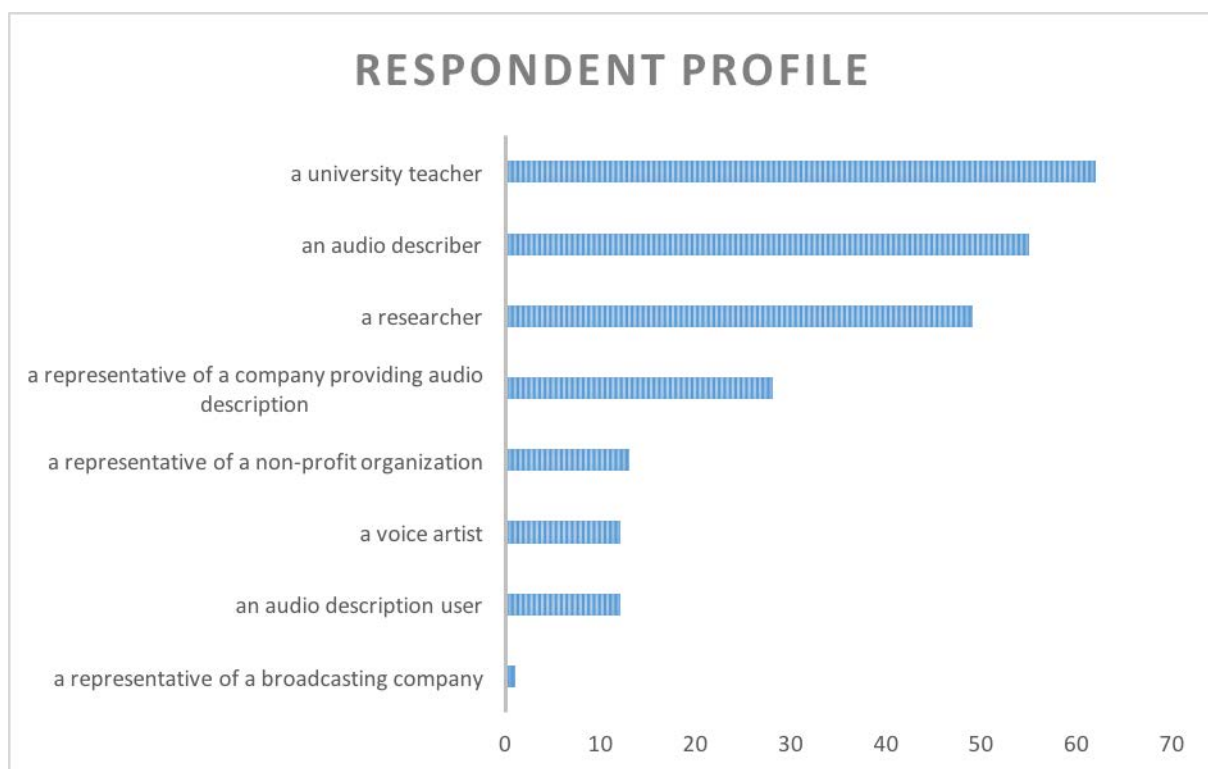
In general, we obtained responses from 86 respondents and managed to sample the total of 192 courses (including 93 academic and 99 non-academic courses). Below, we first present general results based on all answers, followed by more detailed characteristics of academic and non-academic courses. In the final sections of this part of the report, we compare academic and non-academic courses on selected criteria.

The following section includes results based on the responses elicited from all respondents, regardless of whether they are involved only in academic teaching, non-academic training, or both. They pertain to the general profile of the teacher/trainer, the countries in which AD courses are conducted, the languages in which AD is drafted and types of AD that are taught.

3.2.1. Respondent profile

Responses were collected from 86 AD teachers and trainers. The results are shown in Figure 1. Most of them were university teachers (62%), they also identified themselves as audio describers (55%) and researchers (49%). Almost one third of our respondents represented an AD provider (28%), 13% of the respondents represented a non-profit organisation and 1% represented a broadcasting company. Some of them also described themselves as AD users (12%) and voice artists (12%). Other roles identified by the respondents included a professional translator, a speech therapist and an AD teacher, a curator for a tactile museum and a Ph.D. student.

Figure 1. Respondent profile (in %).



This shows that AD is taught predominantly by people who are experts on teaching (academic teachers), have practical experience in AD creation (audio describers) and are interested in AD also from a theoretical point of view (researchers). This ties in nicely with the concept of a practisearcher popular in the area of conference interpreting studies. The term was popularised by Gile (1994) to denote practitioners-cum-researchers, i.e. practising interpreters who started researching the process of conference interpretation. It is also in line with the results of the survey among translation scholars (Torres-Simón and Pym 2016), which showed that the majority of translation scholars also deal with practical translation. It seems that AD scholars also practice the art and craft of audio description. Such a combination of a theoretical and practical approach may be considered beneficial to research, practice and teaching of AD. Since the teachers have hands-on experience in creating AD, they can use it in teaching future audio describers.

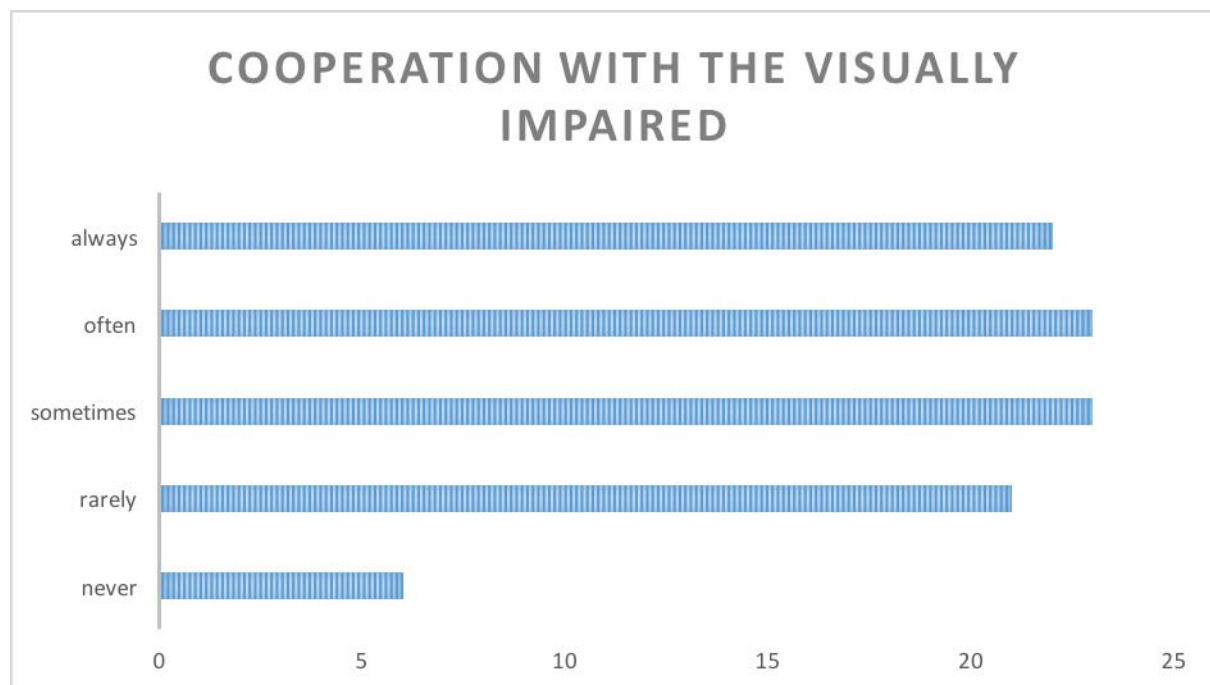
One third of the respondents represented AD providers, which also means that some AD training happens in-house in companies specialising in the provision of AD. Also, these trainers can – like the academics mentioned above – use their professional experience in training audio describers.

The respondents had moderate experience in teaching AD: 57% of them had 3-10 years of experience, 26% - less than 3 years, and 17% had more substantial experience exceeding 10 years. 29% of the respondents claimed that they use AD and 6 individuals claimed so because of their visual impairment.

Cooperation with the visually impaired during teaching was quite common among the respondents, as shown in Figure 2. Only less than one third claimed that they rarely (21%) or never (6%) cooperate with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description. 22% of the respondents always do that, 23% of the respondents do that often and a similar percentage (23%) do that sometimes. It might also depend on the type of course. One respondent stated that such cooperation was usual on courses focusing on museum AD and rare on courses focusing on film AD. It seems that AD is taught in accordance with the principle of social inclusion and involvement of the visually impaired in the process. This might stem from the fact that the teachers – being involved in an activity addressed to a group with visual impairment – are extra sensitive to the issue, supportive

of the idea of awareness raising in the area of accessibility and/or simply very practical: the involvement of the visually impaired in the process of creating and teaching AD may enrich it and improve the quality of the final product.

Figure 2. Cooperation with the visually impaired during teaching (in %).



3.2.2. AD teaching by country

When the respondents were asked to list countries in which they teach AD, Spain was given as the first answer by 31% of the respondents (27). This was followed by Poland (22% – 19 responses), the UK (20% – 17) and Italy (9% – 8 responses). These countries were the most represented ones in our survey as project partners elicited responses mainly from AD trainers from their own countries. Partially, these results may also reflect the fact that these countries are very active in AD training. All in all, 29 different countries were given by the respondents, including 19 European countries and 10 countries from all other continents (including such non-European countries as Australia, Brazil, Colombia, China, Israel, Japan, Qatar, Singapore, South Africa and the USA).

3.2.2. AD teaching by language

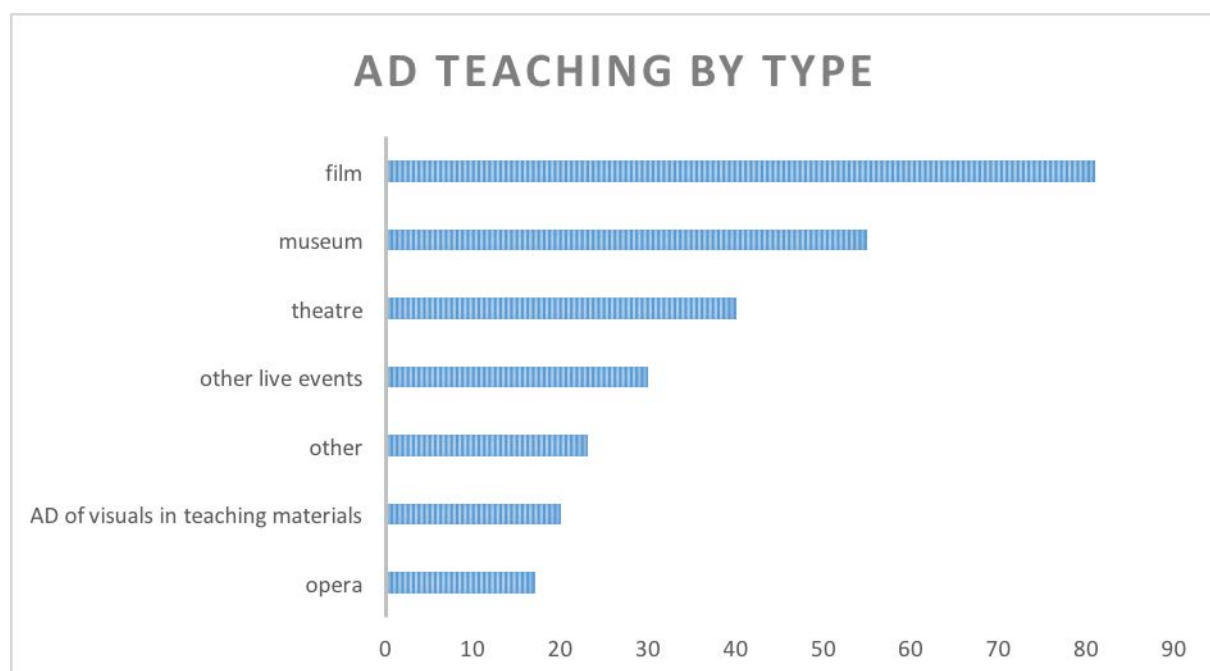
We asked about languages in which audio description is drafted during training. English was given as the first answer by 25 respondents (29%), followed by Spanish (24% – 21 responses), Polish (20% – 17 responses). Other most frequent answers included Catalan, Dutch and Italian. These answers were partially consistent with the previous results regarding the countries in which AD is taught. It is notable that English is mentioned as the most common language, while the UK ranked only third in the previous question. This might be explained as follows: since many trainers teach abroad, English is probably used as a lingua franca. This means that it is possible that many people are first trained in AD with English as both the language of instruction and the language of their practical exercises. As the instructor does not know the specificity of the local language, it is the trainees themselves who would have to adapt English-based guidelines to their vernacular language.

3.2.3. AD teaching by type

It comes as no surprise that the majority of AD teaching concerns film AD (81%). This is in line with the results

of the first ADLAB project, which showed that television is the area in which AD is most appreciated by the target audience (ADLAB 2012). This is followed by museum AD (55%), theatre AD (40%), other live events (30%), AD of visuals in teaching materials (20%), AD for the opera (17%). Other types of AD mentioned by the respondents included: online audiovisual content, press illustrations, photography, architecture, Zarzuela (Spanish musical), historical heritage and living environment. All the results are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3. AD teaching by type (in %).



3.2.4. Competences

Table 1 below presents the importance of specific competences in AD training, as judged by all respondents of the questionnaire. We asked them to evaluate the importance on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – of no importance, 2 – of minor importance, 3 – neither important nor unimportant, 4 – important, 5 – very important).

Table 1. Importance of competences in AD training.

Competence	Importance (out of 5)
choosing the most relevant information to describe	4.87
perfect use of mother tongue	4.70
knowledge of the needs of the visually impaired	4.65
choosing appropriate AD strategies (e.g. deciding when to name a character)	4.46
technical aspects (editing, timing, text compression)	4.32
knowledge of cinematography, theatre, arts and/or semiotics of the image	3.84
vocal skills	3.52
IT related skills (using appropriate software, etc.)	3.51
reflecting filmic language (editing and camerawork) in AD	3.22

Choosing the most relevant information to describe to describe was the highest, with perfect use of mother tongue close behind. This was followed by the knowledge of the needs of the visually impaired, choosing AD strategies and technical aspects. The least important competence was reflecting filmic language, such as editing and camerawork, in AD. This might be partially due to the fact that it is not relevant in some areas, such as theatre and museum. Additionally, there is still no consensus as to the use of cinematic language in film AD (Chmiel and Mazur 2014). Some studies show that cinematic terms are accepted in AD (Fryer and Freeman 2013), while others conclude that such descriptions are less communicative (Mazur and Chmiel 2013). However, it has to be mentioned that filmic language may be reflected in AD not only by using filmic terms, but also by linguistic means (such as appropriate syntax).

3.2.5. Transferrable skills

Table 2 below presents the importance of soft (transferrable) skills in AD training, as judged by all respondents of the questionnaire. As in the previous question, we asked them to evaluate the importance on the 5-point Likert scale (1 – of no importance, 2 – of minor importance, 3 – neither important nor unimportant, 4 – important, 5 – very important).

Table 2. Importance of soft skills in AD training.

Transferrable skill	Importance (out of 5)
efficient work organization and time management	4.45
ethics	4.29
self-development	4.15
teamwork	4.11

All the skills were deemed important by the respondents. It might be interesting to see that self-development ranks slightly higher than teamwork, which means that AD teachers are much aware of the need to constantly raise one's competences. To foreshadow the second part of the report, we will see how teachers strive to develop their students' work organization, time management and teamwork skills in sample courses included in case studies.

3.2.6. Academic courses

The following part of the report focuses on academic courses. 66% of the respondents (57 responses) teach AD as part of university programmes. Their experience varies: 37% of them has taught three or more different AD courses in the last three years, 33% – two courses and 30% – one course. **Based on the information from these 57 respondents, we managed to sample 93 different AD courses across Europe.** Judging by the responses given by the trainers, the number of participants of these courses could be estimated at over 2000. 49% of the respondents claimed that over 60 students have participated in all their AD courses in the last three years. 41-60 participants was the bracket given by 20% of the respondents, 21-40 – by 20% respondents and fewer than 20 participants – by 12% of respondents.

Course characteristics

The majority of these courses are offered at master's level (61%), followed by bachelor's level (20%) and as part of other types of post-graduate programmes (18%). 41% of these courses are offered as a separate course or module, while in the majority of cases AD is taught as part of other courses or modules and these included mainly accessibility, audiovisual translation or translation in general. This shows that AD is mainly taught to more

mature students at master’s level or higher. If not a separate course, it is often combined with such topics as accessibility and taught as a type of audiovisual translation. Thus, in the academic context AD is viewed as an intersemiotic translation that falls within the typology of translation types by Jakobson (1966) and extended by Diaz-Cintas (2007).

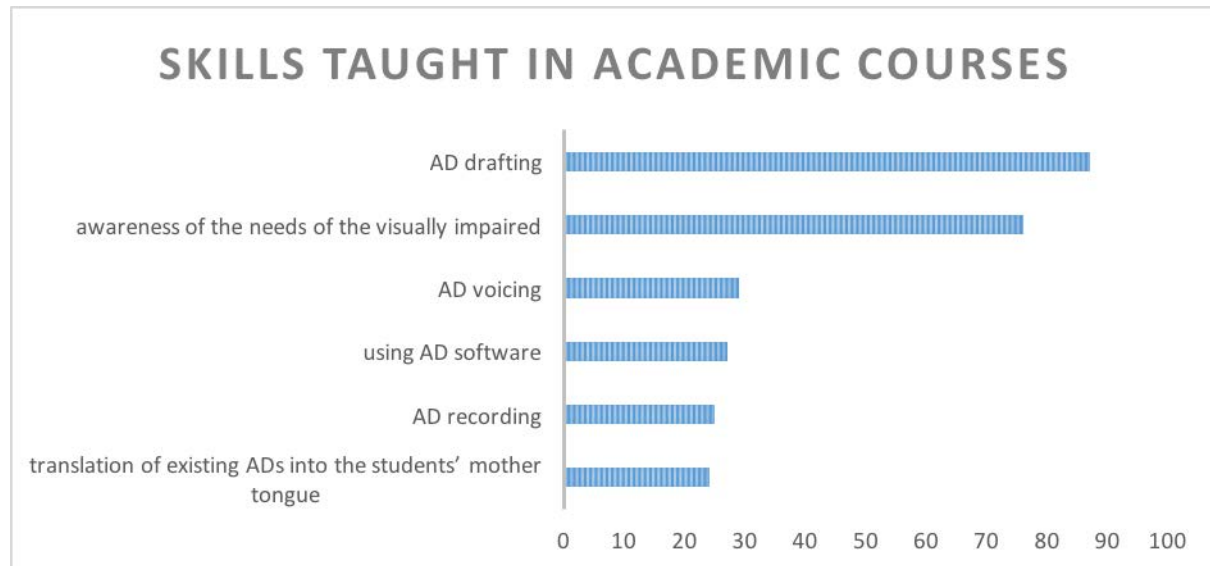
The majority of courses are offered as traditional in-class instruction (76%), only some use remote learning (14%) or blended learning (10%) as a teaching mode. This means that AD is mainly taught in a traditional setting and few courses are conducted entirely online or mix online content with traditional in-class instruction.

We also asked about the duration of the AD courses. If AD was only part of the course and not a separate one, the respondents were asked to specify only the hours devoted to AD. This is probably why the most frequent response (33%) is less than 10 hours, followed by 10-20 hours in duration (30%). 36% of the courses are longer: either 21-30 hours (18%) or more than 30 hours (18%). As regards the average group size, the majority of courses (59%) being offered to groups of 10-20 students, which is the average group size for more practice-oriented courses in an academic context. 26% of the courses are offered to larger groups with more than 20 students and 15% are offered to smaller groups with fewer than 10 students.

Skills

As shown in Figure 4, the majority of courses focused on such skills as AD drafting (87%) and raising awareness of the needs of the visually impaired (76%). As many as 29% of the courses focused on AD voicing. Some courses included using AD software (27%), AD recording (25%) and translation of existing ADs into the students’ mother tongue (24%).

Figure 4. Skills taught in academic courses (in %).



The two predominant skills are understandable. The courses are frequently practical and so they focus on AD drafting. Teachers are dedicated to raising awareness regarding accessibility and most certainly subscribe to the view that discussing the needs of the visually impaired in class may lead to better quality AD produced by students. It might be surprising that voicing and recording are the skills over one fourth of the courses focus on. Although Snyder (2007) has long claimed that vocal skills form one of the four pillars of AD, it frequently

happens – especially in film AD – that the script is read out by a professional voice talent (Chmiel and Mazur 2014). The audio describer’s vocal skills might be thus much more useful in other types of AD, where the script is often read out by its author. As many courses focus on AD types other than film AD, this might explain why AD voicing is a skill practiced on 27% of academic courses sampled in the present study.

AD translation is developed as a skill on 24% of the courses sampled. After careful consideration, this is easily justified. As the majority of AD is created in English due to the UK’s leading position as regards the volume of produced AD, translating AD scripts into other languages might increase the volume and availability of audio description in other countries. As shown by Jankowska (2015), translation of AD scripts might be less time-consuming and less costly than creating AD from scratch in a local language, and still satisfactory in terms of quality. Thus, it is not surprising that as many as one quarter of the courses do focus on AD translation as a skill. This might also be due to the fact that AD is frequently taught as an audiovisual translation type in translation courses, as shown above.

Activities

The academic courses were quite similar as regards the type of activities used in class. The analysis of existing ADs and practical exercises were reported for 91% of the classes. Discussion of AD guidelines and presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.) were both reported for 84% of the courses. Other activities included: action research projects with partners and stakeholders, translation of existing ADs, peer correction of AD scripts, blindfolded activities, learning to work in small teams. These findings suggest that the courses combine practical exercises with AD theory. Blindfolded activities are used to raise awareness of the blind people’s needs, while team exercises help develop soft skills, such as teamwork and work management. Translation of existing AD has also been listed as one of the activities, which is in line with the above result (24% of courses focus on AD translation as a skill).

Course credit

Credit requirements in the sampled courses included active participation in class activities (83%), a final assessment project that involved drafting AD (71%), completion of homework (68%), test(s) (27%) and writing a research paper (15%). Other requirements listed by the respondents included: translation and analysis of existing ADs, participation in “real projects”, creation of “a real piece of work that is made public and evaluated by stakeholders”, presentation of created AD and discussion of AD choices with reference to current literature, presentation of a critical analysis of an audio described film.

The majority of courses require regular participation from their participants in the form of taking part in class activities and completing homework, which would entail continuous, or formative assessment. Students are also required to draft AD, pass tests and write research papers, which would entail summative assessment. Highly contextualised requirements, such as participation in projects and creating AD to be assessed by an authentic audience, suggest that the teachers support context-rich situated learning and subscribe to the view that such learning is effective because students solve real problems (Maddux et al. 1997, Lubina 2005).

3.2.7. Non-academic courses

The following part of the report focuses on non-academic courses. 65% of the respondents (52 responses) conduct AD training in a non-academic context. The majority of them have a lot of experience as 54% of them have taught three or more different AD courses in the last three years. 12% have taught two courses and 34% - one course. **Based on the information from these 52 respondents, we managed to sample 99 different non-academic AD courses across Europe.** Judging by the responses given by the trainers, the number of participants of these courses could be modestly estimated at over 1600. 29% of the respondents claimed that over 60 people have participated in all their AD courses in the last three years. 41-60 participants was the bracket given by 20%

of the respondents, 21-40 – by 22% respondents and fewer than 20 participants – by 29% of respondents.

Course characteristics

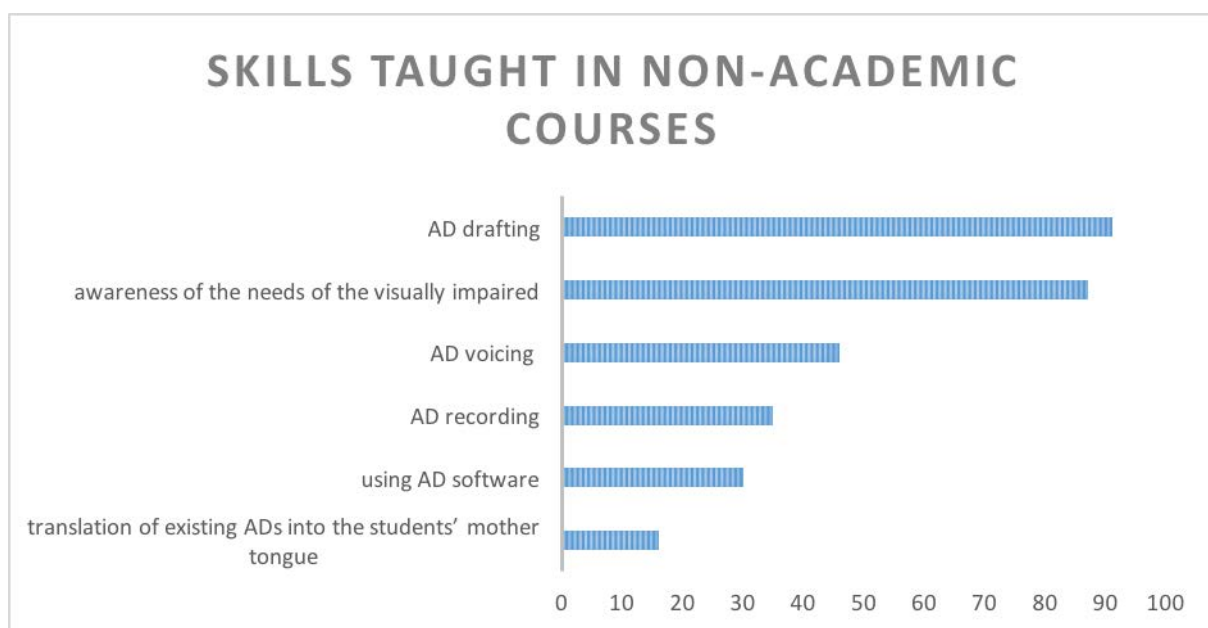
39% of the courses are organised in the form of a workshop. A little more than one third (35%) can be characterised as in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.). 13% of the sampled courses are vocational courses and 10% take the form of one-on-one instruction. One respondent characterised the course as “an e-course for museum guides and volunteers that I developed myself”. Almost half of the courses (49%) provide certificates to their participants after completing the training. However, as we did not ask about any details, it cannot be concluded to what extent these certificates are officially recognised.

As regards duration, 39% of the courses are 10-20 hours long, one third is less than 10 hours long, 17% are longer courses with more than 30 hours and 10% are similar in length to one-semester academic courses (21-30 hours long). Almost half of these courses is addressed to small groups of fewer than 10; 44% involve 10-20 participants and only 8% of the courses are for larger groups (with more than 20 participants).

Skills

We asked about the skills that specific courses focus on. The most frequently mentioned skills (shown in Figure 5) were: AD drafting (91%) and awareness of the needs of the visually impaired (87%), followed by AD voicing (46%), AD recording (35%), using AD software (30%) and translation of existing ADs into the participants’ mother tongue (16%). Other skills identified by the respondents included theatre specific requirements, such as technical systems, physical accessibility to the theatre and guiding, touch tours, audio-introductions, live AD of space and contents, and language.

Figure 5. Skills taught in non-academic courses (in %).



The top skills taught in non-academic courses are similar to the ones identified for academic courses. These are followed by such profession-specific skills as voicing, recording and using software. Translation of existing ADs is the least important skill – this comes as no surprise. Non-academic AD courses are usually not part of broader translation courses and it might actually happen that their participants are in fact monolingual.

Activities

The most frequently identified activities were practical exercises (94%), discussion of AD guidelines (78%) and analysing existing ADs (72%). Additionally, many non-academic courses still include some form of presentation of AD theory (58%). Other activities mentioned by the respondents included: film analysis, feedback from visually impaired trainers, program management (who does what in the AD process), guiding skills, working in small groups with blindfolds (to get an idea of what it's like to rely on verbal information only), audio introductions. These activities again point to a great focus on the AD beneficiaries and their needs.

3.2.8. Comparison of academic and non-academic courses

We compared academic and non-academic courses on the following criteria: duration, group size, skills, activities, competences and soft skills.

A chi-square test showed no difference in the responses to the question about course duration for academic and non-academic courses ($X^2=3.48$, $p>.05$). Another chi-square test was performed to determine whether academic and non-academic courses differed in average group size. The courses did differ ($X^2=29.77$, $p<.001$), with academic courses taught predominantly to medium-sized groups (10-20 students) and non-academic courses addressed mainly to small groups (with fewer than 10 participants). The charts below show the duration data (Figure 6) and group size data (Figure 7) for both academic and non-academic courses.

Figure 6. Duration of academic and non-academic courses (in %).

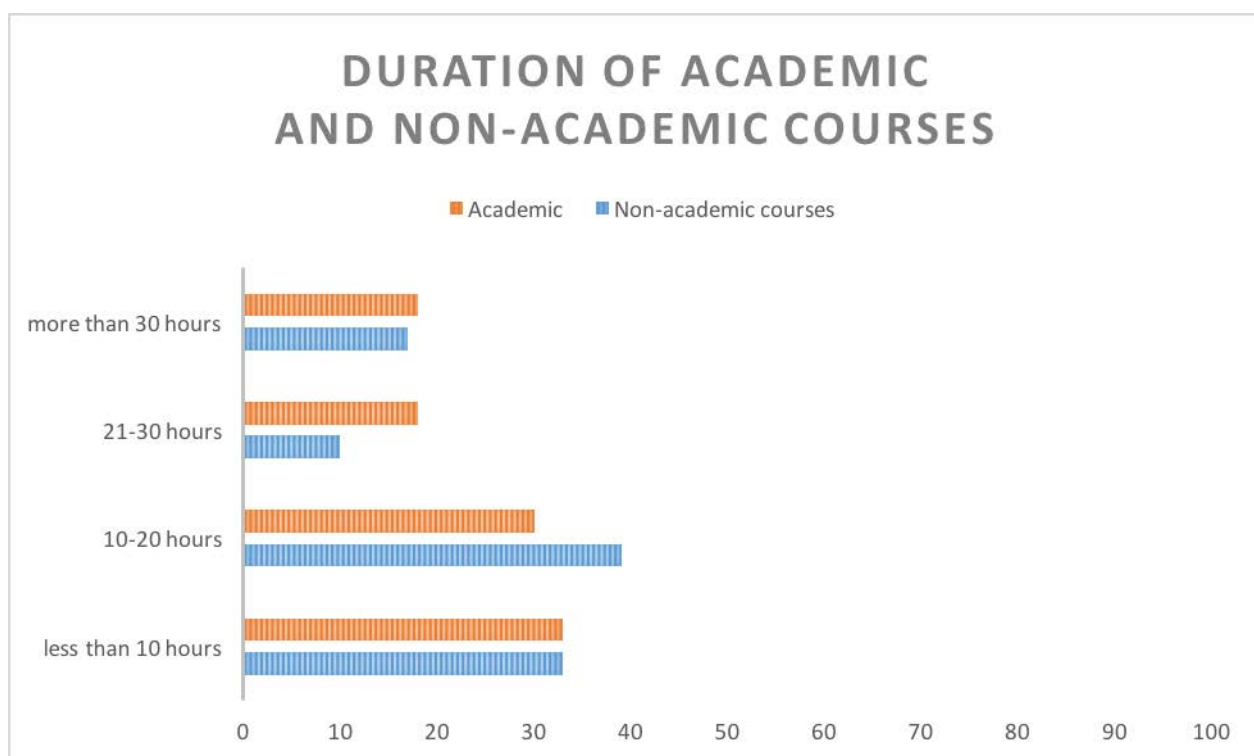
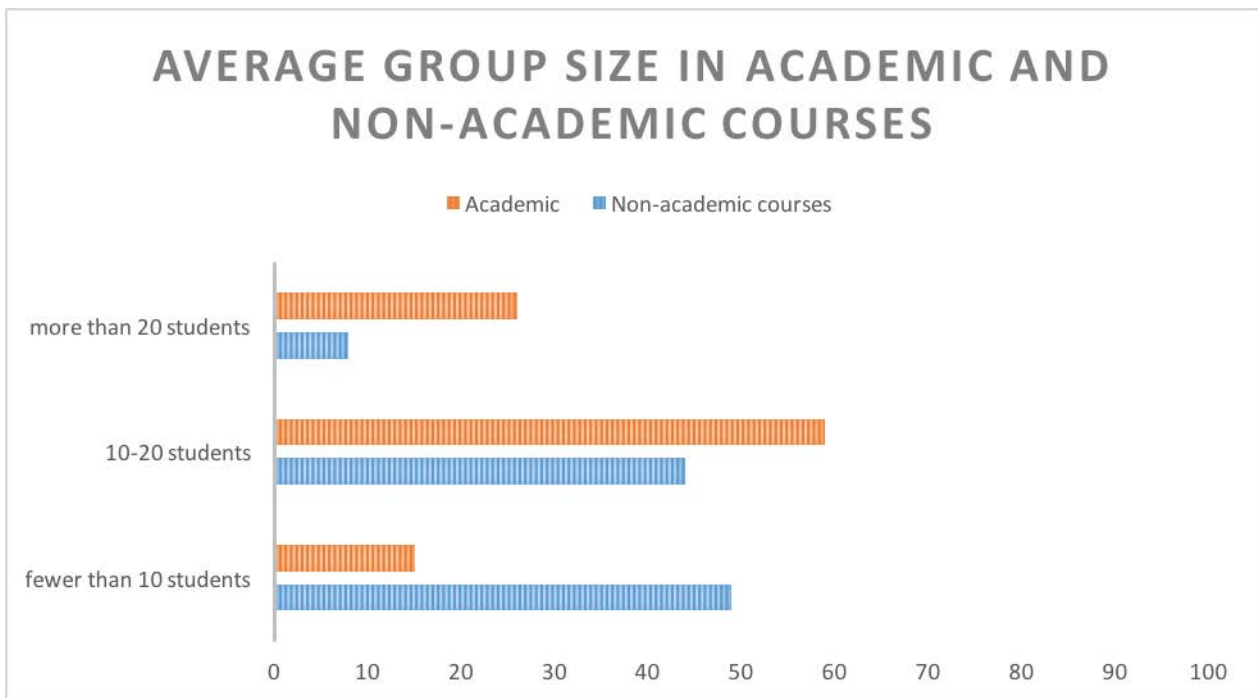


Figure 7. Average group size in academic and non-academic courses (in %).



It seems that the majority of AD courses (regardless of whether part of academic curricula or not) are fewer than 20 hours long. Academic courses are addressed to larger groups (mainly between 10 and 20 students and larger), while non-academic courses are more targeted and taught to smaller groups of participants (mainly to groups with fewer than 10 participants or medium-sized groups below 20).

Figure 8 below compares the percentage of academic and non-academic courses that focused on specific skills. Numerical differences point to the fact that more non-academic than academic courses focus on voicing and recording, which is not surprising, considering that many of these courses are in fact instances of in-house training. We performed a chi-square test to see if academic and non-academic courses differ in their focus on skills and found no statistically significant difference ($\chi^2=5.74, p>.05$).

Figure 8. Skills taught in academic and non-academic courses (in %).

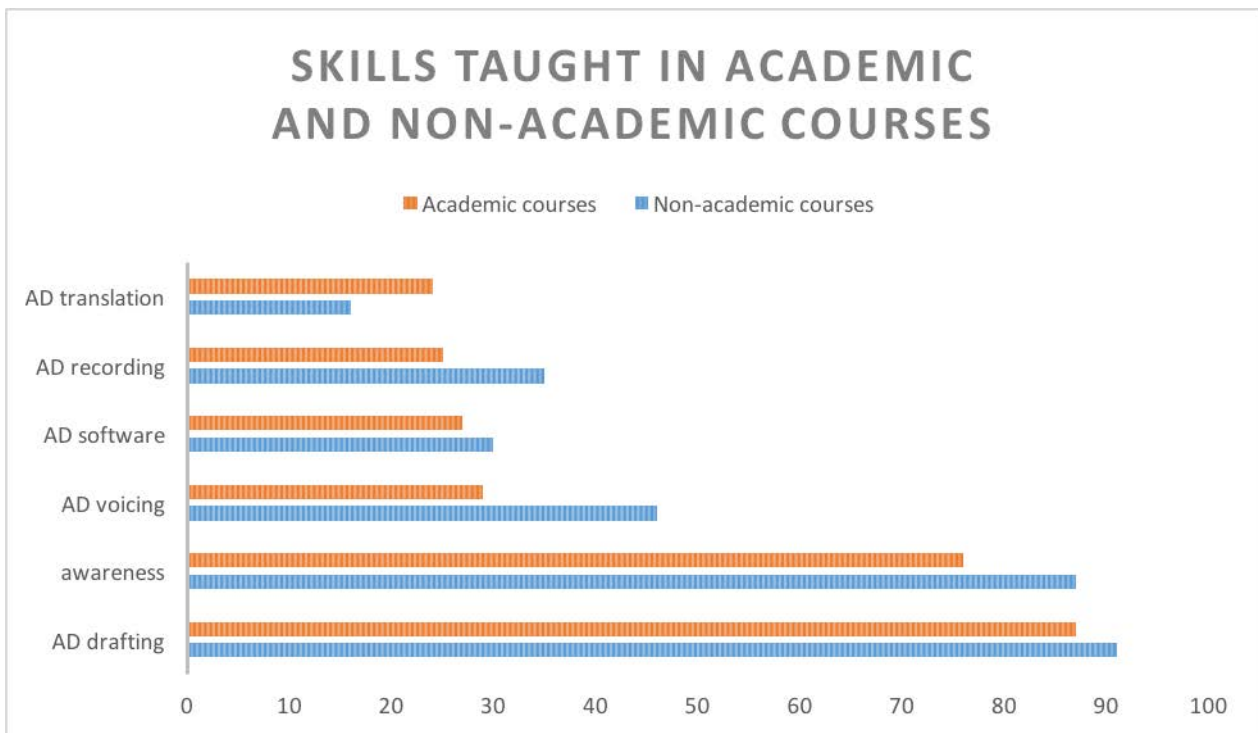
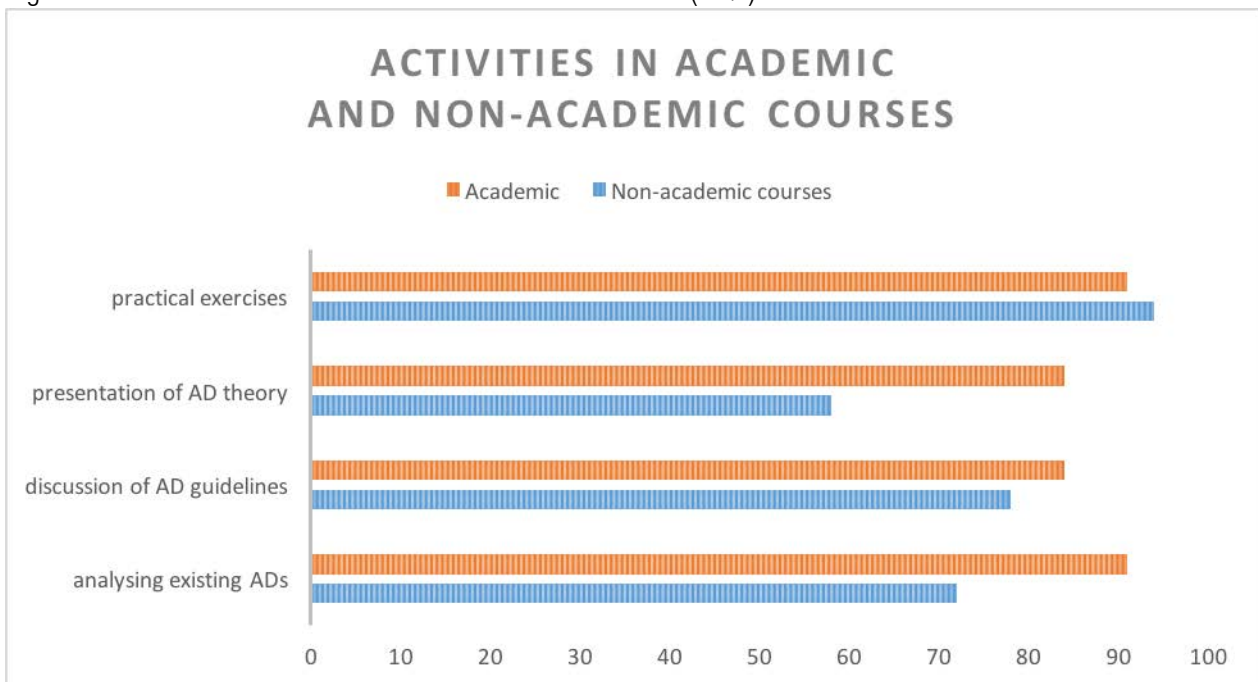


Figure 9 below presents activities used by teachers of academic and non-academic courses. There seem to be no striking differences and in fact a chi-square test confirmed no difference between these courses ($\chi^2=3.73$, $p>.05$). It is probably worth mentioning that a greater percentage of academic courses includes presentation of theory (based on research articles and projects) as compared with non-academic courses. This is not surprising as learning in the academic context is more than vocational.

Figure 9. Activities in academic and non-academic courses (in %).



To further investigate potential differences between academic and non-academic courses, we also re-analysed the data given by teachers and trainers as regards the competences and transferrable skills they consider important in AD training. For that purpose, we only considered responses given by respondents who taught academic courses only (N=26) and non-academic courses only (N=25) and we eliminated the data given by respondents who taught both types of courses. We performed a series of t-tests to examine differences in importance of each competence and soft skill as given by academic teachers and non-academic trainers. The only statistically significant difference was in the importance of vocal skills ($t=-.2.70$, $p<.01$), with the average score of 3.07 for academic courses and 4.0 for non-academic courses. This result is in line with previous findings, whereby non-academic courses focused more on voicing exercises than academic courses. Thus, it seems that the two types of course, although held in different contexts, do not differ much as regards the competences and transferrable skills they focus on.

3.3. Conclusions

The questionnaire results show that most AD teachers have experience in teaching and AD drafting, and almost half of them are also interested in AD research. This means that they can draw on their practical experience while teaching (which is in line with survey results obtained by Torres-Simón and Pym [2016] for translation teachers) and that they are practisearchers in Gile's terms (1994). What is more, over half of the teachers have moderate experience in AD training and they tend to cooperate with the visually impaired to varying degrees.

Our survey sampled AD teaching in 29 different countries, including 19 European countries and 10 countries outside Europe, with Spain, Poland, the UK and Italy being the most widely represented. When it comes to the language in which ADs are drafted, English was indicated as the most common one, which – given the previous results – could mean that it is used both as the language of instruction and AD drafting even in countries other than the UK. When it comes to the type of AD most commonly taught in the courses sampled in the questionnaire, it is film AD, followed by museum AD, theatre AD and AD for other live events. This finding confirms the earlier findings of the television being the most utilised medium for AD purposes (ADLAB 2012).

The most important competence in AD teaching turned out to be choosing the most relevant information to describe, with the perfect use of mother tongue close behind. The least important competence was considered to be reflecting filmic language (editing and camerawork) in AD, which on the one hand confirms the lack of consensus as to whether and how filmic language should be reflected in AD, and on the other the competence is not relevant in other AD types (such as theatre and museum AD). All enumerated soft skills were considered important by the respondents, with efficient work organization and time management ranking the highest and teamwork ranking the lowest.

When it comes to academic courses, more than half of them are taught at MA level, while those that are part of BA and post-graduate programmes constitute a similar percentage of around 20% each. Most of AD teaching at universities happens as part of other courses or modules (mainly courses on accessibility, audiovisual translation or translation in general), which shows that AD is considered a type of (intersemiotic) audiovisual translation that is taught to more academically mature students. The majority of courses are based on traditional in-class instruction, and only some of them rely on e-learning or blended learning. Non-academic courses are most often conducted in the form of workshops and in-house training, with each type accounting for over a third of all courses taught outside of a university. Almost half of all courses provide certificates to participants upon course completion, though no information was obtained as regards official recognition of such certificates.

When compared, academic and non-academic courses showed no statistically significant differences in terms of duration (with the most common mean duration being between 10 and 20 hours), but they did differ as regards

group sizes, with academic courses being addressed to medium-sized groups (10-20 students), while non-academic courses mainly to small groups (with fewer than 10 participants).

When it comes to skills, both academic and non-academic courses place most emphasis on AD drafting and raising the awareness of the needs of the visually impaired. There were some numerical differences for AD voicing and recording (which were more commonly taught in non-academic courses), but the differences were not statistically significant. Also, in the academic courses there was more focus on the presentation of theory, but again the difference was not statistically significant. In fact, the only statistically significant difference between academic and non-academic courses concerned vocal skills which were found to be of greater importance in non-academic courses (which confirms the numerical differences for AD voicing and recording and could be explained by the vocational nature of such courses and the fact that many of them are conducted for in-house purposes). The overall conclusion that could be drawn from the analysis is that the two course types do not differ much, the only significant differences being group size and the importance of vocal skills. Also, academic courses turned out to be very much practice-oriented.

4. The qualitative part

4.1. The approach

The qualitative overview of the state of the art included an in-depth analysis of course materials provided by AD trainers from partner organisations. We analysed in detail existing curricula, theoretical materials, audiovisual materials, types of exercise and teaching/learning modes in accordance with the latest approaches to translator training. We then conducted in-depth interviews with selected teachers to gain more insight into their teaching approach. We worked out an assessment methodology on the basis of Laurillard's (2012) ingredients of an effective course (that should include elements of learning through acquisition, inquiry, discussion, practice and collaboration). The reason Laurillard's assessment model was chosen as the basis of our assessment method is that it is comprehensive and accounts for all types of learning that could be included in an audio description course). It also constituted a good backdrop against which all the scrutinised courses could be compared and contrasted. We also analysed to what extent the courses included elements of project-based and situated learning, which enhances the learning processes by making students use their knowledge and skills in action.

We selected five courses for the qualitative analysis: two long academic courses, one medium-length academic course, one long non-academic course and one short non-academic course. The subsequent part of the report includes detailed case studies of those five courses. We first analysed teaching materials provided by the teachers¹ and then conducted semi-structured interviews to gain a full picture of the selected courses.

We started the interview by confirming information about the teacher and basic information about the course obtained in the quantitative stage. This information included the teacher's experience, the type of course, its duration, group size, entry criteria and the types of AD the course focuses on. We then went on to discuss the curriculum, the materials, types of activities, skills developed during the course and the type of assessment. The detailed questions for the semi-structured interview are included in Appendix 2.

We wanted to identify the pedagogical approach applied in each course. We based our analysis on Laurillard's (2012) list of components of a successful course. Thus, we asked questions that directly reflected these components, as seen in the table below:

¹We would like to thank all the teachers and the Audio Description Association in the UK for making available to us the exhaustive course materials to be analysed for the purposes of this study.

Type of learning	Questions
learning through acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you give your students reading assignments? On what topics? • Do you hold lectures/ talks? On what topics?
learning through inquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students have to analyse cases (e.g. analysing a scene from a film with or without AD, spotting difficulties, problems, etc.). What kind? • Do students have to research a problem on their own (other than going to the library and reading an article or book), e.g. researching a selected topic using available materials?
learning through discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students get to discuss selected issues? With the teacher? In groups? What issues are discussed?
learning through practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students create ADs? Translate ADs? Do other practical exercises? What kind?
learning through collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do students work in groups (other than discussions)? On what projects? How is group work organised? • Do students participate in authentic projects (i.e. actual assignments for a client)?

Additionally, the questions related to the last type of learning (through collaboration) were also important for deciding if the course included elements of situated and contextualised learning that enriches the learning experience in line with Kiraly's emergentist model (2000, 2005). According to this model (Kiraly 2000, 2005; Kiraly and Piotrowska 2014), the competences emerge due to a combination of teacher-centred instruction, scaffolded problem-based teaching, facilitated project work, internship and workplace experience. As a result, we also asked the teachers if and how they incorporate the development of soft skills (such as work and time organisation, teamwork) into their courses. Following this analysis, we finished the description of each case study with a short section about the pedagogical approaches applied in the course.

4.2. Case studies

4.2.1. Case study 1: A long academic course

Information about the teacher

The teacher is a researcher, a university teacher, a practising audio describer and a representative of a non-profit

organisation that promotes media accessibility. She has taught audio description for eight years. She is not an audio description user. She rarely cooperates with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description. She has taught more than three different academic courses and two non-academic courses involving AD in Poland. During these courses, AD is drafted both in Polish and in English. This includes film AD as well as AD for museums. The teacher has taught AD to over 100 students in the last three years.

Basic information about the course

The analysed course is a stand-alone AD course that is offered as a specialised course to full-time MA students majoring in linguistics and translation. The students are Polish native speakers with different foreign language combinations (however all of the combinations include English). The average group size is 15-18 students. The 30-hour course lasts one semester and is a blended one. It includes 12 contact (face-to-face) hours and 18 hours of online tuition. A distance learning platform is used on which learning materials are made available to the students. It is also used for submitting homework, as well as conducting quizzes and holding discussions. The course is focused on film AD. Audio descriptions are drafted in Polish.

Curriculum

The course encompasses seven units:

- Accessibility: General concept (students learn about accessibility – its definitions and different viewpoints on disability and impairment);
- Accessibility: Raising awareness and regulations (students learn about the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; they also learn the different laws which regulate accessibility at three different levels: around the world, within Europe and in Poland);
- Introduction to AD (students learn what audio description is as well as find out about its history in the USA, the UK and Poland);
- Guidelines for AD (students get to know various AD guidelines);
- Translation vs. writing (students learn about different strategies of preparing AD, mainly writing and translation);
- Text editing (students learn how to prepare an AD script from the technical point of view);
- Strategies for AD (students learn about the change that occurred in audio description: from rules and guidelines to strategies).

Materials

Different types of materials are used throughout the course, including academic articles, pre-recorded lectures, audiovisual materials in the form of short YouTube films on various AD-related topics, online materials developed as part of AD projects, movie clips with and without AD. The teacher uses both clips from films she has audio described herself as well as new ones that present potential AD challenges. No specific course book is followed during the course.

Activities

The course covers a whole range of activities, including analysing existing ADs, discussing AD guidelines, presentation of AD theory and practical AD exercises. As pointed out by the teacher, although it is hard to quantify precisely, the course is roughly 80 percent hands-on, whereas the remaining 20 percent is devoted to the discussion of theory.

Students are given reading assignments on to-be-discussed topics and are asked to watch lectures recorded by the teacher. This is usually followed by a quiz. They are also asked to watch short clips on AD-related initiatives and then answer some questions. Issues tackled during the lectures include: the concept of accessibility, the

history of AD (including legislation) in Poland and around the world, the needs and expectations of visually impaired persons, research on AD, text editing for the voice artist, AD strategies and auteur AD.

Students are strongly encouraged to infer information and draw conclusions on their own by reading/watching materials uploaded by the teacher, looking for and researching information and doing various practical exercises. For example, for the unit “Accessibility: General concept” the students were required to formulate their own definition of accessibility based on two reading assignments and three video clips regarding AD initiatives in Poland and the follow-up discussion. In another exercise the students were to imagine that they were a blind person and were supposed to find information about accessible TV programmes, cinemas, museums and theatres. They were then asked to report back whether it was easy to find such information and how they would improve the way such information is provided. Following a lecture on the current AD situation in Poland, the students were asked to carry out research and write a mini report on AD legislation in the UK. In yet another task students were asked to draw pictures based on two descriptions – one that was simple and straightforward, and the other that was overly detailed and chaotic. They then could see for themselves which kind of description works better. Another exercise involved comparing two ADs to two short films in terms of language structures, description of gestures and facial expressions, descriptions of the physical appearance, etc. The students were then to determine which description they preferred. A similar exercise was conducted for translated vs. non-translated AD. All of the above exercises are a good example of the ‘learning by doing’ approach (inductive learning).

During the face-to-face classes topics that have already been discussed online are elaborated on, additional exercises are given, etc. Sometimes new topics are discussed in class. For example, students are asked to read selected AD guidelines, draft audio description on their basis and then present the output to the rest of the class. This is yet another example of learning by doing, as students can discover themselves that the existing guidelines are often contradictory and mutually exclusive.

Various topics are discussed both in-class and online. The discussions are moderated by the teacher, who often challenges the students’ point of view and sometimes acts as ‘the devil’s advocate’ by adopting the opposite viewpoint to the students who then have to find arguments to defend their position. When in class, the students usually discuss selected topics in pairs or groups and only then present their arguments to the rest of the classmates.

The course has elements of situated learning, as the students get to participate in actual AD projects. For example, they drafted AD for a whole film for the Film Music Festival; they processed data, consulted descriptions and tested applications at museums for the OpenArt Project (some of the tasks were obligatory for all the students as part of the classes, some were volunteer work).

Skills

The course focuses on teaching the students the following skills: AD drafting, translation of existing ADs into the students’ mother tongue, using AD software, awareness of the needs of the visually impaired, AD theory and research. As far as software is concerned, students get to master the use of Microsoft Word as well as the Best Player editors and the EZ Titles subtitling software (used for drafting ADs).

When it comes to soft and transferrable skills, the students learn how to prepare powerful PowerPoint presentations as well as how to effectively deliver them, how to organise their work space, how to manage their time and projects (i.e. to always check the material they will be working on ahead of time to make sure there are no technical problems). Moreover, the students are taught such practical things as managing their finances,

including diversifying their income sources. They also learn about the needs of the target users of AD and how to successfully communicate with them.

An important portion of the course is teamwork and project management. Audio descriptions are usually drafted in pairs or in groups of three (with one person acting as a blind consultant). In this way the students learn to negotiate and verify their choices. Sometimes the students are asked to organise group work on their own (e.g. by assigning the roles of audio describers and project coordinator, unifying the descriptions prepared by different audio describers, etc.). For project management purposes they are asked to use the Asana software (where all communication must be performed via the software).

Finally, the students are taught decision-making and flexibility in their thinking – they get an exercise where they are supposed to finish audio description started by somebody else (within a specific time frame). They are then faced with a choice to either correct what has already been written or continue in the style used by the predecessor.

Assessment

In order to successfully complete the course the students have to actively participate in class activities, pass tests, and complete assigned homework. Moreover, each student individually has to draft AD as a final assessment project (for a short film) as well as write a research paper (discussing for example AD strategies).

Lectures and reading assignments are usually followed by a multiple choice quiz. Homework is assessed by the teacher both qualitatively and quantitatively (with the maximum 100 points awarded).

Peer review is used extensively. Students get to evaluate each other's ADs (highlighting both the choices they like and the ones they are critical of). For that purpose they usually work in pairs and the evaluated student must – if possible – defend his or her AD solutions. This teaches the students to substantiate their choices for example when working with an editor in the future. Sometimes blind peer review is used.

The final grade is based on all grades received throughout the semester (including for the final project and research paper).

Pedagogical approach

The course is highly student-centred with elements of situated learning, though it does include some more teacher-centred elements such as pre-recorded lectures delivered by the teacher. Situated learning is effected through, for example, group projects which are highly collaborative and contextualised and resemble actual AD assignments where the major AD competences and soft skills can be put to practice. What is more, most of the tasks assigned to students are problem-based ones, where student autonomy and empowerment is highly encouraged: they have to research selected topics on their own, voice and defend their opinions (especially since the teacher often adopts the opposing point of view), compare and contrast different options and learn AD principles by actually doing a specific task (such as drawing a picture on the basis of two different AD). The situatedness of learning and the students' self-development are also fostered by way of encouraging them to participate in actual research projects, draft ADs for film festivals and do actual work for an AD foundation run by the teacher.

The course includes all of Laurillard's ingredients of an effective course: learning through acquisition (students have reading assignments and listen to lectures on theoretical aspects of AD delivered by the teacher), learning



through inquiry (students analyse existing ADs and research various topics on their own), learning through discussion (students discuss AD problems and solutions with their peers and the teacher), and learning through practice (students draft and revise ADs). Finally, there is also learning through collaboration, especially in the form of the highly contextualised group projects.

4.2.2. Case study 2: A long academic course

Information about the teacher

The teacher is a researcher and a university teacher. He has taught audio description for six years. He is not an audio description user. He sometimes cooperates with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description. He teaches two different academic courses involving AD in Italy. During these courses, AD is drafted both in English and Italian. This includes film AD as well as AD for the museum and for the theatre. The teacher has taught AD to over 60 students in the last three years.

Basic information about the course

The course is taught at an MA level. It is part of a course called “Scientific-technical translation from Italian into English”. Despite the name, the course is focused on audiovisual translation and is spread over two years. In year one the focus is on dubbing and subtitling, while year two is devoted to audio description. The AD course encompasses 30 contact hours. The e-learning platform is also used, but mainly for assigning tasks and making course materials available to the students. The average group size is 25 students. According to the teacher, roughly half of the course is devoted to theory, and the other half to practical exercises. The course ends with an exam, however it is important to note that in order to take the exam, the students need not attend the classes (they just need to assimilate the knowledge covered during the course).

Curriculum

The course is divided into ten lessons:

1. Audiovisual translation, accessibility and cultural access;
2. AD and textual analysis;
3. Multimodality and discourse approaches to AD;
4. The ADLAB project;
5. Intertextual references in AD;
6. Museum AD.

Lessons 7, 8 and 9 are devoted to practical AD and translation exercises, whereas lesson 10 is a revision of the whole course.

Materials

During the course a book entitled *Tradurre l'audiovisivo* (by Elisa Perego and Christopher Taylor) is used as a course book. The students are also assigned to read some research articles as well as the ADLAB manual available online. The lectures are delivered via PowerPoint presentations, which are made available on Moodle. The teacher uses AV materials (clips) as well as a whole movie (*Inglourious Basterds*), the latter of which the students watch at home. Tourist materials for the region and nature documentaries are also used.

Activities

The course covers the following activities: analysing existing ADs, discussing AD guidelines, presentation of AD



theory and practical AD exercises.

The course is structured around PowerPoint presentations delivered by the teacher, discussing theoretical aspects of AD (along with some practical examples). For instance, linguistics-related topics include the phasal analysis of ADs, the theme-rheme structure, appraisal and non-finite clauses. Culturally-oriented topics deal with cultural access, media empowerment or intertextual references in AD, among other things. During the lectures the teacher also discusses AD projects, such as ADLAB or the Pear Tree Project. A separate lecture is devoted to museum AD, where government policy, museum discourse, and the notions of complexity and hybridity are tackled.

When it comes to analysing ADs, one of the exercises that the students get is to analyse the English AD of *The King's Speech*. The students first watch a clip from the film, then are given the AD script to analyse and discuss with other students first in pairs or small groups, and then with the teacher and the rest of the group. They may also be asked to sight translate the script into Italian. Another AD that is commented on in a similar manner comes from the opening scene of *The Hours*, in which a number of characters are introduced and plots initiated, which makes the AD challenging.

AD guidelines are discussed after the presentation of the ADLAB project. The students are asked to read the ADLAB manual available online at home, and then essential issues are pinpointed and discussed during the lesson.

When it comes to practical exercises, the students both translate existing ADs (from English into Italian) and write audio descriptions from scratch. The former exercise usually lasts around 40 minutes and is done in groups or pairs. Students get a portion of an AD script (following watching the relevant clip) and then translate it in their respective pairs or groups, while the teacher circulates around the classroom, monitors the students' work and gives feedback. Then the translations are discussed with the rest of the group. An interesting exercise is offered in drafting an AD. Students are first shown a Martini commercial (featuring Gwyneth Paltrow) which lasts around 30 seconds and then asked to audio describe it. As there is only a one-line monologue in the commercial (and thus ample time for AD) this seems like a fairly easy task. However, it usually turns out that the first ADs last some 60 seconds (thus twice as long as the commercial itself). The teacher then asks the students to shorten the descriptions, which they do gradually, until the AD can fit within the commercial's timeframe. This is a very good exercise for the students to learn on their own about time constraints in AD (inductive learning). The resulting AD is then translated by the students into English. This exercise, as noted by the teacher, is a good "initiation" to the course. On the other hand, towards the end of the course, the students watch an episode of *Popeye the Sailor* with an existing audio description, where action is really fast and time to describe limited. The students then analyse the applied solutions and further learn about time constraints in AD and how to address them.

Whenever clips are given to the students to work on, they are always contextualised, i.e. the teacher gives background information about the film and presents the context for the particular scene. The teacher also noted that the students are very exam-oriented and are thus most willing to do exercises similar to the exam tasks.

Skills

During the course the focus is on the following skills: AD drafting, translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue and awareness of the needs of visually impaired people. How the first two skills are taught was discussed in the 'Activities' sections. As for the last skill, the students are familiarised with the AD situation in Europe by reading an article about it. An interesting 'exercise' is where the students go to have dinner with the teacher in the Dark Restaurant, where they literally cannot see anything. This is a very good example of learning

by doing, where the students can experience firsthand what it is like not to be able to see. The dinner is preceded by a talk by the Director of the Blind Institute on perception by the blind (among other things), which additionally strengthens the experience.

As for the soft skills, teamwork is practiced in that students work in pairs and small groups on different tasks where they have to negotiate solutions or discuss selected topics. Ethics is taught by way of showing students when they should intervene ethically. Efficient work organization and time management are encouraged, for example, by the teacher setting and enforcing deadlines for task submission, whereas self-development is encouraged through, among other things, non-obligatory reading assignments. Also, for some students the course serves as a springboard for further research, which they pursue in the second semester when they have to conduct their own MA projects and write an MA thesis. According to the teacher, quite a few students choose to write about AD, so the course is effective in arousing interest in this type of AVT modality. What is more, a couple of students usually are involved in actual AD projects (where they collect and analyse data, for example) as well as in the organization of the Audio Description Day held at the university.

Assessment

In order to complete the course the students have to do homework, participate actively in class, and pass the final exam. Also, audiovisual translation tests are carried out during the module and discussed in class. As for homework (which usually involves translating an AD and commenting on it), it is corrected by the teacher and then the recurring mistakes are discussed in class. Sometimes there is peer correction as well – the students correct each other's work and comment on the applied solutions. The final exam consists of translating an Italian AD script into English: they first see the relevant clip, do the translation and then comment on it. They get a final mark for the exam (but not for the course itself)

Pedagogical approach

Though the course appears to be rather teacher-centred, as it is structured around PowerPoint-based lectures, it does include a range of student-centred activities. First of all, there is scaffolded problem-based learning, the example being the audio description of the Martini commercial, through which students learn about time constraints in AD. Secondly, the course is interactive. As noted by the teacher, when prompted, students are willing to participate in discussions and answer the teacher's questions. What is more, the students get to work in pairs or groups, where they learn to respond to peer feedback, defend their point of view and negotiate different solutions.

The course facilitates learning through acquisition (by way of lectures and reading assignments), learning through inquiry (by analysing existing ADs). It also facilitates learning through discussion (in pairs or with the teacher) and learning through practice (students create and translate ADs). Lastly, it also enables learning through collaboration (as some of the tasks are performed by the students in pairs or small groups).

4.2.3. Case Study 3: A medium-length academic course

Information about the teacher

The teacher is a researcher and a university teacher. She also serves as an AD adviser to the public broadcaster in Flanders. She has taught audio description for 6 years. She is not an audio description user. She sometimes cooperates with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description. She teaches two different academic courses involving AD in Flanders (Belgium). During these courses, AD is drafted in Flemish. This includes film AD as well as AD for the opera and for the theatre (the latter two mainly through the supervision of MA theses on those topics). The teacher has taught AD to over 60 students in the last three years.



Basic information about the course

The course is taught at master's level. Three quarters (18 hours) of this traditional in-class course are devoted to audio description and the remaining 6 hours are devoted to subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. The average group size is 10-20 students. There are some specific entry criteria for the participants. Students should have translation experience that can be expected from students with a Bachelor of Applied Linguistics. The theoretical background for this practical seminar is provided in another course (mandatory to the seminar participants) focusing on audiovisual translation. It is also desirable that the students have completed a course on subtitling and thus are familiar with the subtitling software. Other entry criteria include: a thorough knowledge of Dutch, good writing skills, interest in film and visual culture.

Curriculum

The course includes 90% hands-on audio description practice and 10% theory (based on a more theoretical course the students had completed before joining this seminar, so the theoretical part of the course is mostly just a revision of the students' knowledge acquired at another course). The theoretical part includes information about narratological building blocks (such as characters and action, spatio-temporal settings and their continuity) based on the guidelines from the first ADLAB project. This knowledge is further supported by in-depth analysis of AD examples. The practical part includes progression in the difficulty of described materials: first static images, then a slow-paced video clip without dialogues and then a video clip with dialogues. The students first work on the content of the description and then focus on refining the language of AD. The work of these descriptions is profound with many revisions and discussion of various detailed solutions.

Materials

Reading materials include the initial sections of the ADLAB guidelines and general AD guidelines. Practice materials include video clips with examples of AD, static images and video clips from films (a slow-paced clip without dialogues and a clip with dialogues). The teacher uses PPT presentations for the revision of theory. Students are also provided with Qu4ntum software instruction (as a reminder, since they should be familiar with the software thanks to their practice in the subtitling course). All the study material is made available through an e-learning service and video materials are made available via a remote server.

Activities

Activities performed in the course include the analysis existing ADs, discussion of AD guidelines and practical exercises (drafting of AD and spotting with the use of subtitling software). In one of the introductory exercises students are asked to prepare a description of a room they know well (e.g. their dorm room or bedroom). The descriptions are read out in class and another student is asked to draw a plan of that room. Usually, one failed attempt is enough for the students to realise that they (as describers) have to position themselves in the space in order to provide audio description that would be appropriate for visualising by end users. This is a good example of problem-based learning through practice, as it involves experiencing difficulties and finding solutions to them.

Another preparatory exercise involves a description of a painting. It is contextualised, i.e. students are instructed to describe it as if it were the opening scene of a film. They should not attend to artistic features (such as types of brush strokes) and they should treat the people depicted there as protagonists of a movie. The students are also given a word limit for the description. Through such a contextualised learning experience students first tackle the editing aspect of AD (selection of content) without worrying about time constraints. The teacher corrects the

descriptions and colour-codes description elements mentioned by all/some/few students. Such descriptions are presented in one merged document. This is followed by a discussion of what must be included, what is superfluous and how to describe things that are not certain. This discussion includes elements of peer review and students have usually no problems providing feedback to their peers. Sometimes, the peer review also pertains to the teacher's own version of the description (provided anonymously). Following such an interactive session, the students are asked to rewrite their descriptions and then are given individual feedback by the teacher.

Exercises involving AD proper focus on description and in-depth discussion of ADs to two movie clips (one being a neatly structured scene with sound effects and music, including long shots, close-ups and point-of-view shots, so that the protagonist's point of view has to be considered in AD). The students focus on the content first, then provide spotting in subtitling software (WinCAPS Qu4ntum) and then focus on language. When students work in groups, the teacher circulates and gives advice. Particular solutions are presented in class and discussed.

Extra exercises in AD are also offered, students can send them to the teacher to obtain feedback.

Skills

The course focuses on such skills as AD drafting and the use of subtitling software for the timing of the AD script. According to the course syllabus, after completing the course the students should be able to provide a technically correct and linguistically proper intralingual audio description to a film or a TV show. However, the emphasis is on the content of the description and not its recording (prepared ADs are read out during classes). Students should also be able to assess and evaluate their work and that of others in a knowledgeable and critical manner.

Since the course is not very long, there is no time to focus on transferrable (soft) skills (such as self-development, teamwork, ethics, efficient work organization and time management). However, group work is used as one type of student-led exercise. Also, due to time constraints, students are not involved in project-based activities except for the individual project they have to complete as their final assignment. However, students typically get more authentic AD experience when they write MA theses on audio description (as part of the MA seminar). For instance, they might get involved in an opera AD project or in describing kid's content for a national broadcaster. This experience then serves as a springboard for writing the thesis and researching the relevant literature.

Assessment

Students are assessed mainly in a summative way. They also have to submit homework throughout the course, but the homework is only assessed qualitatively and not quantitatively. Quantitative assessment pertains to a final project. Students are required to prepare audio description (AD timed script) of a movie clip of their choice (approx. 8-minute film with both dialogues and visual passages). The choice of the movie clip is also assessed: this allows the teacher to determine whether the student understands the challenges of AD. The movie clips are submitted in advance and the teacher has to accept them before students can proceed with drafting the AD. The script is submitted with a commentary (approx. 1500 words). This form of describing one's translation process is known to students because they have produced it already in other translation courses. In the document the students explain and justify their translation choices on the basis of examples from their excerpt (e.g. challenges specific to the selected track, difficult passages, good and not-so-successful solutions) with reference to the guidelines and relevant scientific literature. In the introduction, they introduce the clip and explain their choice,

describe the perceived challenges and move on to discuss their problems and choices, trying to justify their decisions. The commentary serves two purposes: students can show how they managed to solve a particular problem; however, they can also show how problematic certain issues were, which solutions they tried to apply and why they couldn't solve a particular problem. The AD script is submitted as a WinCAPS Qu4antum file, the translation commentary is prepared as a Word document or as a PDF. The grade is based on audio description (two thirds) and the commentary (one third).

Pedagogical approach

The course includes elements of situated learning, i.e. competences emerge through a combination of teacher-centred instruction, scaffolded problem-based teaching and facilitated project work. Students listen to theory revision presented by the teacher, analyse specific problems (such as ways of describing characters), participate in facilitated project work (they describe progressively difficult visual materials and consult their solutions with the teacher).

The teacher is flexible and the course structure might change depending on the timing of particular activities and discussions. The teacher adopts a bottom-up approach with interactive discussions frequently held in class. Students are guided to find things out for themselves rather than instructed by the teacher. The teacher, however, recognises certain risks related to the bottom-up approach. Sometimes not all issues can be covered since a student-led process is not as neatly structured as a teacher-led one. Still, this can be offset by providing more reading assignments to students to fill in the gaps in their knowledge. When assessing the final commentaries prepared by the students the teacher usually knows who has done extensive reading – such students are more sensitive to AD problems and can justify their AD choices better.

The course enables learning through acquisition (learners have reading assignments and listen to the revision of theoretical aspects of AD by the teacher), learning through inquiry (learners analyse existing ADs). It also enables learning through discussion (students discuss AD problems and solutions with their peers and the teacher) and learning through practice (students draft and revise ADs). In the final assessment project, this practice is also reflective as students have to justify their AD choices in AD commentary.

4.2.4. Case Study 4: A long non-academic course

Information about the teacher

The teacher is a researcher, a university teacher and a describer. She has taught audio description for more than 10 years. She always cooperates with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description for museums or theatres but rarely when teaching university courses. She has taught AD in the UK, Australia and Switzerland. During her courses, AD is drafted in English. She teaches AD for films, museums, theatre, opera and other live events. She has taught two different types of academic course and three different types of non-academic course in the last three years with a total of over 120 participants.

Basic information about the course

This course is a certified course for audio describers organised by the Audio Description Association in the UK. It is stage-oriented, i.e. learners acquire AD skills for the description of plays understood as theatre plays, but all the skills developed are also applicable to the description of musicals, opera, ballet, dance and pantomimes. Upon the course completion, learners obtain the Certificate in Audio Description Skills, awarded by the Open College Network Yorkshire and North Humber (OCNYHR), which is the nationally-recognised qualification for describers in the UK. The course is usually conducted as in-house training and commissioned by a theatre where



learners work on a real project and prepare and deliver AD to a real stage production (properly selected so that ample learning opportunity is given to the learners). It is a 60-hour course combining 35 contact hours (5 days with 7 contact hours each) and 25 hours of private study. Half of the time spent in class is usually devoted to theory or tutorial work and half of the time is devoted to practical exercises. There are usually 6-8 learners in the course and one tutor works with up to four participants. There is usually also a visually impaired tutor who assists in certain activities and tasks. The course is conducted in English and the AD is drafted in English. Candidates have to go through a screening procedure, which resembles an audition. Candidates are screened through a three-tier system based on their oral presentations and written descriptions of pictures.

Curriculum

According to the course leaflet, the curriculum covers the following topics:

- history and current status of audio description
- visual impairment
- relevant legislation
- principles of audio description
- language skills
- vocal skills and microphone technique
- use of technical equipment
- preparing a 'script'
- compiling an introduction
- teamworking
- the theatre context

Thus, it stresses not only the theoretical knowledge about AD (history and status) and the practical skill of writing audio description (principles, language, audio introduction, script writing), but also the awareness of accessibility issues (visual impairment, legislation), its 'situatedness', or immediate real-life context (the theatre), the practicalities and technicalities (equipment, vocal skills) and soft skills (such as teamwork).

Materials

The materials used in the course include a manual for self-study and videos for practical exercises.

The manual is a detailed 67-page document that includes all the essential reading and guidance for the learners. It includes 10 sections corresponding to the content of the course. The first section is dedicated to the history and current status of AD. The second focuses on accessibility for people with disabilities. It reviews legislation and provides practical information about the needs of blind and visually impaired people. One of the best parts is a section devoted to "ten things you should know about visual impairment". It is written in a very straightforward style to raise awareness about accessibility issues. The reader can also learn about types of visual impairment and assistance that can be given to a visually impaired person. The section about guiding is very detailed, describing for instance how to touch a VI person, the location of the guiding person in relation to the guided one, going through doorways, the need to explain the type of seat to the VI person, the technique of placing the VI person's hand on the back of the seat to get comfortable before sitting down, etc. The following section is related to theatre and show-related technicalities, for instance advance information (booklets, recorded audio introductions) theatres can provide to VI spectators, touch tours, etc. The fourth section focuses on writing audio introductions, by giving detailed info about the structure of the introduction, such as a welcome to the theatre, basic information about the play, the production crew and cast, setting of the play, characters and special features. The following section is devoted to language, including style and vocabulary. It gives detailed advice on how to use specific parts of speech appropriately, how to describe facial expressions and how to keep up the



dramatic illusion. Especially commendable is a section which encourages the learners to develop a collection of handy words and phrases for character movements, scene changes and lighting effects. The sixth section “aims to teach the learner to feel comfortable and confident in front of a microphone, and to deliver a script with appropriate variation in emphasis, pace and tone”. It includes vocal exercises, details about microphone technique and many useful tips, such as arriving at the venue in plenty of time, having appropriate drinks when delivering the script, some advice on pronunciation and enunciation. The next section focuses on drafting the script, presents the main AD principles and provides guidance on reflecting plot development, good timing, objectivity and ad lib descriptions of curtain calls. Section 8 focuses on teamwork as an important part of AD preparation and delivery. The next section focuses on the equipment used in theatres to deliver AD, while the last section “outlines the role of the theatre in providing an audio description service, and discusses the part played by describers in service delivery.”

The videos are excerpts of theatre plays to be described by the learners. However, film clips are also used as these have no image quality issues. The materials are selected so that learners can focus on specific aspects of AD when drafting a description.

Types of activities

The course involves a variety of activities. Some of them are based on traditional teacher-centred instruction (such as lectures, presentations, Q and A sessions), some are student-centred (such as group discussions, peer review, individual and group presentations in class). At the beginning, learners are usually encouraged to see a real theatre play and listen to audio description to get familiar with it. Throughout the course, learners are expected to complete six major tasks that are used for assessment and should demonstrate that they have achieved the learning outcomes. These include AD proper tasks (writing and delivering an audio introduction and an AD script to a live performance of a theatre play), theatre-related tasks (focusing on using equipment and identifying key contacts in the production team), theory-oriented tasks (a piece of written work about accessibility regulations and issues) and practical role-play (guiding a blind person to their seat and presenting a headset to them). These tasks require a variety of both individual, more autonomous and less individual, and more teacher-led activities. To give an example of the former: to complete a task about the main people involved in play production and relevant to AD development, learners have to do some research on their own and contact appropriate people in the theatre. Thus, learner-autonomy is guaranteed and learner empowerment is exercised.

Teamwork is emphasised throughout the course as “it fosters the team ethos which is so basic to good description” (according to the Guidelines for Trainers developed for this course). For instance, when working on audio introductions, the learners would first work individually, describing the set or the characters. Then a team approach to writing the introduction would be applied. The learners would compare their notes, provide mutual feedback and negotiate the final version. Such an approach is authentic, as it mimics the real process of preparing audio introductions. Additionally, it provides an opportunity to develop group work skills, especially as the learners are expected to both give and accept feedback from their peers (this is explicitly mentioned in the learning outcomes identified for the course). Another exercise, which also supports peer-assessment and an ability to receive and respond to feedback is an exercise that mimics a dry run rehearsal of audio description preceding live performance. One of the learners delivers a script and another one takes down comments to be provided as feedback afterwards. Such a group exercise is then followed by a joint discussion and a final summary by the trainer.

Trainers usually monitor group work and practical exercises but they intervene only when needed. Learners are encouraged and guided to find things out for themselves and trainers strongly emphasise that there are no “one-size-fits-all” solutions to specific problems in AD.



Skills

The course focuses on the following skills: AD drafting, AD voicing, awareness of the needs of visually impaired people, usage of technical systems encountered in the theatre. When it comes to AD drafting, the learners learn to use appropriate language and to select significant visual information in order to provide an audio introduction and an audio description script. They should also be able to evaluate AD and give constructive criticism to their peers. As regards AD voicing, the learners develop their vocal skills to deliver the AD appropriately (with regard to timing, mood of the scene, etc.). Awareness means applying best practice when responding to accessibility needs of the VI persons. Finally, the knowledge of technical systems means that learners learn how to operate the equipment and how to demonstrate the use of headsets to the AD end users.

The course also contributes to the development of soft or transferable skills, such as teamwork and work ethics by emphasising the need to work in a team to produce AD and the need to be responsive to the accessibility needs of blind and visually impaired AD users. As mentioned above in the section on activities, teamwork is crucial – a whole section is devoted to it in the manual and many exercises are conducted in groups to reflect authentic working conditions.

Assessment

Assessment is both formative (continuous, performed throughout the course) and summative (based on final tasks – described above). The trainer assesses the final tasks on the basis of an evaluation grid. The tasks that focus on the AD proper carry more weight than the remaining ones (that focus on technicalities and AD-related issues). This represents about 70% of the final grade. The remaining 30% is based on continuous assessment by the trainer, other tutors (the trainer always consults with the visually impaired tutor to obtain feedback on the learner's performance) and peers. The continuous assessment is more impressionistic and not quantified as the formative one.

The course encourages peer assessment; learners are expected to both give feedback to their peers and respond to feedback received from their peers. Assessment is given by the visually impaired tutors as well. For instance, following a guiding task, the learners find out from the guided person if the guiding was correct and they did not feel threatened or disorientated at any time.

Pedagogical approach

The course includes elements of project-based and situated learning, i.e. competences emerge through a combination of teacher-centred instruction, scaffolded problem-based teaching, facilitated project work and workplace experience. Learners listen to presentations by tutors, focus on specific isolated problems (such as describing a set), participate in facilitated project work (they describe excerpts from plays and can consult with tutors on their solutions) and gain workplace experience (by contacting the production staff and delivering AD live at a play).

The course includes all ingredients of an effective course according to Laurillard (2012). It enables learning through acquisition (learners acquaint themselves with the reading materials and listen to lectures), learning through inquiry (learners analyse existing ADs and do field research on their own, i.e. familiarise themselves with the working conditions and key contacts in a theatre). It also enables learning through discussion (learners discuss issues and AD solutions with peers to develop, re-think, adapt and negotiate the best solutions) and learning through practice (learners create ADs). Finally, it also enables learning through collaboration (learners not just discuss, but also work out AD solutions in groups, coordinate their activities and understand the individual responsibilities that make up the team effort).

Learners in this course are truly empowered as they have an opportunity to gain “autonomy and expertise through authentic experience” (Kiraly 2000, 2005). Learning is collaborative and situated, i.e. set in a strongly contextualised context (Maddux et al. 1997). Learning takes place around a real theatre production. This is in line with the idea of “authentic learning environments with similar cognitive demands as in the future professional environment” (Duffy and Cunningham 1996, p. 184 as quoted in Sawyer 2004, p. 77).

As the course is about making access possible for people with visual disabilities, it also promotes inclusivity by valuing and actively involving visually impaired tutors and consultants. A visually impaired theatregoer with experience of audio description advises the trainers on the final assessment day and participates in the role playing activities.

Finally, the teaching process is also rewarding for the teacher as the learners are typically excited about participating in the AD creation experience in a real theatre and the course makes them see the theatre in a different way. As the tutor claimed: “The main thing you get from your students is the reenergising of your own interests. It reminds you why you were interested in theatre AD in the first place.”

4.2.5. Case study 5: A short non-academic course

Information about the teacher

The teacher is a researcher, a university teacher and a practising audio describer. He has taught audio description for nine years. He is not an audio description user. He rarely cooperates with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description. He has taught more than six different academic courses and non-academic courses involving AD in Spain. During these courses, AD is drafted both in Spanish and in Catalan. This includes film AD as well as AD for the museum, theatre and opera. The teacher has taught AD to over 120 students in the last three years.

Basic information about the course

The course under consideration is an introductory course taught every two years at the request of an audiovisual translators’ association in Spain. The course is aimed at audiovisual translators and other language professionals and there is no prerequisite of knowing other modalities of audiovisual translation. The objective is to provide a general introductory overview so that attendees can choose whether to continue getting trained in that modality. The group sizes vary between 10 and 20 participants, with the average number being close to 12. After completing the training the participants get a certificate from the association.

The course is exclusively conducted online through a platform called Webex, on which one can share the screen as well as videos, and talk at the same time. The course consists of three sessions of 90 minutes.

Curriculum

During the course the following topics are covered:

Session 1:

- What is AD? Its types, characteristics and the legal situation in Spain.
- The audience of AD: What are the needs of the blind and partially sighted?
- The first contact with AD: Analysis of ADs and practice on credits and logos.



Session 2:

- AD norms and standards: the Spanish and the British guidelines.
- How to start to audio describe? The importance of film analysis.
- Analysis of ADs and practice on the AD of characters.

Session 3:

- The AD of actions. The importance of prioritisation through the analysis of AD.
- Practice on the AD of actions.
- Is it worth further training? Current working possibilities of AD in Spain.

According to the teacher, around 70 percent of the course is devoted to AD practice, whereas the remaining 30 percent to AD theory.

Materials

The course centres around PowerPoint presentations delivered by the trainer. A number of film clips are used, both without and with audio description (in English and Spanish). In addition, static images are used at the beginning of the course to introduce the basic issues in AD (like description of characters). What is more, the students are encouraged to do some reading assignments (e.g. AD guidelines). No specific course book is followed throughout the course.

Activities

During the course the following activities are covered: analysing existing ADs, discussion of AD guidelines and practical AD exercises.

Each session is based on a PowerPoint presentation delivered by the trainer, in which he discusses the concepts covered by each topic (see the Curriculum section above). For the discussion of AD guidelines, the participants are asked to read the UK and Spanish guidelines at home. In addition, during the first session the subtitling software Subtitle Workshop is introduced, which the students can use for AD exercises.

When it comes to analyzing existing ADs, not only examples of well-made audio descriptions are discussed, but also ones which may include some errors, which need to be identified (a similar exercise is done for the description of actions). Another exercise is the analysis of audio descriptions of film production companies' logos (e.g. Paramount Pictures, BBC Films) and film credits where three different strategies are discussed depending on how the credits are integrated within a film (e.g. grouping credits when relevant information needs to be introduced through the AD at the same time as the credits appear). This also teaches the participants the importance of prioritizing information in audio description.

Prioritizing information is also practiced when describing a static image of a lady wearing a princess-like dress. The trainer gives a context for the description – somebody opens the door, sees the lady and starts laughing. The photo is described in two conditions – when there is ample time to describe and when there is very little time. In the first case the way the lady is dressed can be described in greater detail, whereas in the second one a short and more subjective AD may be needed (using words such as 'old fashioned' or 'bad taste') in order for the scene to make sense. In this way the students also learn by themselves about subjectivity and objectivity in AD (inductive learning).

An interesting exercise is assigned to the participants as homework, where they have to analyse a clip from *E/illusionista*, which also includes the voice of a narrator. The participants need to decide what is evident from the



original soundtrack and thus needs not be repeated in the AD and also what the spaces are to include AD so that relevant sounds are not obscured (e.g. the tantalizing sound of woodworking). The exercise also involves the description of the magician who disappears towards the end of the analysed clip (along with a tree in the countryside). As noted by the trainer, the exercise teaches the participants how to analyse a film and how to select relevant content for audio description.

The last session is devoted to audio describing actions, though attention is also paid to film analysis and character description (with special focus on the description of facial expressions). A clip analysed for the purpose is the opening scene from *Close*, which includes a number of different filmic techniques (a wide shot, slow motion, close-ups, etc.) as well as telling facial expressions of characters and the building up of tension until the female character is hit by a passing car. The participants first analyse the clip without AD, point out the identified challenges, and then watch the clip with an English AD and assess it critically.

The trainer noted that the practical exercises were meant to elicit knowledge from the participants, encourage them to voice their opinions and make them interact.

Skills

The course focuses on the development of two main skills: AD drafting and the awareness of the needs of the visually impaired. Despite the short duration of the course and it being conducted exclusively online, the participants do get to work on soft skills as well. Firstly, they learn about the ethics of audio description (AD as a social service, the nature of the profession of the audio describer and the professional ethics, how to work with companies and associations, etc.). Secondly, they get to practice their work organisation and time management skills, as they have to submit homework on time (the teacher refuses to accept homework after the deadline). And finally, by being asked to voice their opinions and explain their line of reasoning, the participants are encouraged to work on their self-development. What is more, some of the participants decide to enrol in an advanced course on AD (offered by the same association as this course), so the introductory course manages to arouse the participants' interest in AD and make them want to pursue this educational path further.

Assessment

In order to complete the course, the participants have to be present during the online sessions and submit their homework on time before a given session via e-mail. The homework is then corrected by the trainer and then at the beginning of next session the most common errors are discussed by the trainer with the whole group, while the participants each receive their respective homework with feedback to be analysed individually.

Pedagogical approach

Due to the nature of the course (limited duration, online sessions only), the course is rather teacher-centred. As noted by the trainer himself, the workshop is a “one-way course”, with the trainer speaking most of the time (learning through acquisition, deductive learning). Learning through acquisition is also exercised in the form of a reading assignment (the participants are asked to read the UK and Spanish AD guidelines at home). It should be noted, however, that despite the focus being on deductive learning, inductive learning is also facilitated (e.g. the participants learn about objective and subjective AD by first describing a static image under different time conditions).

It should also be stressed that interaction and participation of course attendees is much encouraged. Throughout the duration of each session they may ask questions or write them down in a live chat. Moreover, there are elements of both learning through inquiry (participants get to analyse examples of both good and bad ADs) and learning through discussion (the examples are then discussed with the trainer and other participants). The trainer



himself remarked that whenever a clip is shown, “the participants are encouraged to interact, respond and share their opinions”. And finally, learning through practice is also facilitated, as after each session they get a practical task to complete at home.

4.3. Conclusions

All of the interviewed teachers are researchers and university teachers, three of them are practising audio describers and one of them is a representative of a non-profit organisation that promotes media accessibility. All of them have taught AD for more than six years (one of them for more than 10 years). All teachers but one teach film AD, most of them also teach theatre and museum or opera AD. When teaching AD, they rarely or sometimes cooperate with persons with visual impairments (one teacher always cooperates with such persons when teaching audio description for museums or theatres). Altogether they have taught AD to over 460 students.

One of the reviewed courses is conducted exclusively online, one involves blended learning, while the remaining ones are based on traditional in-class instruction. All but one course focus on film AD (possibly with the elements of theatre/museum AD), and one course is devoted exclusively to theatre AD. In all courses at least 50% of the time is spent on practical exercises (with one academic course including as much as 90% of AD practice), which confirms the questionnaire findings that not just vocational AD training but also academic training is very much practice-oriented. Most courses touch upon the issues of AD history, types of visual impairment and AD legislation. One academic course is more focused on theoretical aspects of AD in terms of linguistics and discourse analysis.

All of the courses cover the following activities: analysing existing ADs, discussing AD guidelines, presentation of AD theory and practical AD exercises. As part of practical exercises, some courses also offer AD preparatory exercises (such as describing spaces or static images). AD drafting exercises focus on content selection, prioritising information and using adequate language for description. AD theory and guidelines are usually introduced in the form PowerPoint-based lectures (teacher-led activity) or by means of reading assignments (deductive learning). On the other hand, there are a lot of learner-centred problem-based activities, whereby students have to find solutions to the discussed issues on their own (inductive learning). Pair and group work is facilitated in all courses but one, whereby learners either get to discuss things or work together on a task (which teaches them how to defend one’s point of view and negotiate solutions). Peer review is also common, which fosters the students’ ability to receive and respond to feedback. Some courses also include presentation of subtitling software (to be used for AD purposes). Only one course (a non-academic one) focuses on AD voicing, which confirms the survey findings that AD voicing is considered more important in vocational training conducted outside of a university.

Most courses make extensive use of various audiovisual materials (including movie clips and AD-related programmes found on YouTube). PowerPoint presentations are used as a backdrop for lectures. Reading assignments usually involve AD guidelines and only occasionally research articles. During one course a specific handbook is followed and one course is based on a detailed manual.

Most of the courses rely on both formative and summative assessment (with one non-academic course relying mainly on the former and one academic course on the latter). Examples of summative assessment in the analysed courses include tests, an exam or a final project involving preparation of an AD. Peer assessment is used quite extensively in most courses. Most trainers assign homework and discuss reoccurring AD errors or issues with the whole group (and sometimes also give individual feedback).

When it comes to pedagogical methods, all courses combine the elements of both teacher-centred (lectures, presentations) and student-centred (group discussions, peer review, individual and group presentations in class) approaches, however to varying degrees. One academic and one non-academic course are very much student-centred and include cases of situated learning and facilitated project work, whereas the other three courses are more teacher-led. However, it should be stressed that all of the analysed courses include most of the ingredients of an effective course according to Laurillard (2012), as they enable learning through acquisition (reading assignments, lectures), learning through inquiry (analysing existing ADs, researching topics), learning through discussion (discussing issues and AD solutions with peers and the trainer) and learning through practice (learners create ADs and do other AD-related exercises). Three courses also enable learning through collaboration (working in pairs and groups on AD projects, where they learn to coordinate their activities, negotiate solutions, manage time and present the end product. It seems that all courses also foster self-development and reflective study, since often the solutions proposed by the learners must be well-substantiated.

5. Major findings

1. Audio description teachers are practisearchers.

People involved in AD teaching and training are frequently also audio describers and researchers. Thus, they offer a nice mix of both professional, academic and didactic competences.

2. AD teaching is inclusive.

Many trainers involve the blind in the training process. The majority of courses also focus on accessibility issues and making students aware of the needs of the visually impaired.

3. Film AD is the most frequently taught AD type.

The popularity of film AD in teaching might reflect the popularity of screen AD among the target viewers.

4. In the academia, AD is taught in stand-alone courses or as part of audiovisual translation or accessibility courses.

Audio description is perceived as a type of audiovisual translation and thus, if the course is not a separate one, it is included in translation courses at universities. Additionally, it is associated with accessibility studies and taught as part of such courses.

5. Much of the focus of AD courses is on AD drafting and awareness of the needs of AD beneficiaries.

As the training is much practice oriented, the courses focus on AD drafting and making students aware of the needs of the target audience. Thus, when adopting specific solutions in AD creation, students can base their decisions on the expectations and requirements of the end users.

6. The most important competences in AD training include choosing the most relevant information to describe, perfect use of mother tongue and knowledge of the needs of the visually impaired.

All these competences were deemed either important or very important by the respondents. These competences were followed by choosing appropriate AD strategies and technical aspects (such as editing, timing, text compression), which were both identified as important competences.

7. Academic and non-academic AD courses are much alike.

Both types of courses are very much practice oriented. They are of similar duration (20 hours or less) and focus on similar skills. Group sizes tend to be slightly larger in academic courses (10-20 students) as compared to



non-academic ones (fewer than 10 participants). The only difference is AD voicing, which is considered more important in non-academic courses.

8. The most popular activities used in AD training are practical exercises, discussion of AD guidelines and the analysis of existing ADs.

The learners have plenty of opportunity to practice the creation of AD during training. Also, they identify best practices by analysing the work of professional audio describers and familiarise themselves with the available guidelines.

9. Time-permitting, the courses focus on the development of transferrable skills.

Trainers are aware of the importance of such soft skills as efficient time and work organisation, teamwork, ethics and self-development. If the course is extensive enough, they include elements of autonomous and student-centred learning to develop these transferrable skills.

10. Opportunities can be easily identified for AD learning through putting skills into action.

AD training, as shown through some case studies, can be very much learner-centred. AD learning can be highly contextualised and situated (as in the case of AD to real theatre productions or AD to films shown at a film festival). Learners can provide AD for real audiences in real projects, they work in groups and have to use their newly developed skills in real life. This is in line with Kiraly's emergentist model (2005), according to which competences (both job-specific and transferrable) emerge through a combination of teacher-led and autonomous activities and through learning by doing.

11. The courses analysed included most ingredients of an effective course.

In line with Laurillard's (2012) criteria, the courses provided opportunity for learning through acquisition (reading assignments, lectures and recorded talks), inquiry (analysing existing ADs and researching topics), discussion (discussing issues and AD solutions with peers and the trainer), practice (AD drafting and other AD-related exercises) and collaboration (group work).

The major findings constitute a good starting point for further IOs, especially for the development of the AD curriculum and training materials. Laurillard's (2012) list of components of a successful course, as tested here, could be the basis for developing an effective AD course curriculum as part of the project. What is more, the above analysis shows what competences (including transferrable skills) could be considered in AD training (though this will also be tackled as part of IO2) as well as what types of activities can be offered. Finally, it should be considered to what extent the activities should be student-centred and project-based.



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Appendix 1. The questionnaire

This questionnaire is conducted as part of ADLAB PRO, a European project devoted to developing a professional profile of an audio describer. The questionnaire focuses on how you teach audio description (AD) and train audio describers. Following some general questions, there will be two separate parts in which we will ask you separately about your teaching AD as part of university programmes (such as bachelor's, master's or post-graduate) and separately about your training audio describers in the form of workshops and various vocational courses that do not form part of formal academic training programmes. The following questions will refer to the last three years. Depending on the number of courses you teach, it might take you 10-25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. We appreciate your input!

1. Who are you? (multiple answers possible)

a researcher

a university teacher

an audio describer

a representative of a company providing audio description

a representative of a broadcasting company

a representative of a non-profit organization

an audio description user

a voice artist

other, please specify:

2. How long have you taught audio description?

less than 3 years

3-10 years

more than 10 years

3. Are you an audio description user?

yes (go to question 4)

no (go to question 5)

4. Do you use audio description because of your visual impairment?

yes

no

5. How often do you cooperate with persons with visual impairments when teaching audio description?

always

often

sometimes

rarely

never

comment box:

6. In what countries do you teach AD?

reply box:

7. In what language(s) is audio description drafted during your training?

reply box:

8. What kind of audio description do you teach? (multiple answers possible)

film

museum

theatre

opera

other live events

AD of visuals in teaching materials

other, please specify:

9. Do you teach AD as part of university programmes (such as bachelor's, master's or post-graduate)?

yes (go to question 10)

no (go to question 60)

The following questions refer to teaching AD as part of university programmes (such as bachelor's, master's or post-graduate). There will be separate questions about training audio describers in the form of workshops and various vocational courses that do not form part of formal academic training programmes.

10. How many different courses involving AD have you taught in the last three years?

1 (go to question 11)

2 (go to question 19)

3 or more (go to question 35)

38



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Please provide information about your course involving AD taught as part of university programmes

11. Level:

BA

MA

post-graduate

12. Form:

separate course/module

as part of another course/module (if so, please specify)

other, please specify:

13. Teaching mode:

traditional in-class instruction

remote learning (the whole training conducted online)

blended learning (training conducted both in class and online)

14. Duration (contact hours/regular classes only; if AD is only part of the course, specify only the hours devoted to AD):

less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

15. Average group size:
fewer than 10 students
10-20 students
more than 20 students

16. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)
AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

17. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)
analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

18. What do your students have to do to complete the course? (multiple answers possible)
participate actively in class activities
pass test(s)
complete homework
draft AD as a final assessment project
write a research paper
other, please specify:

Now go to question 59

Please provide information separately about each of your courses taught as part of university programmes.

Course 1

19. Level:
BA

MA
post-graduate

20. Form:
separate course/module
as part of another course/module (if so, please specify)
other, please specify:

21. Teaching mode:
traditional in-class instruction
remote learning (the whole training conducted online)
blended learning (training conducted both in class and online)

22. Duration (contact hours/regular classes only; if AD is only part of the course, specify only the hours devoted to AD):
less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

23. Average group size:
fewer than 10 students
10-20 students
more than 20 students

24. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)
AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

25. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)
analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

26. What do your students have to do to complete the course? (multiple answers possible)
participate actively in class activities
pass test(s)
complete homework
draft AD as a final assessment project
write a research paper

other, please specify:

Course 2

27. Level:

BA

MA

post-graduate

28. Form:

separate course/module

as part of another course/module (if so, please specify)

other, please specify:

29. Teaching mode:

traditional in-class instruction

remote learning (the whole training conducted online)

blended learning (training conducted both in class and online)

30. Duration (contact hours/regular classes only; if AD is only part of the course, specify only the hours devoted to AD):

less than 10 hours

10-20 hours

21-30 hours

more than 30 hours

31. Average group size:

fewer than 10 students

10-20 students

more than 20 students

32. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting

translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue

AD voicing

using AD software

AD recording

awareness of the needs of the visually impaired

other, please specify:

33. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs

discussion of AD guidelines

presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.)

practical exercises



other, please specify:

34. What do your students have to do to complete the course? (multiple answers possible)

participate actively in class activities

pass test(s)

complete homework

draft AD as a final assessment project

write a research paper

other, please specify:

Now go to question 59

Please provide information about each of your three courses separately. If you have taught more than three courses, please select the three that you have taught most frequently and provide information about them separately.

Course 1

35. Level:

BA

MA

post-graduate

36. Form:

separate course/module

as part of another course/module (if so, please specify)

other, please specify:

37. Teaching mode:

traditional in-class instruction

remote learning (the whole training conducted online)

blended learning (training conducted both in class and online)

38. Duration (contact hours/regular classes only; if AD is only part of the course, specify only the hours devoted to AD):

less than 10 hours

10-20 hours

21-30 hours

more than 30 hours

39. Average group size:



fewer than 10 students
10-20 students
more than 20 students

40. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

41. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

42. What do your students have to do to complete the course? (multiple answers possible)

participate actively in class activities
pass test(s)
complete homework
draft AD as a final assessment project
write a research paper
other, please specify:



Course 2

43. Level:

BA
MA
post-graduate

44. Form:

separate course/module
as part of another course/module (if so, please specify)
other, please specify:

45. Teaching mode:

traditional in-class instruction
remote learning (the whole training conducted online)
blended learning (training conducted both in class and online)

46. Duration (contact hours/regular classes only; if AD is only part of the course, specify only the hours devoted to AD):

less than 10 hours

10-20 hours

21-30 hours

more than 30 hours

47. Average group size:

fewer than 10 students

10-20 students

more than 20 students

48. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting

translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue

AD voicing

using AD software

AD recording

awareness of the needs of the visually impaired

other, please specify:

49. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs

discussion of AD guidelines

presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.)

practical exercises

other, please specify:

50. What do your students have to do to complete the course? (multiple answers possible)

participate actively in class activities

pass test(s)

complete homework

draft AD as a final assessment project

write a research paper

other, please specify:



Course 3

51. Level:

BA

MA

post-graduate

52. Form:

separate course/module
as part of another course/module (if so, please specify)
other, please specify:

53. Teaching mode:
traditional in-class instruction
remote learning (the whole training conducted online)
blended learning (training conducted both in class and online)

54. Duration (contact hours/regular classes only; if AD is only part of the course, specify only the hours devoted to AD):
less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

55. Average group size:
fewer than 10 students
10-20 students
more than 20 students

56. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)
AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

57. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)
analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects, etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

58. What do your students have to do to complete the course? (multiple answers possible)
participate actively in class activities
pass test(s)
complete homework
draft AD as a final assessment project
write a research paper
other, please specify:

Now go to question 59

59. How many students in total have participated in all your audio description courses offered as part of university programmes (such as bachelor's, master's or post-graduate) in the last 3 years?

fewer than 20

21-40

41-60

more than 60

60. Do you train audio describers in the form of workshops and various vocational courses that do not form part of formal academic training programmes?

yes (go to question 61)

no (go to question 99)

The following set of questions refers to training audio describers in the form of workshops and various vocational courses that do not form part of formal academic training programmes.

61. How many different programmes involving AD have you taught in the last three years?

1 (go to question 62)

2 (go to question 68)

3 or more (go to question 80)

62. Form:

workshop

a vocational course

in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)

one-on-one instruction

other, please specify:

63. Duration:

less than 10 hours

10-20 hours

21-30 hours

more than 30 hours

64. Average group size:

fewer than 10 participants

10-20 participants

more than 20 participants

65. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting

translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

66. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)
analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

67. Do participants get a certificate after completing the training?
yes
no

Now go to question 98

47

Please provide information about both of your programmes taught outside the university separately.

Course 1

68. Form:
workshop
a vocational course
in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)
one-on-one instruction
other, please specify

69. Duration:
less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

70. Average group size:
fewer than 10 participants
10-20 participants
more than 20 participants

71. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

72. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

73. Do participants get a certificate after completing the training?

yes
no

Course 2

74. Form:

workshop
a vocational course
in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)
one-on-one instruction
other, please specify

75. Duration:

less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

76. Average group size:

fewer than 10 participants
10-20 participants
more than 20 participants

77. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing



using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

78. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

79. Do participants get a certificate after completing the training?

yes

no

Now go to question 98

Please provide information about all three programmes taught outside the university separately. If you have taught more than 3 programmes, please select the three that you have taught most frequently and provide information about them separately.

Course 1

80. Form:
workshop
a vocational course
in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)
one-on-one instruction
other, please specify

81. Duration:
less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30hours

82. Average group size:
fewer than 10 participants
10-20 participants
more than 20 participants

83. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

84. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

85. Do participants get a certificate after completing the training?

yes
no

Course 2

86. Form:

workshop
a vocational course
in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)
one-on-one instruction
other, please specify

87. Duration:

less than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

88. Average group size:

fewer than 10 participants
10-20 participants
more than 20 participants

89. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing



using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:

90. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs
discussion of AD guidelines
presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects etc.)
practical exercises
other, please specify:

91. Do participants get a certificate after completing the training?

yes
no

Course 3

92. Form:

workshop
a vocational course
in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)
one-on-one instruction
other, please specify

93. Duration:

fewer than 10 hours
10-20 hours
21-30 hours
more than 30 hours

94. Average group size:

fewer than 10 participants
10-20 participants
more than 20 participants

95. What skills do you focus on in this course? (multiple answers possible)

AD drafting
translation of existing ADs into the students' mother tongue
AD voicing
using AD software
AD recording
awareness of the needs of the visually impaired
other, please specify:



96. What type of activities are carried out in your course? (multiple answers possible)

analysing existing ADs

discussion of AD guidelines

presentation of AD theory (e.g. based on research articles, projects etc.)

practical exercises

other, please specify:

97. Do participants get a certificate after completing the training?

yes

no

Now go to question 98

98. How many people in total have participated in all your audio description training in the form of workshops and various vocational courses that do not form part of formal academic training programmes in the last 3 years?

fewer than 20

21-40

41-60

more than 60

52

These questions refer to your teaching AD and training audio describers in general.

99. How important do you consider these competences in AD training?

5 bullets (1 – of no importance, 2 – of minor importance, 3 – neither important nor unimportant, 4 – important, 5 – very important)

- perfect use of mother tongue
- choosing the most relevant information to describe
- technical aspects (editing, timing, text compression)
- choosing appropriate AD strategies (e.g. deciding when to name a character)
- reflecting filmic language (editing and camerawork) in AD
- knowledge of cinematography, theatre, arts and/or semiotics of the image
- knowledge of the needs of the visually impaired
- vocal skills
- IT related skills (using appropriate software, etc.)

100. How important do you consider these soft (transferrable) skills in AD training?

5 bullets (1 – of no importance, 2 – of minor importance, 3 – neither important nor unimportant, 4 – important, 5 – very important)

self-development

teamwork

ethics
efficient work organization and time management

Please provide your respondent code if you received one with an invitation to complete this questionnaire.

If you are willing to give us more information about how you teach AD (discuss your teaching in an in-depth interview and/or provide a sample of your teaching materials for analysis), please provide your name and email address.

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire.

Appendix 2. Interview structure

- Confirm basic info about the course (course type, no. of participants, scope, hours, objectives).
- Describe content (go through syllabus, if any).
- If there is no syllabus, ask the interviewee to describe the structure of the course (topics covered, in chronological order).
- If blended learning is used, how much of the course is offered online?
- How much theory/practice?
- Do you give your students reading assignments? On what topics?
- Do you hold lectures/ talks? On what topics?
- Do students have to analyse cases (e.g. analysing a scene from a film with or without AD, spotting difficulties, problems, etc.). What kind?
- Do students have to research a problem on their own (other than going to the library and reading an article or book), e.g. researching a selected topic using available materials?
- Do students get to discuss selected issues? With the teacher? In groups? What issues are discussed?
- Do students create ADs? Translate ADs? Do other practical exercises? What kind?
- Do you offer any context for AD exercises? What kind?
- Do students work in groups (other than discussions?)? On what projects? How is group work organized?
- Do students participate in authentic projects (i.e. actual assignments for a client)?
- Do you follow a course book? Which one?
- Do you use AV materials? What types?
- Do you use materials you have audio described yourself?
- Are students given homework? What kind? How is it assessed?
- What other kinds of assessment do you use during course (e.g. tests, project assessment). How do you assess activities? Do you give feedback?
- Is there peer review? How is it organized?
- Is there final assessment (an exam, a final project)? What is the final grade based on? What are the requirements for course completion?
- Are AD-related internships offered to the students?
- Are your students taught transferrable (soft) skills during the course? (e.g. self-development teamwork, ethics, efficient work organization and time management). If so, how?