

# Perception of audio description in educational settings

A qualitative research with teachers from special schools for blind and low-sighted children in Poland

# Outline

- Previous research
- Research questions
- Methodology & Problems
- Research
- Results
- Conclusions

# Previous research

- Audiovisual Translations Lab, Institute of Applied Linguistics, University of Warsaw
  - Scripts: Once Upon a Time... Life, The Americas, The Discoverers
  - Text-to-speech
  - Schools for visually impaired – first impressions
  - My background

# Seven episodes

- Once Upon a Time... Life:
  - The Blood
  - The Eye
  - The Ear
- Once upon a time... The Americas (1 episode )
- Once Upon a Time... The Discoverers:
  - Issac Newton
  - Chalres Darwin and Evolution
  - Marie Curie

# Research questions

- What are the experiences of teachers from special schools with audio description?
- What do they think about educational aids with audio description?
- What applications, according to the teachers, AD can have in educational settings?
- What do they expect of AD?
- Is there any contrast between what they say and what they do?

# Methodology

- Why qualitative?
- In-depth interviews
- Classroom activity observation
  - Questionnaire
  - Problems

# Research (1)

- Warsaw
  - 6 teachers
- Bydgoszcz
  - 5 teachers
- Cracow
  - Group interview with 8 teachers
- Contact with headmasters
- Other schools and their attitude

# Research (2)

- Teachers' profile
  - Age
  - Experience
  - Specialties
  - Subjects
  - 'New' technologies
  - Perception of the role of AV materials



# What is AD? – some definitions

- Enabling the visually impaired / blind person to use images
- Support in watching movies. Telling the blind what they cannot see.
- Additional voice in the film that tells about those things can be seen on the screen
- A guarantee that my students will see and know what I am showing them
- Substituting eyes for those who cannot use them

# When did you see AD for the 1st time?

- Inspirations from abroad (Germany, Italy, Sweden)
- Polish NGOs
- At school
- In AVT Lab's projects

# Previous experiences with AD

- POSITIVE
  - ‘Manual’ AD
  - Cinema therapy
  - During out-of-school activities
  - Many teachers were introduced to AD during our research

# Availability of materials with AD (1)

- Are they available?
  - The majority of teachers said there were no such materials available
  - Some have not checked it yet
- Where to find materials with AD?
  - Majority – no idea
  - Libraries, Polish Association of the Blind, University, Polish TV, DVD discs, Internet, British Council, Oxford Press, private contacts

# Availability of materials with AD (2)

- Are there enough materials with AD?
  - NOT ENOUGH
  - „Until now we managed without them” (language teacher)
  - „Quite a lot. Schools exchange materials” (teacher-audiodescriber)
- Quality of those AD materials that are available
  - GOOD or VERY GOOD
  - Some objections to live audiodescription

# Educational aids that should be audio described (1)

- Physics & Chemistry (dangerous / inaccessible experiments & astronomy)
- Biology & Nature (genetics, cells, tissues etc. / national parks / small organisms)
- Monuments / expositions / museums etc. (multidisciplinary use?)

# Educational aids that should be audio described (1)

- Featured films especially those based on novels
- Documentaries that show distant countries
- Art. (+ additional comments)
- History (portraits)
- Maths
- Theatre
- Poetry
- Textbooks

# AD's impact on education

- Still small – could be bigger
- „it's not a revolution, but a step forward”
- „Kids ask more questions”
- Social function



# Recommendations (1)

- On acquiring materials
  - Internet catalogue of all available materials with AD
  - Available for downloading
- Promoting AD
  - Leaflets
  - Training for teachers  $\rightarrow$  gift copies
  - Raise awareness

# Recommendations (2)

- Writing scripts
  - First – read core curriculum & exam standards
  - Contact between audio describers
  - Common standards and best practices
  - Rather smaller materials (10-15 mins)
- Re-organising space at schools
- Lobbying the Ministry of Education

# Recommendations (3)

- Establishing expert panels consisting of:
  - Audio describers
  - Teachers
  - Visually impaired

# Interesting quotes

- „At school there is always somebody that can describe so we don't need AD that much. On the other hand, AD makes my job easier because I don't have to explain films to my students”
- „Everybody perceives the film. Everyone in one's own way, but all on equal terms.”
- „The limits of my language mean the limits of my world”

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