



香港城市大學
City University of Hong Kong

Integrating audio description training into interpreting classes: Research and practice

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Principal Investigator: Dr. Xiu YAN

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Abstract:

Audio description (AD), by rendering images into words, helps visually impaired people to access audiovisual products. Since AD service greatly benefits the lives of visually impaired people, more audio describers are needed. AD training is important to ensure the quality of audio describers. Offering AD training in universities can provide students an opportunity to get early exposure to this field and raise their awareness of caring for people in need. Therefore, it not only serves the purpose of a special technical training but also helps contribute to the whole-person education of the students. However, training programs of AD can rarely be found in universities. Only a few academic institutions in Western countries offer AD, the majority of which are taught at the postgraduate level as part of audiovisual translation modules or translation in general. Given both AD and interpreting are oral types of translation and the quality heavily depends on the delivery of the presenters, some scholars have started to notice the overlaps between AD and interpreting, especially in areas such as training and evaluation. The cross-fertilization between AD and interpreting is seen to be feasible: The training of delivery and other aspects (language ability, creative skill etc.) in AD can help enhance students' interpreting skills; the facilities for simultaneous interpreting training can serve the purpose of AD training. So far only elements of AD have been introduced in interpreting classes, the present study intends to develop a systematic AD teaching module and conduct a post-training study within the undergraduate interpreting program. Around 60 students will participate in this project. Post-class surveys and interviews will be conducted to solicit students' feedback to the training. It is expected this practice can significantly enrich and broaden the scope of interpreter training, AD Studies and tertiary-level education.