Museum AD: interpretative or un-interpretative audio description?
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Abstract

Museum audio description (AD) has emerged as a research topic in Translation Studies only in recent years, especially since AD started to move from being a service for the visually impaired to become a paradigm in Translation Studies.

Many AD guidelines have been produced over the years to promote accessibility and support best practices for the visually impaired. From a comparison of AD guidelines available in the United Kingdom, Spain, Germany, France, Greece and the United States in 2010, it is clear that film and television AD still have priority over museum AD and that only some general features of museum AD are outlined.

In this paper I will first introduce museum AD as described in these guidelines and try to show the main features of museum AD in relation to the question of objectivity and interpretation in the major studies available. I will also illustrate the theoretical background that explains how interpretation has become a major issue of museum AD and how this issue of interpretation, which has also engaged theorists in Translation Studies, must be gauged against the wider backdrop of museums as multimodal and multi-sensory spaces. Finally, I will show how cohesion, coherence and the discourse-based notions of microstructures and macrostructures are relevant for a comparison between an early un-interpretative example of museum AD and its later interpretative version.