

DARCI 2025 Pre-Conference Workshops

V5 (updated on 2 Jun)

Morning (10:00–13:00)

Joel Snyder: Audio Description: If Your Eyes Could Speak

Abstract: How can a blind person “see” a media event, a theatrical presentation, or a museum exhibit? This workshop will demonstrate how audio description (AD) provides access to the arts for people who are blind – and involve workshop participants in the creation of AD for short video excerpts. AD makes visual images accessible for people who are blind or have low vision via a translation of visual images to succinct language. Using words that are vivid and imaginative, describers observe, select, and use language to convey the visual image that is not fully accessible to a significant segment of the population. This interactive session will be largely based on my own professional audio description work over 44 years in the areas of performing arts (theater, dance, opera), media (film, video, DVDs, streaming services), and museums. All providers of audio description and those interested in studying AD should have adequate training in the fundamentals of audio description. In addition to an overview of the history of audio description and a focus on the nature of the audiences for audio description, the workshop to be presented is focused on “The Four Fundamentals of Audio Description” developed by Dr. Snyder throughout the 1990s:

- OBSERVATION: Active Seeing / Visual Literacy -- how to develop skills in concentration and observation
- EDITING: WHAT SHOULD BE DESCRIBED -- the art of “editing” from what you see
- LANGUAGE: WHAT WORDS TO USE – Brevity, Imagination, Objectivity
- VOCAL SKILLS: using the spoken word to make meaning”

Bio: Dr. Joel Snyder is known internationally as one of the world’s first “audio describers,” a pioneer in the field of Audio Description. Since 1981, he has introduced audio description techniques in over 40 states and 65 countries and has made thousands of live events, media projects and museums accessible. In 2014, the American Council of the Blind published Dr. Snyder’s book, *The Visual Made Verbal – A Comprehensive Training Manual and Guide to the History and Applications of Audio Description*, is available as an audio book, in Braille, and in English, Polish, Russian, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese print editions. His PhD is from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona with a focus on audiovisual translation/audio description. Dr. Snyder is the President of Audio Description Associates, LLC and the Founding Director Emeritus of the Audio Description Project of the American Council of the Blind.

Benny Shakes: Blue Badge Bunch

Abstract: Step into a world of rip-roaring laughter and learning with "Blue Badge Bunch" - the most engaging, inclusive game show that's taking the nation by storm! Designed for kids and grown-ups alike, this show promises heaps of fun and insight in equal measure. The perfect way to spend your time, whatever your abilities! Blue Badge Bunch has toured the UK three times and had two full runs at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe at the Pleasance Courtyard, as well as receiving three rounds of Arts Council funding for its innovative ideas and disabled representation. Join Benny Shakes for an interactive session that highlights the skills of people with disabilities. The workshop features a series of games and challenges, including drawing with feet, cooking one-handed, and representing audio description in theatre and TV. Audience members are invited up on stage to compete in the games including:

- The Big Draw: Showcasing artists with limb difference
- That's Life: Cooking one-handed while being poked by giant foam fingers
- Let's Talk: Describing images to draw, representing audio description in theatre and TV
- System Overload: Completing tasks while wearing headphones with multiple instructions
- Jamie's Gamey!: Guessing TV show titles and instructions from symbols

Bio: Benny is a standup comedian and workshop leader, he has led the team on three successful tours and two Edinburgh Fringe runs at the Pleasance Courtyard. Benny has Cerebral Palsy. He is the winner of the ND review Disabled Champions Award 2023, as heard on BBC Radio 4 and creator of the hit show Blue Badge Bunch.

"Benny Shakes is a great comic, end of story" (Stageside UK).

"The honesty and humour cannot fail to endear the audience" (Theatre & Arts Review).

Ouassima Bakkali Hassan: Exploring Audiovisual Translation: The Art and Techniques of Subtitling

Abstract: This workshop will be delivered in Spanish with simultaneous interpretation into English by using the brand new facilities in the Spring Lane Building of the University of York. We are delighted to be able to use our new facilities to support the delivery of and participation in this workshop.

See Spanish description and bio below the English translations.

Workshop Description:

In this workshop the participant will learn and use free of charge subtitle editors, so that in addition to learning how to do accurate translations, they are able to master the tools and files used in the subtitling sector.

On the other hand, the participant will translate very short videos on different themes and genres, giving them the chance to practise on how to deal with different types of audiovisual material and solve problems linked to reading speed, character limits per line, translation of cultural references, word games, humour, and much more.

All the exercises and practical tasks in the workshop include final translations.

Together with knowledge from other practical courses on subtitling specific to tools, this course will help you get prepared for subtitling work and in the process of working as a professional subtitler.

What Will You Learn in This Course?

- You will master the main functions of subtitle editors used in the subtitling industry. You will understand and apply key subtitling guidelines related to reading speed, character limits per line, spacing between subtitles, segmentation, line breaks, and more.
- You will learn the conventions for writing and formatting subtitles, including the use of italics, periods, semicolons, commas, quotation marks, ellipses, parentheses, dashes, symbols, etc.
- You will develop strategies to overcome various translation challenges specific to audiovisual translation. A full module is dedicated to analyzing common issues such as translating humor, cultural references, wordplay, proverbs and idioms, songs, names, and more.
- You will learn how to perform spotting, timing, and synchronization of your subtitles efficiently using different subtitle editors.
- You will experience working with subtitles displayed directly on the screen, ensuring real-time visualization of your work over the video you are translating.

- You will learn how to play your subtitles on any device, allowing you to check for errors on-screen and correct them as you learn.
- You will be able to self-assess your translations in each project with feedback from the instructor, who will explain key challenges and different translation possibilities for each case.
- You will learn while having fun, as all projects and videos are carefully selected to ensure that you not only enjoy translating them but also watching them.

Participants should come equipped with their own headphones and laptops. They should also download in advance the software Subtitle Edit, which is compatible with Windows machines.

I am Ouassima Bakkali Hassani, a professor at the King Fahd School of Translation in Tangier, Morocco, affiliated with Abdelmalek Essaadi University. After completing two master's degrees—one in Translation and another in Audiovisual Translation—at the University of Cádiz, I decided to culminate my academic journey with a PhD at Pablo de Olavide University (Seville, Spain), where I specialized in "Audiovisual Translation in Morocco."

Throughout my career, I have dedicated myself to the study of languages and audiovisual translation, fields in which I have a solid academic background, having graduated from the same institution where I currently teach. Driven by my interest in accessibility and disability, I have focused my research on these areas with the aim of contributing to the development of literature on a specialty that remains largely unexplored in the Arab world, particularly in Morocco.

I have several academic publications on this topic, including:

- Censorship in the Dubbing of Spanish Series into Arabic. (2024). Peter Lang. ISBN 978-3-.
- Dubbing in Morocco: Professional and Linguistic Aspects. (2020). Collective book. Edited by Ahlem Hal. Berlin.
- The Translation of Spanish Cultural References into Dariya: The Case of Two Series, Los Hombres de Paco and Mis Adorables Vecinos. Entreculturas 9 (February 2017) ISSN: 1989-5097.
- bAudiodescription in Morocco: State of the Art. Turjuman- ISSN: 1113-1292. April 2014, Vol. 23, etc.

Additionally, I have participated in several international conferences, such as:

- (October 24-26, 2024). Audiovisual Accessibility and Sustainability in Morocco. Paper presented at the International Congress on Inclusive and Multilingual Communication: Scientific-Argumentative Knowledge Generation and Its Dissemination in Diverse Contexts, Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tetouan, Morocco.
- Bakkali Hassani, O. (April 1-2, 2024). Professional Orientation Workshops for Undergraduate Translation and Interpreting Students. Seville, Spain: Pablo de Olavide University.

- Bakkali Hassani, O. (2023). Manipulation and Translation in Arabic Dubbing. In CUICID 2023 Conference Proceedings (pp. XX-XX). Madrid: CUICID. ISBN 978-84-09-48185-9.
- Bakkali Hassani, O. (November 27, 2023). Artificial Intelligence in Preparing an Interpretation Assignment. Lecture given at the Department of Translation and Interpreting, Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, University of Málaga, Málaga, Spain.

Descripción del taller:

En este taller, el participante aprenderá y usará editores de subtítulos libres o gratuitos para que, aparte de saber traducir correctamente, domine las herramientas de trabajo y los archivos que se ven en el sector del subtitulado.

Por otro lado, el participante traducirá vídeos muy cortos de distintas temáticas y géneros, por lo que tendrá volumen de sobra para saber cómo lidiar con todo tipo de productos audiovisuales y resolver problemas relacionados con velocidad de lectura, límite de caracteres por línea, traducción de referencias culturales, juegos de palabras, humor, transcreación y mucho más.

De hecho, todos los ejercicios y proyectos prácticos del taller incluyen las traducciones finales.

En definitiva, junto con los conocimientos prácticos de nuestros otros cursos de subtitulado específicos sobre herramientas, este curso te ayudará a tener una gran preparación en subtitulado y convertirte en subtituladora o subtitulador profesional.

¿Qué aprenderás con este curso?

- Dominarás las funciones principales de los editores de subtítulos que se utilizan en el sector del subtitulado.
- Sabrás entender y aplicar las principales pautas de subtitulado en aspectos como velocidad de lectura, límite de caracteres por línea, espacio entre subtítulos, segmentación o saltos de línea, etc.
- Aprenderás las convenciones de uso y redacción de subtítulos en aspectos como el uso de la cursiva, el punto, el punto y coma, la coma, las comillas, puntos de enlace, paréntesis, guiones, símbolos, etc.
- Aprenderás a superar todo tipo de problemas de traducción propios de la traducción audiovisual, ya que dedicamos un módulo completo a analizar los problemas más frecuentes (traducción del humor, referencias culturales, juegos de palabras, refranes y frases hechas, canciones, nombres, etcétera).
- Aprenderás a hacer el spotting, pautado o temporizado de tus subtítulos de manera productiva con distintos editores de subtítulos.
- Descubrirás cómo es trabajar viendo tus subtítulos en pantalla, ya que siempre podrás tener tus subtítulos sobreimpresionados encima del vídeo en el que estés trabajando.
- Aprenderás a reproducir tus subtítulos en cualquier dispositivo, por lo que podrás comprobar en pantalla si hay errores y aprenderás a la vez que los corriges.

- Podrás autoevaluar tus traducciones en cada proyecto gracias a los comentarios del docente, ya que se explican las dificultades más importantes y las diferentes posibilidades de traducción que puede haber para cada caso.
- Aprenderás divirtiéndote, ya que los proyectos y vídeos están seleccionados de forma cuidadosa para que disfrutes no solo traduciendo, sino simplemente viéndolos.

Participantes en el taller necesitan traer sus propios auriculares y ordenadores portátiles. También deberían descargar el programa Subtitle Edit, compatible con ordenadores de Windows

Afternoon 14:30–17:30

Michelle Duxbury: Nature: Sensory: an introduction to creative audio description through multi-sensory exploration of the landscape

Abstract: Join disabled and neurodivergent artist Michelle Duxbury for an introduction to creative audio description through an exploration of the landscape beyond the visual. During the first part of the workshop, participants will spend some time exploring the outdoor space on campus, working with a series of prompts and provocations designed to centre a multi-sensory approach to engaging with the landscape. Participants will be encouraged to immerse themselves in the sounds and smells and feel of the landscape, documenting and recording their experiences using simple equipment such as their phones or notepads. In the second part of the workshop, participants will be invited to spend some time creating an audio description of the outdoor space they were exploring, again centering a multi-sensory approach and stepping away from a simple visual description. At the end of the session participants will be invited to share their audio descriptions with the group, if they are comfortable to do so. Alternatively Michelle is happy to share on their behalf.

Bio: Michelle Duxbury is an artist and postgraduate researcher from Leeds, with a studio practice based in Wakefield. Her work explores an intrinsic link between landscape, body and identity, and how our individual and collective (dis)connection to landscape can impact on our feelings of belonging/not belonging. She works with embroidery, moving image, sound and immersive installation work, using fictional narratives and speculative thinking to radically reimagine how disabled (and other marginalised) people might interact with landscapes they can not be physically present in, drawing on her own experiences as a disabled, neurodivergent woman from a working-class background.

Freya Shaw: Hodr Engine: Enabling Blind Developers to Create Games

Abstract: As a blind sound designer and programmer, I founded Immersion Sound Studio to address a gap experienced firsthand: the absence of tools for visually impaired people who want to create video games. Popular game engines, such as Unity and Unreal, are inaccessible to screen readers. Furthermore, these engines often require coding experience, which can make them even more inaccessible for both visually impaired and sighted individuals. An article on Medium stated, "Learning to code while making games is like trying to climb Mount Everest after having walked up a hill." The lack of accessible tools excludes many from participating in this groundbreaking industry. With 41% of the global population identifying as gamers — among them, an estimated 119 million visually impaired individuals and 165,000 blind or partially sighted developers — creating an inclusive game engine is essential.

During my MA by Research at the University of Huddersfield, I developed the Hodr Engine, a prototype designed to meet these accessibility needs, with feedback from blind testers instrumental in shaping its user-friendly interface. Now, in partnership with game studio Red Nought, we're developing a cross-platform, no-code commercial product.

My DARCI conference workshop will be practical: attendees will first learn about blind-accessible game development, then create a game to keep, and finally take part in a Q&A session. Before attending the workshop, participants will receive an email outlining necessary preparations: bringing a laptop (MacBook or Windows) with the Hodr Engine app installed — which will be available for them free. They will also need headphones.

Furthermore, in preparation, participants will be asked to conceptualise a 3D environment referred to as a walking simulation — a virtual experience accessible to blind users through spatial audio. These simulations use sound cues to represent objects in the environment, such as trees or rivers, allowing users to navigate using auditory information alone. Spatial audio effects mimic real-life hearing changes based on position and environmental acoustics.

During the workshop, participants will create these environments by linking 3D models with sounds from Hodr Engine's built-in library. Participants can also bring their own sound files. The workshop encourages individual or group projects (up to four people per group). The three parts of the workshop are:

1. Introduction and Demonstration (30 minutes): I will demonstrate the Hodr Engine user interface, showing how to create an environment. I'll also explain how games and immersive experiences can be made accessible with features like spatial audio, auditory icons, and text-to-speech.
2. Workshop with Break (2 hours): Participants will create an interactive environment using Hodr Engine.
3. Discussion and Q&A (30 minutes): This session will guide future improvements to Hodr Engine's design.

I also plan to record and transcribe the Q&A part of the workshop to help improve the software, and will ensure that participants' consent is obtained prior. After the workshop, participants who created an experience will receive a copy as an app.

Bio: Freya Shaw is a registered blind musician, sound designer, and programmer. She is the founder of Immersion Sound Studio Ltd, a company supported by Innovate UK and the Innovative Entrepreneurs Programme. Freya leads the development of Hodr Engine, an accessible, no-code game engine for those of any sight condition or skill level, enabling the creation of immersive experiences including games and audio environments. A commercial release is planned for 2025 in partnership with Red Nought's Infinitaria, a game engine powering Hodr's user interface. Freya developed the Hodr Engine prototype as part of her scholarship MA by Research in Music Technology at the University of Huddersfield. She regularly shares her knowledge through one-to-one consultations and at events such as SLUSH, STEMFest, Electric Spring, and the Innovation Festival. Through Immersion Sound Studio, Freya promotes inclusive design and proves you don't need sight to have vision!