

The making of a protocol for opera audio description

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Resumen:

Spain is to date the only country in the world which has a written Standard for audio description (AENOR 2005). While countries such as US or UK have enjoyed Broadcasting Acts which have enforced the inclusion of subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing, sign language, and audio description for many years now, none of them have a standard guideline which must be observed. They only have recommendations such as ITC (2000) from Ofcom in the UK which serves as «guidance as to how digital programme services should promote the understanding and enjoyment of programmes by sensory impaired people including those who are blind and partially-sighted». If we look at the Spanish law —Ley General del Audiovisual— which is supposed to regulate media accessibility implementation we find it does not have any sanctioning power. Nevertheless the mere fact that the Spanish government —and a good number of people— formed a working group to draft some guidelines and passed a national Standard is an important social achievement and a step forward for media accessibility and social integration in a country where people with sight problems have been suffering a segregation promoted in part by its own users association.

The draft of the Spanish Standard UNE did not have any academic nor scientific basis, and its content does not help when writing an audio description (Orero 2005, Orero & Wharton 2007). With the experience of having to write an AD script and the lax information offered by the Spanish Standard it has been thought convenient to start a research project which aims at creating an AD protocol for Catalonia, which is the geographical area where we are based and where we have obtained funding. The first steps in the study and the approach to

drafting the Catalan protocol are the two issues which will be discussed in this article.

