

In this thesis its author presents the first theoretical study of audio description (AD) in the Czech Republic. The aim of this paper is to summarize current international knowledge of AD, explore the status quo in the Czech Republic, assess applicability of the international experience in the Czech environment and, finally, propose further steps to be taken in order to enhance AD practice and theoretical research in the Czech Republic.

Audio description is a form of translation where, to quote Joel Snyder's paper, visual is made verbal. As such, it plays an important role in today's society: to people with visual impairment AD conveys information that would otherwise be inaccessible. Audio description facilitates access to culture and, in a broader sense, helps integrate the visually impaired into the society. In addition, AD in some countries serves as a learning tool for non-native speakers and for students with learning difficulties.

Given its integrative potential, it is highly desirable to promote audio description and ensure its professional quality. As of today, several major countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Spain, and Germany have taken a clear structured approach to audio description. The model for development of AD is the United Kingdom, where a tenth of digital broadcasting must be audio described, as stipulated in the 1996 Communication Act.

In the Czech Republic, on the other hand, AD is still on the periphery of interest, both in terms of theoretical research and public awareness. Two organizations, SONS and Apogee, produce audio description for films on a voluntary basis. Though financially supported by the Czech government, they still have not gained access to the Czech television and thus to the general public. Moreover, both Apogee and SONS have so far maintained their know-how in-house and have not aspired to standardize AD in the Czech Republic.

(...)