



WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL VISITORS – ACKNOWLEDGING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPLEXITIES

ROBIN CRANMER
UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER
LONDON

OUTLINE

- Can translations meet international visitor (IV) needs?
- A collaborative project – museums and galleries working with linguists
- Ways of welcoming IVs – a few options

CAN TRANSLATIONS MEET IV NEEDS?

- **L'entrée au British Museum est gratuite pour tous les visiteurs.**
- Le musée est ouvert tous les jours de 10h00 à 17h30.
- [Calendrier des horaires d'ouverture](#)
[Horaires d'ouverture nocturne](#)



A 'SIMPLE' OBSERVATION ...

- A museum leaflet translated from English to French just didn't 'feel' right!
- Could a translated gallery leaflet ever reflect the needs of an IV?

MUSEUM AND GALLERY 'DISCOURSE'

- The visitor 'experience'
- The 'responsive', the 'inclusive' museum
- How far is the cross-cultural situation of IVs actually acknowledged?

THE 'CHALLENGE' OF IVs

- With 'mass' tourism do museums and galleries need to rethink their purpose?
- The need for policies and practices to acknowledge cross-cultural complexities

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT – MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES WORKING WITH LINGUISTS



THE PROJECT

- London museums and galleries working with University of Westminster linguists
- Aiming to produce 'culturally appropriate' leaflets
- Process involved pairing museums and galleries with linguists

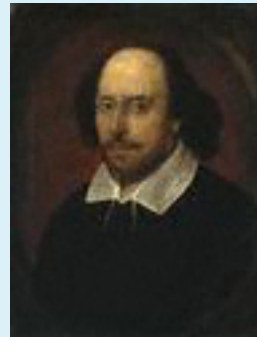
CONSTRAINTS ON MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES

- Limited budgets!
- 'Brand' – they often prefer to keep a unified style
- They need to feel they retain 'control'

WAYS OF WELCOMING IVs – A FEW OPTIONS

**NATIONAL PORTRAIT
GALLERY**

**Die größte
Porträtsammlung
der Welt**



OPTION A – TAKE IVs FIRST CULTURE AS CENTRE

ADVANTAGES

- Format is familiar
- Content actually meets needs
- A profound gesture of 'welcome'

DISADVANTAGES

- Doesn't meet constraints
- Is it the form of welcome most IVs want?

OPTION B – ‘INSIDER’/‘OUTSIDER’

ADVANTAGES

- Some acknowledgement that IVs have different needs from domestic visitors
- A partial gesture of welcome

DISADVANTAGES

- ‘outsider’ is a large category
- IV needs only very partially met
- The models for creating a cultural common denominator are crude

OPTION C – AN ‘ACCESSIBLE’ VERSION OF DOMINANT LANGUAGE

ADVANTAGES

- Should meet museum and gallery constraints
- Transferrable skills might help ...
- Meets aspirations of many IVs

DISADVANTAGES

- Needs of domestic visitors are compromised
- The politics of language (post-colonialism, globalisation)

WHAT NEXT ...?



REFLECTIONS

- Useful analogies – education, ‘post-multiculturalism’
- Writing cross-cultural complexities into mission statements and policies
- London’s National Gallery, the Mauritshuis in the Hague ...

CONTACT DETAILS

Robin Cranmer
University of Westminster
London

r.p.cranmer@wmin.ac.uk

