



UNIT 3B. EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND (E2U) AND AUDIO DESCRIPTION (AD)

ELEMENT 2. LINGUISTIC ASPECTS

CREATING INTERTEXTUAL RELATIONS: AN EXAMPLE

Video Lecture Transcript

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This is Unit 3B. Easy to Understand and audio description. Element 2. Linguistic aspects. Video lecture: Creating intertextual relations: an example.

My name is Piero Cavallo. I have prepared this video lecture in collaboration with Rocío Bernabé Caro, on behalf of the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany.

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In this video lecture, we are going to give a quick overview on what intertextuality is and how to solve lexical barriers that might derive from the use of specialised terminology in a broadcasted news, with a practical example. The focus is on how a standard text and an E2U text can interact to avoid assuming that readers share the same lexical repertoire in the E2U text.



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First of all: what is intertextuality?

Intertextuality is the characteristic of a text to have relations with other texts. Every text has intertextual relations with other texts.

These relations can be implicit or explicit.

These relations can refer to other texts, in the form of citations. Or they can be implicit or explicit reference to the specificities of the text itself, that range from the terminology used, to the structure of the text and the sentences. For instance, if a regular reader reads an article about medicine, it is highly probable that the text will have some medical-related words in it. This means that the reader expects to find this type of terminology. Likewise, if an experienced reader reads a newspaper, it is immediately clear to him or her, that he or she is reading a newspaper, because the structure of the text and sentences is unique to that type of text.

An experienced reader could deduce this information from the context or fill the information that is missing either before, during, or after he or she has read the text. For other users, this task might be difficult. In fact, texts that presuppose knowledge from other texts can be complex for the readers to process. This is why, if the information is relevant to understand the text, it should be added directly to the text.

This is also true for audio-visual contents, that are texts. Every audio-visual content has its own specificities, like texts do. For instance, a comedy film is different than a newscast, in terms of terminology and structure.

If you want to learn more about intertextuality, you can consider watching the video lecture on this topic, from Unit 2, element 4.



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Since we cannot presuppose that users of easy-to-understand language have previous knowledge on a text subject, it can be helpful to provide short explanations, in order to clarify this previous knowledge. This information can be conveyed through different ways.

It can be provided as a written or an audio introduction that users can read or listen to before watching the actual content.

It can also be provided as a so-called "extended audio description", as defined by the Web Content Accessibility guidelines 2.2. An "extended audio description" is an enlarged audio description that is provided in a video by pausing it, so that there is enough time to convey additional description of what is happening on screen. This technique has already been used in legal texts by Bathia (1983), who labels it as "easification". The core idea is to maintain the original text unchanged while providing so-called "easification devices" that help information intake. In extended audio descriptions, the easification devices are explanatory information.

But what if a user needs both the support of easy-to-understand language along with audio description and audio subtitles, for audio-visual contents in a foreign language? In this case "extended audio subtitles" can be provided.

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What are "extended audio subtitles"? Audio subtitles, as you may know, help people who are unable, or have difficulties reading a text, but who instead require the text to be read out. The "extended" feature is taken from the concept of "extended audio description", i.e. when the audio

description of an audio-visual content needs to be paused in case of longer descriptions.

Following this idea, extended audio subtitles can be used both to read out the subtitles and to provide additional contextual and intertextual information. This additional information is necessary for the target groups to understand the content.

We are aware that this is a new, hybrid service that has not been realised or studied yet. In this video lecture, we just want to provide an example. We also hope to obtain feedback from reception studies soon to share with you.

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In our example, we show a short video, which length was originally of 1 minute, from the Slovenian broadcast RTV Slovenija.

The news item is about how things have changed in hospitals for pregnant women who are about to give birth during the current COVID-19 pandemic. As you could expect, the news item presupposes some knowledge, related to topics like hospitals, COVID-19, and pregnancy.

In our sample, we provide easy-to-understand audio subtitles in English. This means that the subtitles will be read out. Furthermore, the video will be paused to provide additional information, as it occurs in the case of extended audio descriptions. The subtitles are also provided in written form, and are burnt-in in the video, just for the purpose of this video lecture. The subtitles are the same provided in the video lecture from Unit 3A, Element 2. They have been simplified following the guidelines of Inclusion Europe and the conventions and style of journalistic texts.



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Finally, we decided to provide 2 versions of the same example. One of them has a slower speech rate. This slower version might be more suitable for a certain segment of users, and support the readability. In fact, the number of characters per second (in short, cps) in the slower version does not exceed the maximum of 15 cps per subtitle event, as recommended in subtitling for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. In this way, users that can read the subtitles can do that more easily. Similarly, users that access the content through the audio mode only can also benefit from a slower speech rate.

To maintain the maximum of 15 cps also in the written subtitles of the standard version, we decided to leave the subtitles for a longer time on screen, while keeping the audio subtitles at a standard speech rate, and respecting synchrony.

Of course, the additional information provided, the speech rate, and the degree of simplification can be adapted according to the end-users' needs.

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What should extended audio subtitles convey? The recommendations for extended audio descriptions and subtitles from Inclusion Europe remember the importance to explain the subject clearly and also explain any difficult word.

So, apart from the easy-to-understand audio subtitles themselves, extended audio subtitles could convey a summary, that introduces the general and specific content to the viewer. For the sample we are using, it can specify that the viewer is about to watch a short video from a broadcast in another language with easy-to-understand audio subtitles in



English. It can also specify what the video is about, i.e. the current situation in hospitals for pregnant women during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Similarly, terminology on an expert subject like this one can be explained. In our example, COVID-19, or simply COVID, as it is usually referred to, can be explained as a “disease”, or an “illness”.

All this additional information is conveyed by pausing the video, as in the case of extended audio descriptions.

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Now, let’s watch the sample, with extended audio subtitles at a standard speech rate:

Extended Audio Subtitles [standard rate]:

This news item is about pregnant women with COVID.

And how hospitals are ready to help them.

This news item has English easy-to-understand audio subtitles.

There are difficult words in this video.

We will stop the video to explain them.

And to describe the speaker and the environment.

The video starts with the person who reads the news.

He is in his 50s.

He wears a suit.

And he is standing in front of a computer.

There is a picture of a pregnant woman on the background.



She looks out of the window.

She is wearing a mask.

And her hand rests gently on her baby belly.

[video sample starts]

We visit a maternity hospital.

[video sample stops]

A “maternity hospital” is a hospital for pregnant women.

[video sample starts]

Some pregnant women have COVID.

They are a risk group.

[video sample stops]

A “risk group” is a group of people that can become very ill from a disease like COVID.

Pregnant women are a risk group for COVID.

[video sample starts]

Until now, women gave birth without problems.

Their babies did not have COVID.

Hospitals are ready.

There are separated rooms.

And the staff wears protection.

Things are different now.

[video sample stops]



Now the images show persons working at the hospital.

And the protection they wear.

[video sample starts]

The staff uses masks, gloves and gel.

Shields and goggles.

So everybody is safe at birth.

[video sample stops]

A new-born baby is sleeping at the hospital.

The mother is standing just beside him.

[video sample starts]

9 women with COVID already gave birth.

[video sample stops]

Then, a man appears on the screen.

He works in the hospital, in Slovenia.

He wears doctor's clothes and a mask.

[video sample starts]

Altogether, we are helping 60 pregnant women with COVID.

[video sample stops]

Finally, the images show people working at the hospital.

[video sample starts]

Mothers must also wear a mask.



But not at birth.

Fathers with a mask can be at the birth too.

Slide 10

Now, let's watch the sample, with the same extended audio subtitles at a slower speech rate:

Extended Audio Subtitles [slower rate]:

This news item is about pregnant women with COVID.

And how hospitals are ready to help them.

This news item has English easy-to-understand audio subtitles.

There are difficult words in this video.

We will stop the video to explain them.

And to describe the speaker and the environment.

The video starts with the person who reads the news.

He is in his 50s.

He wears a suit.

And he is standing in front of a computer.

There is a picture of a pregnant woman on the background.

She looks out of the window.

She is wearing a mask.

And her hand rests gently on her baby belly.

[video sample starts]



We visit a maternity hospital.

[video sample stops]

A "maternity hospital" is a hospital for pregnant women.

[video sample starts]

Some pregnant women have COVID.

They are a risk group.

[video sample stops]

A "risk group" is a group of people that can become very ill from a disease like COVID.

Pregnant women are a risk group for COVID.

[video sample starts]

Until now, women gave birth without problems.

Their babies did not have COVID.

Hospitals are ready.

There are separated rooms.

And the staff wears protection.

Things are different now.

[video sample stops]

Now the images show persons working at the hospital.

And the protection they wear.

[video sample starts]

The staff uses masks, gloves and gel.



Shields and goggles.

So everybody is safe at birth.

[video sample stops]

A new-born baby is sleeping at the hospital.

The mother is standing just beside him.

[video sample starts]

9 women with COVID already gave birth.

[video sample stops]

Then, a man appears on the screen.

He works in the hospital, in Slovenia.

He wears doctor's clothes and a mask.

[video sample starts]

Altogether, we are helping 60 pregnant women with COVID.

[video sample stops]

Finally, the images show people working at the hospital.

[video sample starts]

Mothers must also wear a mask.

But not at birth.

Fathers with a mask can be at the birth too.

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In this video lecture, we have seen that intertextuality is the characteristic of texts to refer to other texts, explicitly and implicitly. These relations can refer to the text itself and to the text type. Easy-to-understand users might find it difficult to notice these relations. Because of that, these relations need to be made explicit and more easily noticeable, which might include making pre-supposed knowledge explicit.

One way to make intertextuality more clear can be the use of extended audio subtitles. These can be used to help people who require audio subtitles and also additional information to explain the context, the environment, and also difficult words or expressions.

Different speech rates and degrees of simplification can be offered, to be more suitable to the needs of end-users.

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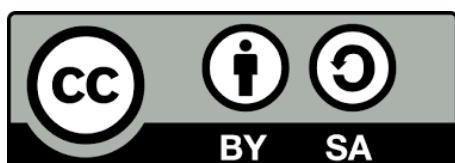
This video lecture has been prepared by Piero Cavallo and Rocío Bernabé Caro from the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany.

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