



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

ELEMENT 2. LINGUISTIC ASPECTS

IDENTIFYING AND ORGANIZING INFORMATION FOR E2U ADs

Video Lecture Transcript

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This is unit 3B, E2U and AD; element 2. Linguistic aspects, video lecture “Identifying and organizing information for E2U ADs”.

This is Elisa Perego, from Università degli Studi di Trieste,

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and in this short video lecture I will give you some ideas on how to identify salient information in a source audiovisual text, and deliver it in a comprehensible AD.

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As you know or have learned, audiovisual – or multimodal – texts are texts that make meaning through several and very different components.

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In fact, there are so many, that AV translators need to observe and recognize each one, as well as determine which is relevant for a given audience to understand and enjoy the AV product in question.

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When the translator has to audio describe a product, he or she will take good care of the visual verbal and non-verbal components – in simpler words: text on screen and images. These are in fact the components that sight impaired users need to retrieve.

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However, saying that the task of the audio describer is to “translate images into words” is only partially correct.

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Doing so literally would be impossible without selecting the elements to describe based on the contribution they make to the overall meaning of the audio visual product.

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So, as audio describers, we cannot describe *everything*: this would generate far too long a description. And a long description would fail to integrate successfully with the source text. It would overload, or even bore users,



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who need some time and silence to process all the information they receive aurally *and* to enjoy it.

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How can an audio describer identify significant information in an audiovisual text?

A thorough source-text analysis should always precede the target-text creation.

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If we focus on the characters in a film, for instance, we'll have to identify main and supporting characters, and determine through what means they manifest themselves most – e.g. general appearance, facial expression, actions, dialogues -, so we'll know what to prioritize in the description.

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Then, we'll have to decide whether it's better to name the character (Virginia Woolf),

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name and gloss it (The English writer Virginia Woolf),



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describe it (A middle aged woman with a slightly hooked nose and hair pulled back in a bun),

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or describe and name it (A middle aged woman with a slightly hooked nose and hair pulled back in a bun, Virginia Woolf).

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The example is taken from the ADLAB AD guidelines, where you can find a lot more.

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Back to the AD, keep in mind that your decision on the best AD strategy to use will be based on time constraints, on the moment when you insert the AD, but also on the level of comprehensibility you wish to maintain.

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E2U principles normally encourage short and clear texts, repetitions, consistency.

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So, in an E2U AD you might want to avoid referring to a character with a pronoun;

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you might need to select just *one* salient descriptive element to associate with the character (the hooked nose, for example, in the case of Virginia Woolf),

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or even stick to a short gloss (The English writer) avoiding the name – if at all possible.

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If you feel that more needs to be said about the character in question, you can convey the relevant information at a moment in time during the film when you can do so – though normally in the first scenes – even if the character is not on screen when you provide the information.

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However, in an E2U perspective, I'd encourage the use of audio introductions, which can include elements that need to be digested to understand and enjoy the film, thus limiting the amount of words to use in the AD proper.

In this way, you'll be able to comply with E2U principles more easily while writing your AD.

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An “audio conclusion” might be an interesting idea to test: recapping, or repeating pieces of information might in fact help users to refresh their memory and find a meaning and coherence in the film.

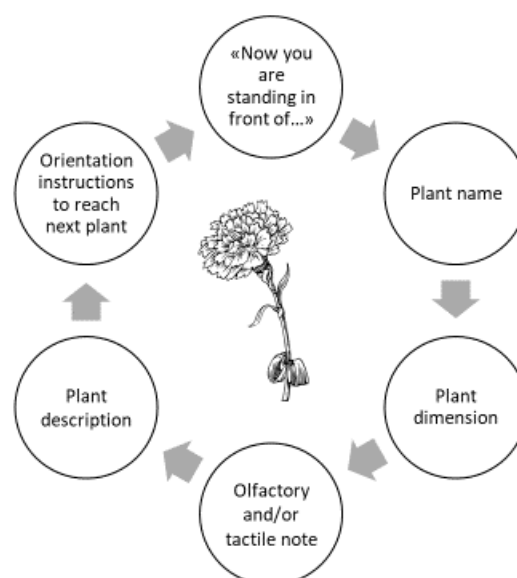
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Linearity and organization are key factors in other types of E2U AD as well.

Following the same text pattern to describe the same item (a picture, a sculpture, but even a flower) could offer users a recurring and predictable, therefore reassuring, tool they can rely on.

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You can observe this figure.





It exemplifies the fixed structure of the plant ADs designed for an accessible tour of the Trieste Botanical Garden.

Recurring language chunks were used to introduce each phase, and approximately the same information in the same order was provided for each plant:

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the plant name,

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its dimension,

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olfactory or tactile information,

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the plant description including type and colour of flowers and foliage,

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and orientation instructions to reach the next plant.

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To recap, never forget to apply E2U principles to your ADs and consider preparing an audio introduction and an audio conclusion for E2U audio described audiovisual products.

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When you deal with static art, on the other hand, always create a structured text consisting of fixed phases and recurring language expressions to help users get acquainted with the textual and linguistic patterns, and therefore follow your ADs more easily.

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I hope you learned something new in this video.

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The Virginia Woolf Picture used in this presentation comes from Wikimedia Commons, a collection of more than 64 million freely usable media files. It is under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 Generic (CC BY-SA 2.0) license.

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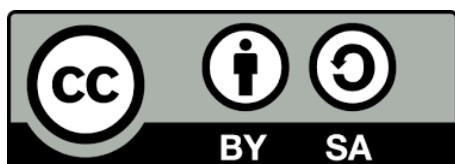
This video lecture was prepared by Elisa Perego and produced by Martina Atzeri, from Università degli Studi di Trieste.

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