



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

### **ELEMENT 1. PROCESSES**

#### **INTERVIEW WITH PROFESSIONALS: CHRISTOPHER TAYLOR**

#### **Transcript**

Unit 3B, Easy to understand (E2U) and audio description (AD), Element 1., Processes, "Interview with professionals: Christopher Taylor".

Overview. In this video interview, we will listen to the answers of Christopher Taylor to some AD-related questions. Professor Taylor is an academic who has been researching AD for many years. He recently coordinated a European Union project, ADLAB (Audio description: Lifelong Access for the Blind), which achieved 'success story' status, and remained active in the follow-up project ADLAB PRO. He has recently retired.

**Christopher Taylor:** I am Chris Taylor, from the University of Trieste, now retired, and for many years now I have been interested in audiovisual translation, and more recently in audio description, to the point of coordinating a European project called ADLAB, which was then taken on by my colleague Elisa Perego and ADLAB PRO, both of which were aimed at improving and enhancing the state of the art regarding audio description in Europe, but also, I hope, in relation to the rest of the world. In fact, the two of us are now coordinating a book, a handbook of

audio description, which covers, we hope, the entire globe in terms of the future prospects of audio description.

**Elisa Perego:** Do you think that AD as you know it is really accessible for all, including people with cognitive, intellectual and/or learning disabilities whose processing times might be slower?

**Christopher Taylor:** Well, museum experience would suggest that this is the case. Sighted visitors like hearing an AD, maybe because it is simpler than the normal audio guide, and then we have your EASIT. As regards the cinema this has been less investigated, but I have watched films with AD, as a professional has it, and I am not disturbed by it and with universal design, everybody is talking about universal design these days, I think some people may opt for it. Those with cognitive or learning disabilities might benefit from AD in all settings, though for obvious reasons it would have to be AD in EASIT form. The speed of reproduction, clarity of enunciation, etcetera, are of the most importance and latest developments in personalisation technology would prove very useful here. So the person could adjust the speed of delivery, the clarity, the style, etcetera.

**Elisa Perego:** Do you think that simplifying AD for people with cognitive, intellectual and/or learning disabilities could be the right way to go to extend possible uses?

**Christopher Taylor:** Well, simplification is in any case an aim of audio description. In addition to the question to speed, clarity, etcetera, just mentioned, people with cognitive, intellectual and/or learning disabilities need simplified text. So the move towards plain English, or plain Italian, or plain whatever, has led to the elimination of a lot of jargon and bureaucratese and so on, and that is for normally sighted people, in all areas. So AD as a specialised genre could definitely benefit from the same kind of intervention, both of the blind and sight impaired public and those



with special needs. So, if psychologists, teachers, social workers and so on are made aware of the progress been made in this direction, then I can see it being extended.

**Elisa Perego:** What types of simplification can you think of?

**Christopher Taylor:** Well, the usual things: short sentences, limited technical terms, plain language, no bureaucratic language and so on; syntactically simple, paratactic sentences, no subordination; clear deliberate pronunciation and so on. But from a purely audio description point of view, simplification could include describing the minimum necessary for understanding when dealing with the needs of persons with sight loss, but concentrating on the kind of image-text matching that a cognitively disabled listener needs. For example a dyslexic person would require particular attention to be paid to image-text, making sure that the words are clearly associated with the visual, for example.

**Elisa Perego:** Do you think that all types of AD (screen AD, art AD and so on) can be simplified and remain successful?

**Christopher Taylor:** Yes. Sighted cinema audiences, museum visitors, etcetera, they like simple descriptions. So this is especially true towards the end, the end of films, the end of a museum visit and so on. The only possible exception is live AD, which is becoming more frequent, where the describer would have to be particularly skillful. And mindful of the listener's needs.

**Elisa Perego:** The results of the focus group carried out in a previous stage of the project showed that some users might need ADs that are more informative than descriptive. This would imply replacing some descriptions by explanations. Which criteria or strategies would you apply to implement this requirement and, in your opinion, in which cases would this not be possible?

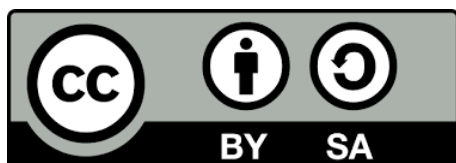


**Christopher Taylor:** Well, bearing in mind the old adage “you say what you see” and the recommendation found in various sets of guidelines to be objective, not subjective or judgmental, the informative approach would not work for film or TV AD. Attempting to explain a scene would involve personal interpretation and would transgress that line, which the blind and sight impaired call “condescension” or “pandering”. It is true that not everything can be described, only a small fraction of the elements in the frame can or should be described, but most scenes can be explained, even in a brief and satisfactory way. Thus, in my opinion anyway, the informative type of AD is much more acceptable for example in museum AD. Again, the need to avoid spoon-feeding exists, but sighted visitors also require and desire explanations of museum exhibits.

This video was prepared by Elisa Perego and produced by Angelika De Marchis, Laura Marini and Annalisa Navetta from the University of Trieste. The narrator was Annalisa Navetta.

**Copyright and disclaimer:** The project EASIT has received funding from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education programme, grant agreement 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



#### Partners:



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI DI TRIESTE

Universida<sub>de</sub>Vigo