

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

ELEMENT 1. PROCESSES

EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND AUDIO INTRODUCTIONS: A SAMPLE

Other Video Transcript

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This is unit 3B, Easy-to-understand and audio description. Element 1: Processes. Other video: Easy-to-understand audio introductions: A sample.

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This is Elisa Perego, from Università degli Studi di Trieste, and this is a sample video on the simplification of audio introductions.

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Given their communicative purpose, audio introductions or introductory notes in the shape of - I quote Fryer 2014 – “pieces of continuous prose”, can be exploited successfully in easy-to-understand scenarios, if adequately adapted.

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Audio introductions set the scene and make up for what cannot be delivered through the audio description: for instance, relevant details, the style of the product, cast and production credits, fuller descriptions of visual details, and much more.

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Standard audio introductions guide users through the text to come. Their adaptation into easy-to-understand texts surely makes them what Bhatia, in 1986, calls *easification tools*. That is, extra-textual devices that can enhance the comprehensibility and the usability of the text in question.

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In this video sample, we will focus on some excerpts taken from Fryer's audio introduction to the film *Slumdog Millionaire*.

If you listen to the opening, read by herself, you'll find it very rich in details:

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[Louise Fryer, AI]

Welcome to this audio introduction to *Slumdog Millionaire* directed by Danny Boyle in 2008. It's based on the novel *Q&A* by

Vikas Swarup with screenplay by Simon Beaufoy. It has a running time of 2 hours, and stars Dev Patel and Frieda Pinto.

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Do we really need so many details in an E2U scenario?

Can't we prioritize what is really central and easier to remember?

And, if it is true that "less is more", shall we try to stick to this principle?

Look at what we can do.

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Adding the word "film" can help give a clearer context for some users.

Then, repeating it or

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using an anaphoric pronoun ("it") could contribute to giving coherence and linearity to the text without repeating the film title.

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If maintaining the film director's name and production date seem crucial pieces of information, keeping the name of the author of the novel on which the film is based, or the screenwriter's name, is possibly too taxing. After all, we need to select.

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We can also substitute the verb “to star”

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by a longer but clearer sentence type (with a subject, a copular verb and a complement),

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and introduce the straightforward noun “actors”.

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Finally, starting each sentence on a new line is a good practice, especially if we think of using audio introductions also in the form of printed documents that can be read rather than listened to – based on the situation or the preference of the user.

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If we do so, adding non-linguistic elements – such as a picture of the film poster, or of the actors – would improve the usability of the written document and would comply almost fully with most Easy Language principles.

Not all users like, can or wish to consume texts aurally, so when working with audio introductions,

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creating a written version and making it available online – both as an accessible PDF or as a printable brochure - might be a good idea.

Let's now listen to the easy-to-understand audio introduction read by Christopher Taylor:

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[Christopher Taylor, E2U AI]

Welcome to this audio introduction to the film Slumdog Millionaire.

The film was directed by Danny Boyle in 2008.

The film is based on a novel.

It lasts 2 hours.

Its main actors are Dev Patel and Frieda Pinto.

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Let's move to a more descriptive and detailed passage of the audio introduction, read by Louise Fryer:

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[Louise Fryer, Standard AD]

Their home is a shack – one of thousands cobbled together from sheets of corrugated iron, painted wooden planks and scavenged

cardboard in the teeming Juhu slums - sandwiched between an airport runway, a vast rubbish tip and the railway tracks at the edge of the city.

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Rubbish litters the slum's narrow passageways. It's a patchwork of poverty but rich and throbbing with life – and full of colour – walls are daubed in blue and yellow, the women wear patterned saris of every hue, there are fruit and vegetables for sale at outdoor stalls, and painted statuettes of gods set up in home-made shrines.

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Though beautifully written (and read), and close to literary style, this text needs to undergo major simplification processes to become easy-to-understand.

A quick look at the most uncommon words (though really vivid, we must admit) shows there are a great many:

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- **shack** which is a primitive shelter;
- **cobbled** meaning 'paved with small stones'.

But also:

- **corrugated;**
- **planks;**



- **scavenged;**
- **teeming;**
- **Juhu** which is an upmarket neighbourhood of Mumbai.

Perhaps even:

- **slums** – or poor areas in a city;
- **rubbish tip;**
- **tracks;**
- **edge;**

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- **litters;**
- **passageways;**
- **patchwork;**
- **throbbing;**
- **daubed** meaning carelessly painted;
- **patterned;**
- the cultural borrowing **saris;**

but also:

- **hue** - for colour or shade;
- **stalls;**
- **statuettes** – a derived word exploiting a diminutive suffix;
- and to conclude **shrines**.

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The text is long (101 words, but only three sentences). Its readability is too low – with a Gunning Fog index telling us that a reader would need over 16 years of schooling to be able to understand the text properly.

Let's try to do something.

The compression work will not be easy, and, sadly, most colorful details will be lost. The following E2U version, read by Christopher Taylor, is just a proposal:

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[Christopher Taylor, E2U AI]

Their home is small and made of iron sheets and cardboard.

Their home is in a very crowded area of the city.

It is located between an airport, a rubbish tip, and the railway.

Rubbish is all over.

Poverty is all over.

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But, a lively atmosphere comes

- **from the *colours* of the walls:**
- **from the women's traditional dresses;**
- **from the fruit and vegetables for sale;**
- **from the painted statues of gods.**



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Now the text is still informative, but shorter (71 words and 6 sentences), and the level of instruction needed to understand it is now approximately 7 years – not 16 any longer. The idea of the slum, of the poverty and its liveliness are not completely lost, and an engaging tone of voice will help to make up for what had to go.

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

The original audio introductions were created and read by Louise Fryer from Utopian Voices.

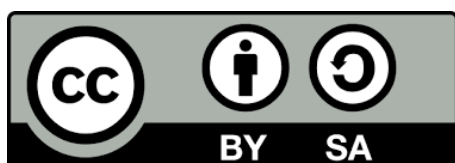
The easy-to-understand audio introductions were prepared by Elisa Perego and read by Christopher Taylor from Università degli Studi di Trieste.

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