



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

ELEMENT 1. PROCESSES

THE CREATION, ADAPTATION AND VALIDATION OF E2U AD AND AUDIO SUBTITLING (AST)

Video Lecture Transcript

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This is unit 3B, easy to understand and audio description. Element 1: Processes. Video lecture: The creation, adaptation and validation of easy-to-understand audio description (or AD) and audio subtitling (or AST).

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

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In this video lecture, I will focus on the process of creation, adaptation and validation of easy-to-understand audio description and audio subtitling.

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In so doing, I will insist on the specificities of texts that are written to be listened to, such as AD and AST.

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You should know well what creating an AD or AST implies.

If you learned the principles of easy-to-understand too,

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now you just need to merge the two competences.

Let's see how you can do this focusing on some examples.

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Before doing so, however, I'd like to stress that both AD and AST are texts that are received *aurally* and that are *listened to* rather than read.

Reading and listening imply different cognitive and perceptive processes. Texts to be listened to should comply with principles that have to do with "listenability".

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So, before you start creating an AD, do not forget to prioritize linguistic and rhetorical structures that ease the cognitive burden listeners face.

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Favour an oral-based language style, use signpost language guiding listeners through the audio text, deliver coherent information that flows smoothly and is well structured.

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Do not forget to use simple words and short sentences, to define the difficult or more technical words, and feel free to repeat the same words rather than to look for synonyms – which might be confusing.

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This entails a lot of preparation and editing.

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When adapting (or “translating”) an already existing text into an E2U text, a major re-structuring of the content and a language revision might be necessary, and perhaps this could prove even more challenging than creating and organising text information from scratch.

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Interestingly, some E2U rules which apply to written texts will have to be overlooked or rather recalibrated for an oral presentation.

The provision of summaries and glossaries, for instance, could be substituted by short E2U audio introductions and audio conclusions. Bold character, used in written texts to emphasise new or difficult words, could

easily be replaced by prosodic stress or over-articulation, in order to favour – and I quote Bernabé and Orero 2021 page 66 – “acoustic segmentation and lexical access”.

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In fact, a creative and comprehensive use of all the voice potentials can be a powerful surrogate for the lack of pictures and page layout, which play a major role in E2U written content. So, in AD or AST delivery, vary your intonation, melody, volume; articulate every word, to ensure clarity on your part and understanding on the part of the audience.

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Use pauses in strategic spots and breathe properly. Aim at a natural - though slower rather than faster – pace: a speech delivered much too fast can hinder understanding in the audience, while a speech delivered too slowly can tire and bore people.

Finally, set the right tone for the AD and the AST.

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Similar and many more recommendations are followed when working with audiovisual journalism, where voicing plays a crucial part.

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When the E2U AD or AST are ready, validation can start.

Validation is a key stage that requires the involvement of end-users who are asked to assess whether the text produced is usable. In this case, a thorough check of the AD content and of its delivery should be conducted to make sure that the E2U AD or AST are really easy to understand and to listen to.

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Ideally, the validation of an easy-to-understand audio description should be performed in two stages, both by a sight impaired user and by a user (or a group of users) with learning difficulties – the E2U validators. By the way, E2U facilitators might also do – these are professionals who are members of a validation team.

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The aspects to check are in fact various. Sight impaired experts will make sure the AD is coherent, and that the selection of visual information is adequate to enable users to follow the source text successfully. In screen products, they will also check whether AD and AST have been integrated properly and if it is easy enough to differentiate between dialogues and narration.

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The easy-to-understand validator, on the other hand, will make sure the information is delivered according to easy-to-understand and easy to listen principles, and is therefore usable for audiences that need to access simplified products. Resorting to a checklist and creating a personal validation scheme might ease the work.

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What should be kept in mind, however, is that the validation of AD and of AST includes the assessment of various aspects that have to do with orality, an aspect that plays a major role in any oral text type.

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Make sure your checklist includes a specific section then, because assessing the usability of texts that are written to be read is different than assessing the usability of texts that are written to be listened to.

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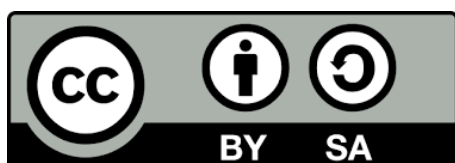
This video lecture was prepared by Elisa Perego and produced by Martina Atzeri from Università degli Studi di Trieste.

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