



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

ELEMENT 1. PROCESSES

WHAT IS E2U ART AD?

Video Lecture Transcript

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This is unit 3B, E2U and AD; element 1. Processes, video lecture “What is E2U ART AD?”. This is Elisa Perego, from Università degli Studi di Trieste,

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and in this short video lecture I will briefly define audio description, I will focus on art AD, and I will also offer some hints and examples on the way you could make it simpler.

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Nowadays, the multimodal world we live in has become more and more inclusive for people with different abilities. Screen products, but also exhibitions and static art forms are no longer inaccessible to people with sight loss.



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Audio description, which is a form of accessible, assistive and intersemiotic audiovisual translation, enables us to transfer the most relevant visual elements of a text into a verbal aural narrative.

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Depending on what we audio describe, the audio description can be more or less complex.

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In art AD, texts are normally long. Lexically, they are varied and dense. They are precise and use specialized words. They use a lot of adjectives, especially descriptors,

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which can be very long, as in “an extraordinarily luminous sulphur-lemon yellow” used by the audio describer Louise Fryer

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to describe the background of Van Gogh’s painting The Sunflowers.

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Syntaxwise, art ADs can use much longer sentences than screen ADs and they use structures that are normally avoided because they are known to

hinder readability for instance passive voices, heavy subordination, embedded structures.

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An example, again from the AD of Van Gogh's famous painting, can show you what I mean. I quote Fryer's AD: "The sunflowers are mostly grouped in threes around a central flower facing us - with swirling orange and brown middle, energetic, sinuous golden brushstrokes radiating from the top for petals and similar pale green strokes at the bottom for sepals where the petals have fallen off."

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Listening to such a complex description could certainly put off some users.

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To make information as clear and as easy to understand as possible, just try and follow some simple standards – for instance, those illustrated in the Inclusion Europe guidelines.

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First, stick to short sentences and do not overload them with too many unnecessary syntactic components. A subject-verb-object might just be enough!

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Focus on salient words and choose high frequency and common items.

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Restrain from elaborating on adjectives and pick one-word attributive inherent ones, which clearly denote the quality of the noun.

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Let's focus on the sunflower example again. A way to go when adapting or translating an already existing text would be to highlight salient and necessary items. You can see them emboldened on the slide.

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I selected: "The sunflowers are mostly grouped in threes around a central flower facing us - with swirling **orange and brown middle, energetic, sinuous golden brushstrokes** radiating from the top for **petals** and similar **pale green** strokes at the bottom for **sepals** where the petals have fallen off."

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I decided to avoid words such as: The sunflowers are **mostly** grouped in threes around a central flower facing us - with **swirling** orange and brown middle, energetic, **sinuous** golden brushstrokes **radiating** from the top for petals and similar pale green strokes at the bottom for sepals where the petals have fallen off.



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You can consider reformulating difficult words and use more common items, or longer but less technical reformulations. So, “brushstrokes” can become “the marks of the brush made by the painter”.

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The “sepals” are “the outer part of a flower that surround the petals”.

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As a result, the description could turn into the following:

The sunflowers are grouped in threes.

The sunflowers group around a central flower.

The central flower faces us.

Its middle part is orange and brown.

The petals are golden.

Some petals have fallen off.

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The outer part of the flower is pale green.

The style of the painter is unique.

The marks of the brush are lively.



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Once your E2U AD is ready, do not forget to consider its “listenability”, i.e., the ease with which a given material is listened to, understood, and enjoyed.

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Keep in mind that readability and listenability are different concepts that might not overlap.

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Because your text cannot be re-read, make sure that the message is “instantly intelligible”, stimulating, attention-grabbing. So don’t forget to always take an audience-centered perspective when you audio describe.

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To produce a listenable text: use an oral-based style; do not read too fast; convey engagement in what you say.

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Select an appropriate voice for aural reproduction; calibrate the volume and the quality of the recording; and adjust the rate of delivery.



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I hope these selected recommendations were useful and thought-provoking. It's up to you now to find more ways to write or adapt art ADs integrating E2U and listenability principles.

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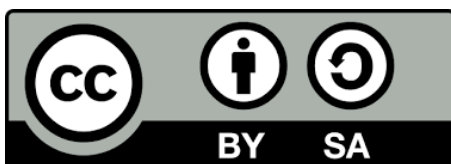
This video lecture was prepared by Elisa Perego and produced by Martina Atzeri, from Università degli Studi di Trieste.

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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.

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