



## **UNIT 1. MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY**

### **ELEMENT 5. MEDIA ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

#### **AUDIO DESCRIPTION**

#### **Video Lecture Transcript**

#### **Slide 1**

This is unit 1, Media Accessibility; element 5, Media accessibility services, video lecture Audio description. I am Anna Matamala, from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

#### **Slide 2**

In this lecture I will provide an overview on audio description. From now on I will call audio description AD.

#### **Slide 3**

Select a film or a TV series you have never watched. Start watching it with your eyes closed. What is happening? Can you make sense of it without seeing the action on screen? Probably not. Well, something similar happens to persons with sight loss.



## Slide 4

AD tries to overcome this barrier. AD is a description in auditory format of what is happening on screen. It could be considered a type of intersemiotic translation. The visuals, the images, are translated into spoken words. This AD narrative is integrated in the soundtrack.

## Slide 5

The opening scene of the short film *What happens while* has no dialogue, no language, just music. What is happening? Well, the AD will provide you access. It reads: "On an overcast day, a man and a woman walk by the seaside with a large, lanky dog. A jogger passes them in the opposite direction. The dog pauses to sniff the ground and trots onwards".

## Slide 6

You can find AD for film, as in the example before, but also for the performing arts, museums, cultural heritage, live events, etc., each of them with their own specificities. You can audio describe a static or dynamic content, and the AD can be live or recorded. For example, a work of art in a museum or the Eiffel Tower are static. An opera or a theatre play, a sunset or even a conference opening are dynamic.

## Slide 7

The AD may be delivered live, with or without preparation. For instance, an opera may be performed live. The describer can prepare it beforehand, take part in rehearsals and have it ready for live delivery during the performance, adapting, of course, to any last-minute changes. In other



situations, the describers may need to adapt to an improvised situation and offer a live improvised AD. At the other end of the spectrum, you have recorded ADs, for example for a film, which of course are prepared in advance.

## Slide 8

The AD can be developed as part of the production or as a post-production element, as an afterthought, once the content is finished. If prepared in the production, special care is taken to make sure enough space is left for the delivery of the AD. If the AD is developed post-production, it must adapt to the existing content. All this, of course, has implications for workflow and for the final result.

## Slide 9

One shared aspect regardless of the type of AD being created is that the audio describer needs to select *what* to transfer into words and *how* to transfer it. Images are very rich, so... what shall be selected, especially when the gaps for the AD are limited and taking into account that the AD should not overlap with relevant audio elements such as dialogues?

Well, the ADLAB guidelines provide good advice on this, and I strongly encourage you to read them. They are available in open access from the ADLAB project website.

## Slide 10

Understanding how the audiovisual content is constructed will help you identify the most relevant elements to be audio described and decide on

the best strategy to transfer them. In films, for instance, some fundamental aspects are:

- Place and time
- Characters
- Action
- Text on screen
- Film language
- Sound

## **Slide 11**

Once the audio describer has decided *what* needs to be transferred, the *how* needs to be carefully considered: finding the right words, vivid words, and providing the necessary details in a limited space without overwhelming the audience and without adopting a patronizing attitude are fundamental skills to be learned by describers. The AD also needs to be delivered with the most appropriate voicing. An accurate sound mix will make the AD understandable and enjoyable.

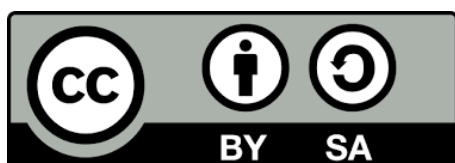
It is beyond the aim of this video to provide thorough training on AD, but the ADLAB PRO project has created extensive training materials that will allow you to learn a lot more about AD, and for free. Please visit its website at [adlabpro.edu](http://adlabpro.edu) and watch the course materials.

## **Slide 12**

This video lecture has been prepared by Anna Matamala, from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. You can reach me at [anna.matamala@uab.cat](mailto:anna.matamala@uab.cat).

**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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