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**THE VERBALIZATIONS OF THE EFFECTS OF LIGHT
AND CONTRAST IN AUDIO DESCRIPTION**

TESIS DOCTORAL

presentada por

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dirigida por

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Introduction

Since 2010, which is when this doctoral dissertation has its origins, considerable strides have been made in the field of film audio description (AD). These include liaisons with cognitive science (Fresno 2012; Fryer and Freeman 2012b; Vandaele 2012), eye tracking methodology (Orero and Vilaró 2012; Orero and Vilaró forthcoming; Vilaró and Orero 2013), or text-to-speech technologies (Szarkowska 2011; Szarkowska and Jankowska 2012), to name but a few. As advanced and valuable as these developments are, the present thesis is couched in a more orthodox context, namely that of Film Studies. It investigates the ways in which light and contrast are verbalized in film audio description, and so contributes to the ongoing research into film language rendition in AD.

Among film scholars, there seems to be a consensus with regard to the role light and contrast play in cinema. Grodal (2005, 152) deems lighting to be “one of the most powerful means of creating effect in films”; Bordwell (2004, online) claims it is “essential to all films”; Alton (1995, 32) lists it as one of the “means to tell the story”. However, this relevance is hardly echoed in the audio description guidelines, most of which do not even explicitly discuss lighting. When they do, they make a general reference to it as one of the many elements “important to the plot or characterisation”, to be described provided there is enough time (Media Access Australia 2010, 11). Aspects of lighting have also been largely absent from academic research on AD. Some insights into focalisation through lighting in TV mini-series come from Mascarenhas (2013), and Marzà Ibañez (2010) places light at the top of her audio-description contents scale designed to be included in education courses on AD. Other than that, the mentioning of the importance of light and contrast in AD-related research is nonexistent.

This divergence of interest between the fields of Film Studies and Audio Description concerning lighting gave rise to the principal research question posed in this dissertation: How are light and contrast patterns verbalized in film audio description? Using qualitative modes of enquiry, the present thesis first explores the ways in which the effects of lighting are rendered in commercial audio-description scripts. Then, synthesizing Kruger’s descriptive-narrative continuum (2010), it builds a taxonomy of strategies applicable to lighting description.

The overall structure of this dissertation takes the form of a compendium of research papers published in international journals. The scope of the publications presented herein opens with state of the art review of light functions in Film Studies. In this first article, the significance of the subject matter and the overall direction for further research are outlined. The next two papers constitute a multiple case-study of audio described films. The scripts are analysed in terms of the verbalizations of four pre-determined lighting functions. The outcome of this phase of investigation is an overview of strategies for audio describing light, based on Kruger's descriptive-narrative continuum (2010). The thesis concludes with a paper documenting the semiotic analysis and possible audio description strategies of one particular movie, *What Dreams May Come* (1998). Switching the methodology from top-down to bottom-up, and offering examples of AD founded on filmic grounds is believed to add a didactic value to the present dissertation. A summary of the main findings, the concluding remarks on the conducted research, as well as an updated bibliography close the dissertation.

The present thesis constitutes an important building block in advancing the understanding of the meaning of light in film for the purposes of audio description. At this stage, it was beyond its scope to carry out a critical analysis of the strategies identified in the corpus material. Taking into account the lack of research on the verbalization of light and contrast cues in AD, it seemed pertinent to assume an explorative research angle and establish a valid state of affairs. This approach opened many new investigation avenues, which will be discussed in detail in subsection 2.4.

1.1. PhD structure

The present dissertation is a compilation of four research papers published within the course of the doctoral studies in international peer-reviewed academic journals. Even though the articles are stand-alone pieces of writing, they are “organized around an argument that links all aspects of the research process from problem formulation, through literature review and the presentation of research methods, to the discussion and conclusion” (Bryman 2012, 687). In other words, the order of their presentation in this

thesis reveals the subsequent steps taken by the author in order to accomplish the objectives set and answer the research questions posed.

The dissertation opens with the article published in *MonTI* (Maszerowska 2012a). In this paper, a review of the state of the art with respect to light and its meaning in the area of Film Studies is conducted. The aim of this publication is to establish the role lighting has in filmmaking and to explore its fields of application within the story line. The results of this stage of investigation reveal that light and contrast are one of the principal elements of film language and as such are used in service of, among others, character, setting and overall mood depiction. This article shows that lighting is an important element of the visual layer of films, which is believed to have direct implications on audio description.

The second article (Maszerowska 2013) builds on the above conclusion, in that it documents the first attempt at investigating the position of lighting within the research and practice of audio description. In its theoretical part, the paper summarizes the viewpoints on light and contrast as expressed by film scholars. On that basis, it proposes a synthesized list of lighting functions relevant from the audio-description perspective (plot punctuation, setting perception, character perception, and eye guidance). What follows is a review of guidelines and research literature on audio description regarding light. The article then analyses six professionally audio described crime films in English. The aim of this analysis is to see how the four pre-determined functions of light are accounted for in AD and if any verbalization tendencies can be identified in this respect.

The third paper (Maszerowska forthcoming a) is a continuation of the above analysis, in that it largely replicates its methodological principles, but also gives an important step forward. On the one hand, its general objective is to verify the outcomes of the preliminary analysis from the previous article using a corpus of seven audio described Tim Burton films. On the other, it specifically aims to label, using Kruger's descriptive-narrative continuum (2010), the strategies the describers apply when dealing with relevant light cues in the scripts. The contribution this article makes is an overview of AD strategies for light description. To the best of our knowledge, it is the first attempt at creating such taxonomy, which can benefit not only the academia, but also professional describers.

The fourth article (Maszerowska forthcoming b), is a case-study of one film, *What Dreams May Come* (1998). In contrast to the other two publications, this paper uses a bottom-up methodology. Its aim is to discuss what strategies can be applied to the audio description of one movie, whose visual language pushes the cinematographic codes (Chaume 2004) to an extreme and so becomes an inherent part of the plot. The rationale behind this article is to highlight the need to read into the film, to recognise all its signifying visual components, and only then decide on the adequate description strategy (see also Orero 2012).

The four papers presented in this dissertation form a continuum in terms of narrative and research, a series of logical steps in which one answered question gives rise to another. However, these articles do not represent the author's complete academic record. In the course of the doctoral studies, more pieces of research, complementary to the principal area of interest of this thesis, were published. Due to their diversified subject matter, they are not included neither in the body of the dissertation, nor as annexes. Instead, they are briefly contextualized in the following paragraphs.

In the course of this thesis, two books (Maszerowska 2012b; 2014) have been reviewed. One of them is a post-conference collection of research papers on audio description edited by Elisa Perego. Apart from individual research tasks, collaborative efforts have also been undertaken. Team work, both within the field of Audiovisual Translation (Maszerowska and Mangiron forthcoming), as well as outside its borders (Casacuberta, Maszerowska, and Orero forthcoming), added an important ingredient to this PhD career. The former paper discusses cultural references in audio description, and the latter deals with the (philosophical) aspects of silence in film and their rendering in AD.

Another joint initiative was the co-editing of the first book on audio description (Maszerowska, Matamala, and Orero forthcoming), which will be published by John Benjamins, one of the leading international publishing houses in Translation Studies. Even though it is not directly related to research, editing is a valid academic activity and an important publication modality within the fields of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility. Co-editing the book offered training in important integrative skills, such as project management, proof reading, and drafting an index, amongst others. It also allowed to understand the internal mechanisms of publishing in a large

international editorial, as well as offered valuable insight into interacting with authors, co-editors and publishing house editors. This volume is an example of successful multidisciplinary and international collaboration. It is one of the outcomes of the European project ADLAB: Lifelong Access for the Blind (517992-LLP-1-2011-1-IT-ERASMUS-ECUE), in which the author of this dissertation has also participated as researcher. The volume counts eleven chapters written by authors from as many as six different European countries, each representing different audiovisual translation and language status. Apart from the task of editing, which in itself is an enriching academic merit, two collaborative chapters were written for the book: the introduction (Maszerowska, Matamala, Orero, and Reviers forthcoming), and the chapter on cultural references in audio description (Maszerowska and Mangiron forthcoming).

1.2. Theoretical framework

In a very broad context, the present thesis is based in the field of Translation Studies. Its main area of interest is intersemiotic translation (Jakobson 1959), and particularly the rendition of visual signs into verbal utterances. The research material this dissertation uses to investigate the above issue is film, which situates it within the scope of studies on Audiovisual Translation. Specifically, this PhD project focuses on films with audio description, thus making Media Accessibility its major reference arena. The topic in question is the description of light and contrast. Therefore, in order to gain understanding of the subject matter, the present dissertation also draws on Film Studies. It inquires about the ways in which lighting is audio described in cinema, and so uses the practice-oriented angle to elaborate new concepts.

Film language description has garnered a lot of interest from many AD scholars. Some provide general observations regarding its importance for a successful audio description (Haig 2002; Orero 2012), some tap into reception studies in order to test the target audience's acceptability of its explicit inclusion in AD (Fryer and Freeman 2012a), and others set out to measure the impact of film language on the interpretation of audio described films (Wilken 2013). Yet another group of researchers put forward their own proposals for film language description: Kruger (2010) looks into focalisation; Mascarenhas (2013) studies the use of light in TV mini-series; Perego

(forthcoming) analyses shot sequences. Last but not least, there are those who conduct case studies with the intention to find out how selected codes of film language are rendered in audio description: Pérez Payá studies the effects of camera movement (2007) and the aspects of editing (2010); Mälzer-Semlinger (2012) discusses the importance of colour. The present dissertation belongs to this last category, and it aims to address an issue many research papers and AD guidelines have so far failed to study in depth.¹

The lack of academic interest in the description of light seems remarkable, all the more so when taking into account the importance lighting has for film. From 1920s Expressionist cinema, through the silent era, up to 21st century Hollywood productions, light has been the essence of film. Some film scholars talk about the art of using light (Bellantoni 2010), some claim that it is one of the channels through which cinema speaks (Geuens 2000), while others argue that the core of visual perception lies in light (Arnheim 1985). Millerson (1991, 16-17) enumerates as many as 18 “typical ways in which lighting allows us to control the picture”, with the ability to imply or modify our impressions of a given scene or object heading the list. However, the existing guidelines and research papers on audio description refer mainly to the basic ways in which light and contrast indicate time and weather (American Council of the Blind’s Audio Description Project 2010; Georgakopoulou 2008; Independent Television Commission 2000; López Vera 2006; Salway 2007), a function Millerson quotes towards the end of his record (ibid.).

At the same time, one of Hollywood’s golden rules states that the use of light in film should be as unobtrusive as possible (Sipos 2010, 142). In other words, lighting is meant to add authenticity to a scene, make it seem real without drawing attention to itself. This could be one of the reasons why many cinema-goers fail to realize the presence of light and ultimately do not appreciate its impact (Geuens 2000). However, this does not imply that the use of light is unimportant. Quite the opposite, its successful combination with elements of setting and with the features of the characters is what eventually creates the “engulfing effect of modern cinema” (Hollander 1989, 15).

¹ The potential of light to convey aspects of mood and emotional state has already been studied even in the field of virtual storytelling (Heloir, Kipp, and Kipp 2011).

The present dissertation aims to investigate how this inconspicuousness of light is rendered into words in audio description. In its analytical stage, this thesis scrutinizes the degree of explicitness of the relevant AD fragments using Kruger's descriptive-narrative continuum (2010). In this way, the final contribution of this project lies at the crossover of "the visual arts and the art of the visual" (Carey 2002, 82).

1.3. Research questions

According to Sandberg and Alvesson (2011, cited in Bryman 2012, 88), "spotting gaps in the literature is the chief way of identifying research questions". This dissertation focuses on one specific under-researched area, namely the rendition of the effects of light and contrast in AD, and is based on the following general research question:

How are the effects of light and contrast verbalized in audio description?

No specific hypotheses are posed in the present thesis. Instead, it opens with a broad query, whose direction and limits had progressively been laid down by the results obtained as the study evolved (see Bryman 2012, 89). The specific research questions posed in this dissertation are the following:

1. Do the audio descriptions of light and contrast reveal any recurrent patterns?
2. Can they be identified as specific strategies?
3. Can these strategies be grouped into a representative overview?

The same "open-minded" approach (see Bryman 2012, 89) holds for identifying the objectives of the present thesis. First, the general aim is established. On its basis, specific goals are put forward. They are discussed in detail in the following section.

1.4. Objectives

The general objectives this dissertation sets out to fulfil are:

1. To discover how light and contrast cues are verbalized in audio description.

2. To establish an outline of strategies the describers use to render the effects of lighting in the scripts.

Specifically, the present thesis aims to:

1. Conduct a state of the art review in the fields of Film Studies and Audio Description with respect to lighting, in order to create a theoretical framework for the analytical part of this dissertation.
2. Design a multiple case-study, by means of which a thematic analysis of the corpus material is carried out.
3. Compile a corpus of commercially available films audio described in English, in which the instances of four pre-determined functions of light (plot punctuation, setting perception, character perception, eye guidance) are analysed in terms of their verbalizations in AD.
4. Interpret, using qualitative measures, the outcomes of the analysis and identify possible future developments in the area.

To sum up, the present thesis sets out to extend prior work on film language description. Even though the research on AD has recently seen some advances in this field, up to date no single study has extensively covered the impact lighting has on film meaning and, as a consequence, on audio description.

1.5. Methodology

The present dissertation has a descriptive character and its research angle is explorative. In other words, it aims to deal with the *how* question of audio description (see section 1.3). To that end it uses a multiple case-study. However, prior to the analysis of the corpus material, a literature review in the fields of Film Studies and Audio Description is conducted (Maszerowska 2012a; 2013). This stage of research is aimed at first determining how lighting is defined by film scholars, and what functions it is attributed with. Next, AD research papers and guidelines are investigated in order to identify what

aspects of light have already been researched in audio description and what issues still remain unaddressed.

Having established the significance of the present dissertation within the existing contributions on the topic, the next step is to design its analytical part. In this phase of the thesis, first a preliminary analysis is conducted on a purposive sample of six audio described crime films (Maszerowska 2013). The corpus is selected “in a strategic way” (Bryman 2012, 418), so that it is relevant in terms of the research questions posed. In crime cinema, “expressive lighting” abounds, since “setting the mood [is] one of the best ways to tell the story” (Keating 2010, 5). All films chosen for the analysis are recorded on commercially available DVDs with dialogues and a professional audio description track in English. At this point it should be noted that the present dissertation is based on cinematographic material with AD in English only. This can be explained by the fact that, across Europe, United Kingdom has the longest tradition and the largest selection of professionally audio described DVDs. Apart from that, using English corpus heightens the visibility of this thesis amongst audio description scholars and practitioners, allowing for international referencing.

Once the first six films are selected, they are subject to a thematic analysis. On a macro level, four broad categories of light functions are established: plot punctuation, setting perception, character perception, and eye guidance. Each is governed by a set of specific conventions (Keating 2010) and lighting set-ups, which are carefully sought in the corpus material. The audio descriptions of the scenes where the relevant lighting cues are identified, are transcribed manually. In this way, the data is preliminarily revised and sorted into corresponding macro-categories. Next, the collected ADs are scrutinized for any recurring verbalization patterns. Two major tendencies surface, which are subsequently extrapolated onto a wider thematic context: property- and effect-oriented AD of light. It is then that the first findings of the present thesis begin to take shape.²

In the second phase of investigation, the sequential approach to sampling is employed. In other words, in order to verify the results of the preliminary analysis, to the initial sample of six films, seven Tim Burton productions are added (Maszerowska forthcoming a). The same thematic analysis is performed, but in the final stage of

² See Bryman 2012, 580-581.

research the data is projected against Kruger's descriptive-narrative continuum (2010). The aim of this phase of the PhD project is to position the ADs of light on the above spectrum and so compose a fine-granular taxonomy of strategies applicable to lighting description.

Since the present thesis is oriented towards advancing the existing concepts within the field of Audio Description, qualitative measures of analysis are employed. The thematic analysis, even though deemed "an approach [without] an identifiable heritage" (Bryman 2012, 578), allowed to lay the foundations for the understanding of the subject matter. Furthermore, it was by following the process of encoding the qualitative data (Boyatzis 1998, vii) that the final contribution of the present dissertation, i.e. the overview of strategies for lighting description, was able to emerge.

Even though the findings obtained on the basis of qualitative research conducted on a purposive sample cannot be generalized, it is believed that this investigation sheds more light on the aspects of film language rendition in audio description. The fact that the methodological focus in the last paper presented herein (Maszerowska forthcoming b) switches from top-down to bottom-up, illustrates the intention of the author to verify the assumptions made throughout this thesis against an authentic, so far undescribed, cinematographic material.

Chapter 2. Conclusions and further research

2. Conclusions and further research

As evidenced in section 1.2 of the present dissertation, light and contrast have so far received little attention from audio description scholars. The mentioning of lighting in AD-related literature is anecdotal, its functions mostly boiled down to marking the passing of time or discerning between dark and bright settings. Meanwhile, when looked at from the perspective of Film Studies, lighting turns out to be one of the most influential elements in cinematography. For example, a face lit from below will evoke different connotations than the same countenance with light cast on top or to the side of it.

The above dissension was the rationale behind this thesis. Its general objective was to investigate how light and contrast cues are verbalized in audio description, and its outcome was oriented towards taking a photograph of the current strategies applicable to lighting description. Given the lack of research on the topic at hand, the present PhD has an explorative angle which instead of proving or disproving a hypothesis, departed from a series of research questions, and on their basis progressively established its more specific aims and goals. The following subsections discuss the degree of their completion and offer a recapitulation of the queries posed along this doctoral project. As a final contribution, possible avenues for future investigations in the field are exposed. These draw on the conclusions of the present thesis, and reveal the multiple interpretations its finding can be subject to.

2.1. State of the art in the fields of Film Studies and Audio Description

The first specific objective of this thesis was to conduct a state of the art review with respect to lighting in the fields of Film Studies and Audio Description. In order to create a theoretical background for the analytical part of the present dissertation, it was mandatory to first define the position of light within filmic language. To that end, an extensive study of manuals, text books and research papers on cinematography was conducted. The many functions and features of light that surfaced during the literature review allowed to acquire a detailed vision of the subject matter. The findings made in this phase of investigation

were brought together in the form of a journal article (Maszerowska 2012a), which allows for the first part of the objective to be considered fulfilled.

Having established the point of view of cinema scholars, it was necessary to investigate the importance of lighting from the perspective of audio description. This dual approach guaranteed the correct contextualization of this project within the field of Media Accessibility and confirmed its validity. The insights obtained from the literature review in AD-related research (Maszerowska 2013) showed that there is a considerable lack of academic interest in light. The revision of the existing guidelines on audio description (ibid.) also revealed a rather superficial understanding of the subject matter. On the one hand, these findings, coupled with the results of the state of the art review conducted in Film Studies, aimed to establish a global perception of light as a cinematographic code within accessible filmmaking. On the other, they reaffirmed the assumption that, when it comes to audio description, it is the interplay and not the singling out of different pieces of visual information that is of essence (Maszerowska forthcoming a).

In this way, the first objective of the present dissertation can be deemed fully accomplished. The significance of light was defined both in terms of cinematography and accessibility. Apart from that, such comprehensive literature review allowed to orientate and structure the analysis which is discussed in detail in the following subsection.

2.2. Case study design and corpus

In order to answer the general research question posed in this dissertation, it was essential to design a case study that would combine two broad aims. First, it would have to allow for the theoretical concepts outlined in the initial phase of research to be applied in practice, i.e. by means of an analysis of the functions of light in a corpus of selected films. Secondly, it would have to enable the examination of the verbal renditions of those instances of lighting spotted in the relevant material, i.e. in the corpus films with audio description.

With that in mind, a multiple case-study of six films followed by a sequential analysis of another seven audio described movies was conducted. This layered approach

can be justified by the lack of similar previous studies to fall back on and the resulting inability to estimate the results. The general, common criteria for corpus selection were the following:

- unilingual films with dialogues and audio description in English;
- mainstream cinema available for Region 2 countries;
- DVD release date after 2000.

The films chosen for the analysis differed in terms of genre, though. The first six productions belong to the category of crime, while the seven remaining films are Tim Burton movies. In spite of the manifold discrepancies between them, both parts of the corpus material were believed to contain numerous scenes where the use of determined lighting set-ups would be of prominence: for example, the conventions for crime films call for a lot of low-key lighting to convey the atmosphere of mystery, and Tim Burton is known for his passion for high contrasts to portray the creepy settings.

All 13 films were analysed in terms of the audio descriptions of the following four functions of light:

- plot punctuation;
- setting perception;
- character perception;
- eye guidance.

These categories resulted from the literature review. It was necessary to create such synthesized labels, so that the study could have been conducted according to identifiable themes.

Once the preliminary analysis was concluded and the first patterns of verbalizations begun to manifest themselves, the second sample of films was scrutinized with the objective to verify the initial results. This second analysis revealed not only similar general tendencies for light and contrast description, but also cared for a schematized distinction of micro-strategies applicable to the four pre-determined features of light. In broad terms, the descriptions of light and contrast can be oriented towards either the property or the effect of a specific lighting convention. In more detail, depending on the function of light, these

two categories branch out to description with elements of narration, a combination of description and narration, intonation-marked description, or soundtrack-enhanced description.

In this way, the last two research questions posed in this dissertation are answered and the objectives related to the design and the presentation of the analysis are successfully accomplished. Even though the corpus used to conduct the conceived study was selected on the grounds of purposive sampling, it is believed that the results offer a first but nonetheless valid insight into the description of light and contrast.

2.3. Interpretation of the outcomes

The most important contribution this thesis makes is the overview of audio description strategies applicable to light and contrast in mainstream cinema. Apart from the novelty this outcome implies, it also stresses the significance of inclusive AD, one that does not exclusively deal with each and every element of the visual layer of films, but that is based on an understanding of the cinematographic craft and the mutual dependence of all its components.

In other words, even though the present dissertation focuses on one particular code of the filmic language, in the course of the analysis it emphasized the ways in which light works together with acting, *mise-en-scène*, the dialogues, not to mention the plot itself. The objective of this project was not to elevate lighting to the very top of AD relevance scales. It did not pretend to position light and contrast above the description of actions or gestures either. Quite the opposite, by means of a qualitative analysis it aimed at showing how lighting interacts with other semiotic codes of film and how this cooperation can work to the advantage of the describer.

For example, the fact that lighting shapes characters can be a valid asset when describing a drama where extreme close-ups of the protagonists with a lot of high contrast focus on their expressions and reveal their affective states. There will be instances when a more property-oriented description of light will suffice, as is the case with plot punctuation, but even within this category there turns out to be room for creativity too. For

instance, a simple cut from night to daytime setting can be announced by mere “day”. However, when the change of temporal circumstances is enhanced by means of such editing techniques like time-lapse footage or fade-out, the describer can resort to more narrative forms of expressions (e.g. “night gives way to a new day”).

That said, the present thesis also reveals that there is no one way of describing lighting. The strategies vary depending on the function, the context, and the time available, to name but a few factors. It was beyond the scope of this project to assess whether the identified approaches were adequate. Instead, it aimed at signalling a series of approximations as to how specific features of light can be described given a certain cinematographic context.

Knowing the filmic craft, its fields of application, and the modes of its employment allows to create descriptions that account for many pieces of visual information in short utterances. The analysis of the film *What Dreams May Come* (Maszerowska forthcoming b) conducted in the last paper of the present dissertation shows how to apply some of these concepts in practice. Discussing the multiplicity of the visual codes this particular film uses, the above article reaches as far as to museum description guidelines to advise on how to render the unusual feel of the image.

To sum up, this thesis contributes to the debate on film language in AD in manifold ways. It is original, in that it investigates a factor no researcher has so far focused on. It is valid, in that it is based on authentic, commercially available material. It is valuable, in that it provides a tangible outcome in the shape of an overview of audio description strategies. Finally, it is authentic, in that it recognizes its caveats and generalization limits, some of which can be solved by future investigations in the field, as outlined in the following subsection.

2.4. Future research avenues

The present dissertation is couched within an established line of AD-related research, but at the same time it opens many new lines of investigation. These can be grouped into three main categories, all of which are contextualized below.

2.4.1. The subject and the approach

In the course of this thesis, light and contrast have been investigated from the point of view of description strategies. Specifically, Kruger's descriptive-narrative continuum (2010) was used as a reference. However, the AD of lighting in film can also be looked at from different perspectives:

- a) linguistically – it could be interesting to see what parts of speech prevail in the audio descriptions of light and what collocations they constitute. This particular angle of research could initially draw on the conclusions of the present thesis, but it would bring the analysis down to the micro-level of lexis. In this way, a contribution would be made to the understanding of the “language used for audio description” (Salway 2007, 1);
- b) culturally – this approach could benefit the ongoing investigations into the aspects of translation of AD scripts. It could be interesting to compare the outcomes of this project with similar analyses conducted on the same films audio described for the purposes of different languages. Would the strategies differ across cultures? Does regional audio description exist?
- c) translologically – for the purposes of this study, Kruger's proposal for audio narration (2010) was used. However, it could be interesting to see whether the descriptions of light and contrast can be analysed against the backdrop of traditional translation strategies. One approach would be to continue along the lines of Matamala and Rami (2009), who used Hurtado and Molina's classification.
- d) cinematographically – the descriptions of light and contrast could be compared with the existing studies on the AD of camera movements, editing, or shot sequences. It would be interesting to see if the strategies differ or, conversely, whether some comparisons can be drawn.

2.4.2. The modality

The present project deals with light and contrast in film. However, lighting is an important feature in other audiovisual productions too. Theatre and dance appear to be the leading modalities, which seems to be confirmed by the existing guidelines on AD. Some of them quote light as one of the principal elements to be described in a stage performance (AENOR 2005; American Council of the Blind's Audio Description Project 2010; Royal National Institute of Blind People 1988). Therefore, it could be of interest to see how light is described within scenic arts, what strategies are applied, and if they coincide with the ones used for film.

2.4.3. The audience

This thesis has a descriptive character. It explores the current state of affairs with respect to lighting and its audio description. As such it does not explicitly take into account the target audience of the audio described film. Since reception studies lie at the core of successful AD (see Chmiel and Mazur 2012), the following studies could be carried out in the future:

- a) preference-oriented reception studies – it could be interesting to see if personal opinions of the target audience fluctuate when it comes to describing specific features of light (Should plot punctuation be always described in terms of the properties of light? Could the mostly effect-oriented description of character-moulding lighting be exchanged for a more explicit one?). A cross-cultural study involving many different countries could provide an even more valuable input;
- b) empirical research – it could be interesting to submit the audio description strategies identified in the present thesis to a critical analysis with the participation of the target audience. An experiment could be designed, in which the ADs of specific lighting patterns used in previously defined contexts would be presented to the participants. Their task would be to define the effect or the purpose of a given description, which would then be compared with the characteristics outlined in Film Studies literature. In this way, the effectiveness and the accuracy of the existing AD strategies could be verified.

As a final prescriptive recommendation, it could be useful to add to the existing guidelines on audio description a separate section on lighting for film, its significance and possible verbalization modes.

Chapter 3. Summary

3. Summary

The aspects of film language rendition have long been at the core of international audio description research. While many scholars have looked into ways in which camera movements, editing techniques and elements of *mise-en-scène* are accounted for in AD scripts, light and contrast, some of the most fundamental codes of film language, have so far not garnered any significant academic interest.

The aim of the present thesis is to address this gap by investigating the strategies the describers apply when dealing with relevant lighting set-ups. To that end, in the course of the PhD project a multiple case-study of 13 films audio described in English was carried out. The analysis of the corpus material was conducted against the backdrop of four general categories of lighting functions: plot punctuation, setting perception, character perception, and eye guidance. All of them had previously been identified on the basis of an extensive literature review in the field of Film Studies.

In the preliminary phase of research, the audio description fragments corresponding to the relevant lighting set-ups were retrieved from a corpus of six crime films. In that stage of investigation, two macro-strategies for audio describing light surfaced: property- and effect-oriented AD. In the second phase of the project, the same four functions of light were investigated, but in a corpus of seven Tim Burton films. Also, a finer-granular analysis drawing on Kruger's descriptive-narrative continuum (2010) was carried out. As a result of the conducted studies, the final contribution of present dissertation emerged: an overview of the existing audio description strategies applicable to cinematographically relevant light and contrast patterns.

The basic conclusion reached upon completing this thesis is that there is no one strategy for the audio description of light. Some patterns of lighting may call for a more explicit rendering, some lend themselves better to a narrative account, and others can be described by mixing description with elements of narration. The decision will depend on the describer's knowledgeability about the filmic craft and its modes of application, as well as on time constraints and scene context, to name only but a few considerations.

It is believed that this approach allows to achieve a photograph of the current state of affairs regarding the AD of lighting. While due to the vastness of the subject matter this project makes no claim to completeness, it can be considered a first step towards better understanding the meaning of light for cinema and, subsequently, for audio description.

Chapter 4. Resum

4. Resum

La interpretació del llenguatge cinematogràfic és de fa molt temps al centre de les investigacions centrades en l'audescrípció. Mentre que molts investigadors han estudiat com els moviments de càmera, les tècniques d'edició i la composició del pla s'expressen als guions d'audiodescripció, la llum i el contrast, codis fonamentals del llenguatge filmic, no han despertat fins ara massa interès acadèmic.

Aquesta tesi té com a objectiu respondre a aquest buit parant esment a les estratègies emprades pels audiodescriptors quan s'enfronten amb configuracions d'il·luminació rellevants. A tal fi, al llarg del projecte de doctorat s'ha realitzat un estudi de cas múltiple de 13 pel·lícules amb audiodescripció. El corpus ha estat analitzat tenint en compte quatre categories generals de funcions de la il·luminació: puntuació argumental, percepció de l'escenari, percepció dels personatges i orientació de la mirada, totes elles prèviament identificades després d'un ampli escrutini de la literatura dels Estudis Fílmics.

A la fase preliminar de la investigació, els fragments d'audescrípció amb aspectes rellevants de configuració de la il·luminació pertanyen a un corpus de sis pel·lícules policíiques. En aquesta etapa de la recerca van sorgir dues macroestratègies per audiodescriure la llum: audiodescripció pròpiament descriptiva o audiodescripció centrada en l'efecte. A la segona fase, les quatre mateixes funcions de llum s'estudien en 7 films del director Tim Burton. També s'hi efectua una anàlisi més al detall, basada en la continuïtat descriptiva-narrativa de Kruger (2010). Com a resultat de la recerca realitzada emergeix la contribució final del present treball: una visió general de les estratègies d'audiodescripció existents aplicables a patrons rellevants de llum i contrast.

La conclusió bàsica a la que s'arriba en acabar aquesta tesi és que no hi ha una estratègia específica per l'audiodescripció de la llum. Algunes pautes d'il·luminació es s'expressen de manera explícita, altres donen lloc a una explicació narrativa, i n'hi ha que poden ésser descrites mesclant descripció amb elements narratius. La decisió depèn de diferents factors com, entre d'altres, del coneixement de l'audiodescriptor de l'ofici filmic i dels seus modes d'aplicació i de les limitacions de temps en cada escena.

Aquest acostament hauria de permetre assolir una visió de l'estat actual de l'expressió de la il·luminació en audiodescripció. Degut a la immensitat del subjecte, aquesta tesi no pretén ser un estudi complert, sinó que espera ésser considerada un primer pas envers d'una millor comprensió del significat de la llum per al cinema i, consegüentment, per a l'audiodescripció.

Chapter 5. Updated bibliography

5. Updated bibliography

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