



Module 1

Unit 1: Audiovisual texts

Core video transcript

Module 1

Unit 1: Audiovisual texts

Transcript

Slide 1

Hello. I'm Aline Remael, from the University of Antwerp, and in this ADLAB PRO video I will explain what the main characteristics are of audiovisual texts. This is Unit 1 (Audiovisual texts) in Module 1 (AD: General Introduction).

Slide 2

Intuitively you know what an audiovisual text is. You have all watched feature films, documentaries, series, talk shows and other such productions in the cinema, on TV or online.

Slide 3

Audiovisual texts, better known as audiovisual productions in some disciplines, are texts that make use of words, images and sounds to tell their story.

Slide 4

They are composed of different modes, sometimes referred to as sign systems, and are therefore essentially multimodal. Moreover, they also use different communication channels.

Slide 5

The different modes that constitute audiovisual texts are:

- the visual-non-verbal mode or images,
- the visual-verbal mode or text on screen,
- the aural non-verbal mode or sounds and music,
- the aural-verbal mode or speech.

Slide 6

Which mode is dominant and how the modes interact with each other to tell the story in any specific audiovisual text will vary greatly and is connected to the genre to which a production belongs. A disaster movie will make use of striking sound effects, whereas a romantic comedy will rely more on dialogue and music.

Slide 7

The different modes are transmitted through two channels: the visual channel (the images) and the auditory channel (the sound track).

Slide 8

The visual channel conveys: the visual non-verbal mode or the images and action filmed by the camera as well as the visual-verbal mode or text on screen, such as text balloons.

Slide 9

The visual channel also conveys how all of this is filmed.

Slide 10

The auditory channel conveys:

- speech, in other words, dialogues, voice-over or interviews, for instance,
- sounds and sound effects, going from birds singing to violent explosions, and,
- music, which is often crucial to set the atmosphere of a scene.

Slide 11

However, other types of productions that can be audio-described, besides filmic ones, often have audiovisual components too.

Slide 12

Obvious examples are live events such as opera and theatre but also exhibitions and museums may have audiovisual and multimodal features.

4

Slide 13

It is important for audio-describers to be aware of all this because the audio description for people with sight loss is added to these already complex productions and the core AD audience has access only to the information conveyed through the auditory channel.

Slide 14

Let's look at some stills from the opening scene of the *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*, a classic from 1952 directed by Henry King.

Slide 15

The opening shot shows a snow-capped mountain and the voice-over of a

male narrator identifies it as Kilimanjaro, the mountain of the film's title, also giving details about its altitude, combining visual non-verbal and aural-verbal modes.

Slide 16

A subsequent shot shows large, as yet unidentified birds flying overhead. Their flight is accompanied by menacing violin music. The aural-verbal mode has been replaced by the aural-non-verbal mode.

Slide 17

Different shots of the birds then alternate with close-up shots of the face of a man whose eyes are moving. He is watching the birds. On the sound track the menacing music continues.

Slide 18

The voice-over identifies the mountain shown by the images as Kilimanjaro. The music with the shots of the birds suggests that they hold a threat. The continuation of this music over the images of the face of the man watching them, also links this threat to the man.

Slide 19

The visual and aural modes of the film convey meaning in themselves and through their interaction.

Slide 20

Audiences who have access only to some of the modes, for instance, the aural one, miss part of the story if there is no AD.

Slide 21

That's it for now. I hope that you have learnt quite a bit about the functioning of audiovisual texts.

Slide 22

A classic you may like to read is: "Film Art. An Introduction", by Bordwell and Thompson (1979).

Creation of these training materials was supported by ADLAB PRO (Audio Description: A Laboratory for the Development of a New Professional Profile), financed by the European Union under the Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships, Project number: 2016-1-IT02-KA203-024311.

The information and views set out in these training materials are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

