



Module 2

Unit 8: Screen audio description: film language

Core video transcript

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Transcript

Slide 1

Hello. I'm Iwona Mazur from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. In this ADLAB PRO video I will talk about film language. This is Unit 8 (Screen AD: film language) in Module 2 (Screen AD).

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Film language comprises different filmic techniques that are used to tell the story in a film.

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The techniques can be grouped into three broad categories: mise-en-scène, cinematography and editing.

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Mise-en-scène refers to what is being filmed in a shot and includes, for example: the setting, costumes and makeup as well as staging, that is the actual performance of the actors.

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These elements are normally prioritised in AD, as you will surely describe the setting, the characters and their actions.

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Cinematography deals with how individual shots are filmed and comprises such aspects as the shots' photographic qualities, framing and duration.

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Photographic qualities include colour, speed of motion, lighting or camera angles.

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For example, a scene can be shot in black and white to indicate a flashback.

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In AD, you can convey this either using a filmic term, for instance “Now in black and white” and let the audience infer what it means in the film narrative.

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Or you can explicate the meaning of the technique: “A flashback”.

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Framing, on the other hand, determines what is presented within a film frame. It is linked to various types of shots, (...)

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(...) which can range from long shots (...)

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(...) to close-ups. We will return to describing shot types in a moment.

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The last aspect of cinematography is shot duration.

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A long take can be used to allow the audience to appreciate a certain landscape, for example.

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In such a case, the AD could be more detailed and read out at a slower pace.

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Finally, editing refers to how shots are arranged. In AD, fast cuts, for example, could be reflected using short and simple sentences.

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Before you start describing a film determine what filmic techniques have been used and what functions they serve.

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A close-up of a woman's eyes could be use to highlight her fear.

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In your AD you can name the technique (“Eyes in close-up”), name it and

describe its function (“A close-up reflects fear in her eyes”) or only describe the function or meaning of the close-up (“Fear is reflected in her eyes”).

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You can also reflect filmic techniques using the corresponding language structures.

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For example, instead of just saying “A man is drinking water” you can say “A hand holding a glass of water”. This will suggest to the blind viewer that what is shown is a close-up of the hand rather than the whole figure of the man.

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Remember that although conveying what is happening on the screen in you AD is a priority, it may also be useful to reflect how the story has been depicted. This will help persons with sight loss actually ‘see’ the film in their minds’ eyes.

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To prepare this video I used the chapter on film language in the ADLAB guidelines. Read it, if you want to find out more.

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I also recommend reading Perego’s article on film language and tools.

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I hope you have learned some interesting things about reflecting film language in AD from this video.



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