



Module 6

Unit 4

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Unit 4: Text-to-speech

Task 1: Multiple choice¹

Question 1

How is text-to-speech (TTS) used in audio description and audio subtitling?

- a) To create audio subtitles only.
- b) To create audio subtitles and audio descriptions.
- c) It is not used, although research shows it has a lot of potential.
- d) It is not used and research shows it does not work.

Question 2

What do results from Szarkowska's team indicate on TTS?

- a) Users prefer TTS AD.
- b) Users are willing to accept TTS AD.
- c) Users are totally against TTS AD.
- d) Users only accept TTS AD for live productions.

Question 3

What do results from Anna Fernández Torné and Anna Matamala seem to indicate?

- a) Human voices are always better assessed than synthetic voices, but most users consider TTS AD an acceptable solution.
- b) Human voices are always better assessed than synthetic voices and TTS AD is not considered an acceptable solution.
- c) Synthetic voices are always better assessed than human voices.
- d) None of the above is true.

¹ The responses are based on the ADLAB PRO core videos. Only one answer is correct.

Question 4

According to Kobayashi's tests, in what type of content was TTS AD most accepted by users?

- a) It was not accepted at all.
- b) Only in documentaries.
- c) In films and series.
- d) In short videos and informational content.

Question 5

Does the genre have an impact on the reception of TTS AD, according to Walczak and Fryer?

- a) No, not at all.
- b) Yes, human voices prompt significantly higher levels of presence for drama compared to TTS voices, but in documentaries results are similar.
- c) Yes, but only in Poland and not in the UK.
- d) Yes, but only in older generations.

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Unit 4: Text-to-speech

Task 2

Aim(s):

- To discuss and evaluate the impact of text-to-speech technologies on the AD process.

Grouping: individual and group.

Approximate timing: 2 hours.

Material and preparation needed:

- ITU-T Recommendation P.85 (1994) Telephone transmission quality subjective opinion test. A method for subjective performance assessment of the quality of speech voice output devices. Geneva: Switzerland, ITU. <https://www.itu.int/rec/T-REC-P.85-199406-I/en>
- Fernández-Torné, A., Matamala, A. (2015). Text-to-speech vs. human-voiced audio descriptions: a reception study in films dubbed into Catalan. *Jostrans. Journal of Specialised Translation*, 24, 61-88.

Development:

1. Provide learners with a 200-word excerpt of an audio description. Ask them to find two text-to-speech voices and produce a text-to-speech audio description. Suggestions: Acapela, Verbio, Festival, iSpeech, Loquendo.
2. Ask learners to rate on a 5-point Likert scale the following items: overall impression, accentuation, pronunciation, speech pauses, intonation, naturalness, pleasantness, listening effort, acceptance.

3. In class, share the results obtained by learners and compare them in case the same voices have been used by different learners.
4. Ask them to compare their results with the results reported by Fernández-Torné and Matamala's article mentioned above.



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Unit 4: Text-to-speech

Task 3

Aim(s):

- To discuss and evaluate the impact of text-to-speech research on the AD process.

Grouping: in pairs or individual.

Approximate timing: 90 minutes.

Material and preparation needed:

1. Kobayashi, M., Kentarou, F., Hironobu, T., & Asakawa, C. (2009). Providing synthesized audio description for online videos. In *ASSETS 09. Proceedings of the 11th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility* (pp. 249-240). New York: ACM.
2. Kobayashi, M., O'Connell, T., Gould, B., Takagi, H., & Asakawa, C. (2010). Are synthesized video descriptions acceptable? In *ASSETS 10. Proceedings of the 13th International ACM SIGACCESS Conference on Computers and Accessibility* (pp. 163-170). New York: ACM.
3. Oncins, E., Lopes, O., Orero, P., Serrano, J., & Carrabina, J. (2013). All together now: a multi-language and multi-system mobile application to make living performing arts accessible. *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 20, 147-164. Retrieved from https://www.jostrans.org/issue20/art_ oncins.php

4. Szarkowska, A. (2011). Text-to-speech audio description: towards wider availability of AD. *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation*, 15, 142-162. Retrieved from https://www.jostrans.org/issue15/art_szarkowska.pdf
5. Szarkowska, A., & Jankowska, A. (2012). Text-to-speech audio description of voice-over films. A case study of audio described *Volver* in Polish. In E. Perego (Ed.), *Emerging topics in translation: audio description* (pp. 81-98). Trieste: EUT. Retrieved from <https://www.openstarts.units.it/handle/10077/6362>
6. Verboom, M, Crombie, D., Dijk, E., & Theunisz, M. (2002). Spoken subtitles: Making subtitled TV programmes accessible. In K. Miesenberger, J. Klaus & W. Zagler (Eds.), *Computers helping people with special needs. ICCHP 2002. Lecture Notes in Computer Science, vol 2398* (pp. 295-302). Berlin: Springer.
7. Walczak, A., & Fryer, L. (2017). Vocal delivery of audio description by genre: measuring users' presence. *Perspectives. Studies in Translatology*, 26(1), 69-83. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2017.1298634>
8. Walczak, A., & Szarkowska, A. (2012). Text-to-speech audio description of educational materials for visually impaired children. In S. Bruti & E. Di Giovanni (Eds.), *Audiovisual translation across Europe: an ever-changing landscape* (pp. 209-234). Bern & Berlin: Peter Lang.

Development:

1. Distribute the 8 articles above among your learners.
2. Ask them to prepare a short 5-minute presentation on each document at home.

3. In class, learners give 5-minute presentations, followed by a discussion led by the trainer, on the impact of research on audio description practice.



The 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.

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