



Module 1

Unit 3: Audio description research

Core video transcript

Module 1

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Transcript

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Hello. I'm Aline Remael, from the University of Antwerp, and in this ADLAB PRO video I will survey the some of the main research trends in AD. This is Unit 3 (Research) in Module 1 (Additional services).

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AD has developed fully into an academic discipline since the turn of the 21st century.

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This means it has developed its own conceptual framework, it has its own publications and conferences, and has been integrated into university programmes.

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AD can also be seen as sub-discipline of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) and/or Media Accessibility (MA).

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Both disciplines study translations for audiovisual texts and have become virtually indistinguishable.

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Both encompass intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation.

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Very specific to research into AD is also its link and interaction with practice, the industry, stakeholders, legislative developments and technological innovation.

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This interaction has resulted in a constant diversification of research topics and methods. Early research questions aiming at understanding how AD functions, going back to the 1990s, continue to be investigated alongside new ones, now often more empirically.

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Initially, research by practitioners and academics alike was mostly analytical-descriptive.

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It asked questions related to AD as a text type and focused on screen AD, aiming to identify its nature and challenges.

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Early research also focused on the development of guidelines. It wanted to understand the challenges involved in the transition from a multimodal text

that can impart a lot of information at once, to a verbal narration that is linear.

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In other words, research focused on determining what content to select for AD.

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It dealt with what to include in the AD and how much.

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It dealt with when to include the information and how.

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And it considered how objective an audio describer should be and whether equivalence is possible in audio described films.

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As AD was developing at different speeds in different regions, resulting in studies focusing on the establishment of national or regional traditions.

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Initial views about the nature of AD tended to be rather intuitive since they were practice-based, relying on the responses of small focus groups only, or on case studies using limited data.

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Technology has enabled researchers to compile larger, digitized multimodal corpora for textual analysis and, more generally, this has led to a strong increase in experimental and empirical research.

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Reception research has benefitted greatly from technological developments such as eyetracking and electroencephalography, which can measure the physical and emotional reactions of AD users.

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As we pointed out before, this means that questions about audience preferences and the functioning of AD can now be answered more accurately.

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Interdisciplinarity and collaboration with experts from such diverse disciplines as engineering or experimental and cognitive psychology has become central to AD research.

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The same goes for project research. European projects such as HBB4ALL aim to create large-scale implementable solutions to the benefit of the industry as well as AD users.

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Some research aims to optimize production methods and minimize costs, looking into the use of machine translation and artificial voices for AD, while

research into quality issues aims to guarantee the quality of the AD thus produced.

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To conclude, the concept of inclusive or universal design in AD is gaining ground. It aims to create products that can be used by all from their inception.

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Several new research initiatives also investigate how AD can be integrated into the creative process of filmmaking and theatre directing, for instance.

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This may eventually lead to the merger of AD research with the larger discipline of accessibility studies.

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Well, this has been a bird's eye view of research in AD. I hope it has kindled your curiosity.

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