



Module 4

Unit 5: Live and recorded audio description

Core video transcript

Module 4

Unit 5: Live and recorded audio description

Transcript

Slide 1

Hello. This is Elisa Perego from the University of Trieste, Italy, and in this ADLAB PRO video I will explain the difference between live and recorded AD in terms of writing and delivery strategies. This is Unit 5 (Live and recorded AD) in Module 4 ((Semi-) live or recorded AD for static arts and environments).

Slide 2

The way AD is delivered is crucial and can have a strong effect on the emotional experience of the visitor, as well as influence the whole aesthetic experience of an artwork. Factors such as the tone and prosody of the narrator's voice, the pace of the narration, the way pauses are used are therefore determining.

Slide 3

In fact, as AD, I quote, "is received aurally by the audience, it carries more than purely semantic information".

Slide 4

Both live and recorded AD are crucial access services to museums and galleries. However, they are different in terms of preparation and delivery strategies, and they are used in different contexts and with different AD types.

Slide 5

Live AD in museums requires the presence of a trained human guide, who needs to be acquainted with the requirements of the audience with sight loss and who knows well the specific content to be described. If a multisensory experience is available, and it includes for instance a touch tour, the guide will also need to be acquainted with the theoretical and practical aspects of tactile exploration.

Slide 6

Not all museums or galleries offer live ADs. The decision to opt for recorded rather than live AD might be determined by the lack of adequately trained human guides, the need to reduce costs, or the wish to offer an access service in several languages, at any time – yet bearing in mind the quality issue.

Slide 7

Although professional recording in a studio is preferable, good results can be obtained also in a semi-professional setting. As shown in the picture, in Trieste, we used my silent office, a good audio recorder, a shotgun mic (operated by a technician), and a stand for the voice talent.

Slide 8

After recording, we processed the audio files using a free audio editing software that enabled us to cut and joint the different tracks; to add the necessary pauses between tracks; to eliminate noise; and finally, to adjust the volume level to make it more consistent.



Slide 9

In terms of preparing and writing live and recorded ADs, keep in mind that the former will just need a rough planning rather than a pre-prepared script because they will be delivered on the fly. In fact, you might just need some notes recording, for instance, titles, ages of the exhibits and some key phrases that you want to use. As a result, live ADs, typically delivered by the audio describer, will end up being slightly informal in style and will adapt to the requirements of the audience.

Slide 10

If you deliver an AD live, remember that PSL might appreciate some pauses to have the time to absorb the information, or ask you some questions, before moving on.

Slide 11

Recorder ADs, on the other hand, will need a tighter logical structure to be followed by listeners with ease and pleasure. They will be smooth, linear and coherent, and they will follow a fairly formal style, closer to the style of written rather than spoken language.

Slide 12

Now, here's a tip. Write any difficult pronunciations into your AD script phonetically and keep sentences short, to avoid slips and costly retakes when recording. Overall, you can also consider giving a short summary at the very beginning of the narration of what you are going to describe.

Slide 13

In general, the AD should favour a narrative approach, where, I quote, “facts and description work towards a ‘story’ about what is being presented”. A narrative style will also help the reader to use imagination to visualize situations, to remember information more easily, and to retain it for a longer time, and to be able to enjoy thoroughly.

Slide 14

The AD of visual arts is not free from constraints that mainly have to do with the attention span of visitors and the ultimate objective of a museum experience, that is, enjoyment. So both in live and recorded AD, do not indulge with the length of your description. Consider the physical fatigue and possible boredom of a visitor standing in front of a work of art, and do not produce ADs longer than approximately a couple of minutes. Remember too, that a PSL does not want to have to spend longer in front of an exhibit than their companions.

Slide 15

I hope the basic differences of live and recorded AD are now clearer. You can learn more watching our additional videos. Bye!

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.

