



Module 2

Unit 1: Screen audio description: films and genres

Core video transcript

Module 2

Unit 1: Screen AD: films and genres

Transcript

Slide 1

Hello. I'm Agnieszka Chmiel from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. In this ADLAB PRO video I will present basic information related to audio description for the screen and focus on films and genres. This is Unit 1 (Screen AD: films and genres) in Module 2 (Screen AD).

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Screen audio description includes audio description of films and shows that are watched on TV, DVD, in cinemas, on VOD platforms and on various devices (TV screens, tablets, phones).

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A survey conducted in the ADLAB project shows that television is the most popular option for AD, possibly because TV offers both entertainment, news and sports and because many people with sight loss prefer to stay in the comfort of their homes to be entertained.

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Screen AD is always prepared in advance and usually recorded although AD may also be delivered live in a cinema.

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Sometimes, the author of the AD script may also be responsible for voicing it. However, it also happens that a professional voice talent is used.

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As in any other type of AD, screen AD must fit between dialogues and make sure special effects are audible.

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However, not all pauses between dialogues should be filled. Otherwise, all the information will be difficult to process and people with sight loss will not have a chance to actually enjoy the film.

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Some programmes are too fast and their AD cannot be really helpful to people with sight loss. These include quiz programmes, game shows and news programmes. Their scripts are almost continuous and offer little opportunity for audio description.

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Films tell a story and AD assists people with sight loss to reconstruct the story based on the auditory information only.

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The story is reconstructed on the basis of actions that are linked to other elements: the characters that cause and undergo them, the spatio-temporal settings in which they take place and the temporal relations between them.

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These are the main building blocks of a film narrative that must be considered when creating audio description.

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Genre is a way of classifying films, of identifying them according to specific repetitive formal, aesthetic or narrative features.

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There are many different genres in cinema: comedy, melodrama, action, thriller, western, etc.

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The label of a particular genre can help the audience formulate their general expectations of a film: in a musical, (part of) the dialogues will be expressed (and/or replaced) by songs.

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In a horror movie, there will be threatening music and startling scary moments.

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Many films mix elements belonging to different genres, thereby creating hybrid categories, such as romantic comedies or science fiction horrors.

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AD script should match the film genre. A lot of terminology may be used and explained in a documentary.

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AD for action films will include short, dynamic sentences.

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In a comedy, the description must be timed with a non-verbal comic sequence so that people with sight loss can laugh together with the sighted audience.

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If you want to find out more, I recommend reading the ADLAB guidelines “Pictures painted in words” and ITC Guidance on Standards for Audio Description.

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I hope you have learned some interesting things about screen AD, films and genres from this video. Bye!

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