

Audio Description Crisis Points: Insights from the ADLAB project

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Overview

- ◆ ADLAB project
- ◆ Aim and methodology
- ◆ Results
- ◆ Discussion

ADLAB project

- ◆ Three-year project (2011-2014)
- ◆ Financed by the European Union under the **Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)**
- ◆ **Eight partners** from six European countries: Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Poland and Germany
- ◆ **Eight** work packages (WPs)
- ◆ WP 3 – **Testing** (2 stages)

WP3: Aim and methodology

- ◆ Aim: identify **Audio Description Crisis Points (ADCPs)** - stumbling blocks; require conscious decision of audio describer (cf. strategic vs. non-strategic translation Lorsch 1991; TCP Pedersen 2005)
- ◆ *Inglourious Basterds*, Q. Tarantino (2009)
- ◆ 5 clips - **ADs** and **quasi-TAPs**
- ◆ **Process-based** analysis – to identify which AD elements problematic
- ◆ **Product-based** analysis (the WHAT and HOW) – to see what **solutions** are applied (>**strategies**)
- ◆ 6 sets of ADs and TAPs
- ◆ **Descriptive** analysis

Identified ADCPs (1/2)

- ◆ Music
- ◆ Text-on-screen (logos, credits, captions, graphics)
- ◆ Setting the scene
- ◆ Describing and introducing characters
- ◆ **Naming characters**
- ◆ **Flashbacks/scene switches**
- ◆ **Camera work**
- ◆ Facial expressions
- ◆ Gestures

Identified ADCPs (2/2)

- ◆ Complex scenes
- ◆ Secondary elements
- ◆ Graphic scenes
- ◆ Intertextual references
- ◆ **Culture-specific issues**

Naming characters

- ◆ Donny Donowitz
- ◆ Donny
- ◆ Donowitz
- ◆ The Bear Jew
- ◆ Sergeant Donowitz
- ◆ Mixed
- ◆ Donny vs. Butz
- ◆ Depends on film genre?

Scene switches/Flashbacks

- ◆ Announce it's a **flashback** ('In a flashback.')
- ◆ Announce **location** ('Back to Hitler's office.' 'In the projection room.' 'Back at the premiere.')
- ◆ Announce **who is speaking** ('Hitler:')
- ◆ Announce **scene participants** ('Butz in front of Hitler.')
- ◆ Announce that **scene will be switching** between two locations ('The scene switches between Hitler's room and the forest.')
- ◆ The same '**descriptive verbal strings**' : 'In light-grey **overalls**' vs. 'In a long vibrant **red dress**'

Camera work (1/3)

- ◆ [clip – the injection]

Complex scenes (2/3)



Camera work (3/3)

- ◆ Mention **filmic terms**
- ◆ AD1: '**Cut to** Brigit who is being given an injection.'
- ◆ Render camera work using **language structures**
- ◆ AD2: '**Hands of a man** apply an injection to a leg: (*scream*) Hammersmark on a treatment couch.'
- ◆ **Do not mention** it at all
- ◆ AD3: **Bridget lies on an operating table** while a vet in white nightshirt and cap, **gives her an injection.**
- ◆ Purpose of AD: to '**SEE**' what the director wanted to convey?
- ◆ Help of **film script**?

Complex scenes (1/3)

- ◆ [clip – the shooting]

Complex scenes (2/3)

- ◆ **TAP**: 'Complex shooting scene: 12:05:10: what to choose? If you say nothing, nobody knows what happens. I chose the blood first (because its Tarantino-specific), then the "first table" (because they are our main characters) and added the "players-table" altogether. As I could not say: he is dead and he is shot etc I sum it up with Wilhelms look. Actually, Hammersmark is not dead, but she seems to be and it looks like it. So its a **surprise** for the sighted and the blind when she is still alive.'

Complex scenes (3/3)

- ◆ Cognitive narratology (Vandaele 2012)
- ◆ **Realized action** vs. **hypothesized (assumed) action** (the telling and the story)
- ◆ Triggers of **mental states**: suspense, curiosity, surprise
- ◆ AD – recreating the triggers?

Culture-specific items (1/2)



Culture-specific items (2/2)

- ◆ AD: 'Hellstrom lifts his **boot stein**.'
- ◆ TAP: 'Secondary elements: 12:02:16: more silence would be nice as well, but the beer stein is such a clumsy cliché and characterises Hellstrom – **it has to be in the AD** (I am sure, when a blind person watches the film next to a sighted person, the sighted person will remark the beer stein)'

Discussion

- ◆ Purpose of AD? (narration? 'seeing'? recreation of triggers for mental states?)
- ◆ The **ADCP** the basis for the **Guidelines**
- ◆ Guidelines in form of **strategies** (cf. translation strategies)
- ◆ Proposed **AD solutions** – basis for strategies
- ◆ Strategies – will **depend** on film genre, director, target audience etc.

<http://www.adlabproject.eu>