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. nonstrategic translation Lorscher 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)

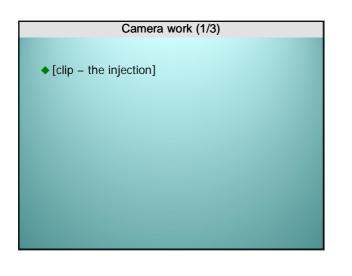
- Complex scenes
- Secondary elements
- ♦ Graphic scenes
- ◆ Intertextual references
- Culture-specific issues

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 (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 (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