Audio describing foreign language films

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OUTLINE

1. Polish AD landscape
2. Methods of audio describing foreign films
3. New method: text-to-speech AD
AUDIODESCRIPTION IN POLAND

1990s - ‘Typhlofilms’
– over 30 films
– Polish and foreign (AD + voice-over)

2006
– Cinema screenings with live AD

2007
– Polish TV series & feature films available online
  • www.tvp.pl/dostepnosc/audiodeskrypcja
  • ca. 80 hours

2008 – first DVD with AD
AUDIO DESCRIBING FOREIGN FILMS

- AD + audio-subtitling
- AD + voice-over
1. multilingual films

2. foreign language films

Who reads audio subtitles?

– Audio describer?

– Another voice talent/actor?
AD + AUDIO SUBTITLING

Volver
AD + VOICE-OVER

The Magnificent Seven
AD + AUDIO SUBTITLING vs. VOICE-OVER

- Common goal: to make foreign films accessible to visually impaired spectators
- The translation of original dialogue in a foreign language
- The original sound in the background
- Oral discourse
- Can visually impaired audience distinguish between AS & VO?

Merging modalities
AD + AS/VO PROBLEMS

- Synchronising AD
  - with voice-over/audio-subtitles?
  - or with source language dialogue?
- Time-consuming
- High production costs
  - Writing the AD script
  - Recording it
  - Mixing with the original soundtrack
TEXT-TO-SPEECH AUDIO DESCRIPTION

- Audio description read by speech synthesis (text-to-speech) software

- Combined with voice-over or subtitling to audio describe foreign films
  - One synthetic voice (AD + VO)
  - Two synthetic voices (AD + AS)
Advantages of TTS AD

- AD production
  - Cost-effectiveness
  - Precise synchronisation
  - A selection of high quality voices
  - Creation of AD templates

- Target audience
  - Familiar with TTS software
  - Rural visually impaired population with no access to (live) AD in cinemas
AUDIOVISUAL PROGRAMME

AD SCRIPT

SYNCHRONISING AD SCRIPT WITH AV PROGRAMME

TEXT FILE CONTAINING AD SCRIPT WITH TIME CODES

FILM PLAYER

TEXT-TO-SPEECH SYNTHESIZER

TEXT-TO-SPEECH AUDIO DESCRIPTION
TTS AD + VOICE-OVER

- Volver
Text-to-speech AD

- Cheaper and more easily available alternative to traditional pre-recorded AD
- Increasing the total AD output
- More audiovisual products accessible to the visually impaired
Questions and comments?

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