

**Text-to-speech audio description with audio
subtitling of a feature film. A case study of *Borat:
Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit
Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan***

Presentation outline

What is audio description (AD)?

What is audio subtitling (AS)?

Project: text-to-speech AD with AS

AUDIO DESCRIPTION

- ▶ An additional narration track for blind and visually impaired people describing what is happening on the screen
- ▶ WYSIWYS (Joel Snyder)

WAYS OF AUDIO DESCRIBING FOREIGN FILMS

- ▶ AD + voice-over
- ▶ AD + audio subtitling

AUDIO SUBTITLING

- ▶ Voicing subtitles
- ▶ AS read by a person vs speech synthesiser
- ▶ What for?

To make audiovisual texts accessible for people not familiar with the foreign source language



foreign language films multilingual films

TEXT-TO-SPEECH AUDIO DESCRIPTION

- ▶ Audio description read by speech synthesis (text-to-speech) software
 - One synthetic voice (AD + VO)
 - Two synthetic voices (AD + AS) → *Borat*

The way we did it..

Translating
subtitles

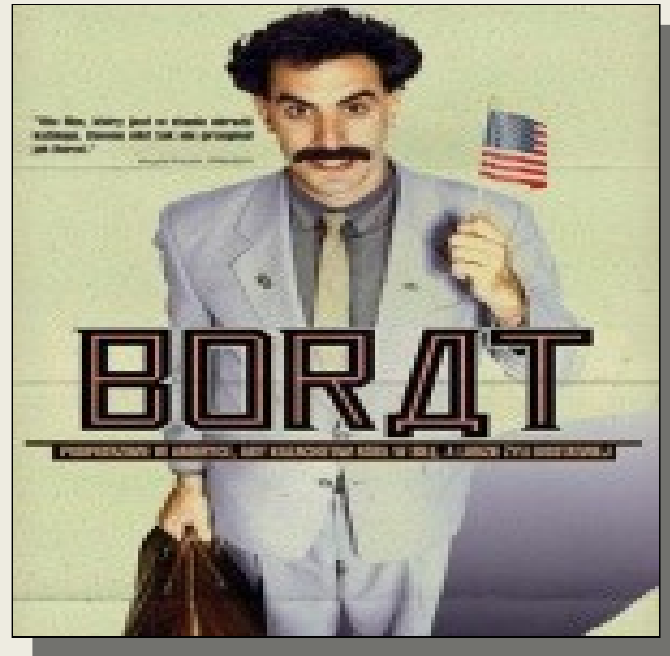
Writing AD
script

Setting time-
codes and
synchronising
the script
with the film

Script +
film
player +
speech
synthesiser

TTS AD
with AS

TTS AD + AUDIO SUBTITLING



**Borat: Cultural Learnings of America
for Make Benefit Glorious
Nation of Kazakhstan**

Advantages of text-to-speech AD + AS

- ▶ Cost-effective
- ▶ Access to foreign films
- ▶ Selection of voices
- ▶ Making use of the software that visually impaired people already have
- ▶ Films available for everyone (people from big cities as well as small towns)

Problems with text-to-speech AD +AS

- ▶ Unnatural intonation
- ▶ Problems with reading foreign names



Logo wytwórni filmowej sentury foks


- Arnold Schwarzeneger = Arnold Szfarceneger
- ▶ Problems with reading numbers and numerals
- ▶ Reading speed (synchronising AD with AS)

Challenges we faced


- ▶ Plot changes quickly → Not enough space for AD
- ▶ A lot of dialogues and monologues of the main character
- ▶ Borat's English → Translate the mistakes or not?
- ▶ Vulgarisms
- ▶ Many foreign names
- ▶ Translating English AD script vs. writing a new one

Text-to-speech AD with AS

Cheaper and more easily available alternative to the traditional pre-recorded AD



Increasing the total number of audio described films



Giving visually impaired people access to foreign programmes and films

Questions and comments?

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More information on the subject available soon at:

www.avt.ils.uw.edu.pl