

Different Approaches to the AD in Russia: How to Improve the AD Quality?

a presentation by

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AD in Russia

- As early as in 1920s, during the silent film era, describers (called by a Japanese word *benshi*) provided live narration for silent films
- Vasili Oshchepkov was one of them.



AD in Russia

- 1978

The first described film, *Cleopatra*, the 1963 American epic historical drama, was screened in Moscow.

Audio describer –
Anatoly Chechetin



AD in Russia

- 1970s-1990s
“Audio films”



AD in Russia

2000s

- Reacomp (Institute) - “typhlocommenting”
- All-Russia Society of the Blind
- RuFilms, LLC



Comparing approaches

“Typhlocommenting” vs. Audio Description

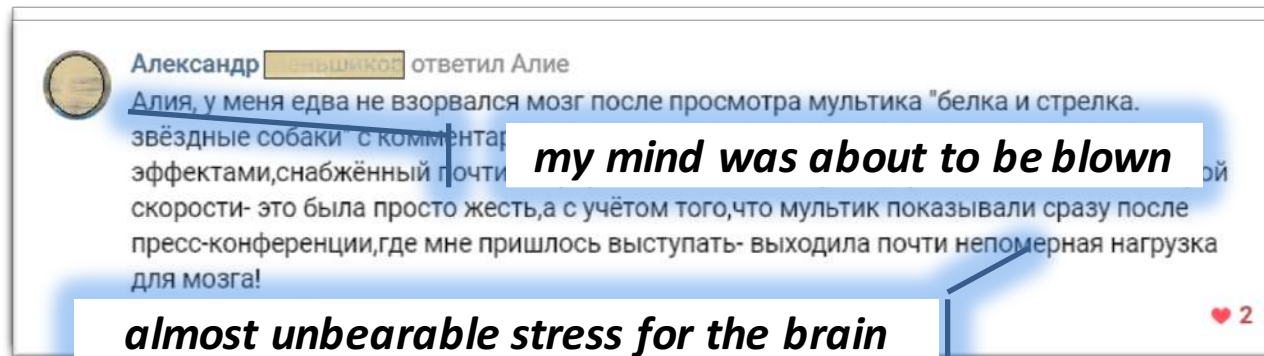
“Typhlocommenting”	Audio Description
is not considered a form of translation	is considered a form of translation (intersemiotic, <i>R.Jacobson</i>), particularly, a form of AVT

“Typhlocommenting”

- *Space Dogs*,
a Russian animated film



“Typhlocommenting” Viewers’ comments



If you close your eyes at the beginning of the film, you may even find yourself having fallen asleep...

...итель не разбирается в погонах офицеров Российской Империи, он ни героев морской офицер, кто ротмистр, а кто в звании капитана (диктор того персонажа). Закрыв глаза в начале «Белки и Стрелки», рискуешь проснуться на середине: в мультфильме так динамично сменяются сцены, что голос тараторящего комментатора быстро перестаёт восприниматься. Возможно, это просто с непривычки.

— 2016-й — Год кино, и наша мечта — сделать татарский тифлокомментарий к татарстанскому

you stop grasping the jabbering voice of the describer

Why?

- Description of each frame, rather than a sequence, and tautology

“Close up of a lump of cheese. The lump of cheese is in crow’s clutches. The crow dances in the air with cheese in its clutches, does flips and somersaults. Crow juggles with the lump of cheese, moving it from one limb to the other, catching it with its beak.”

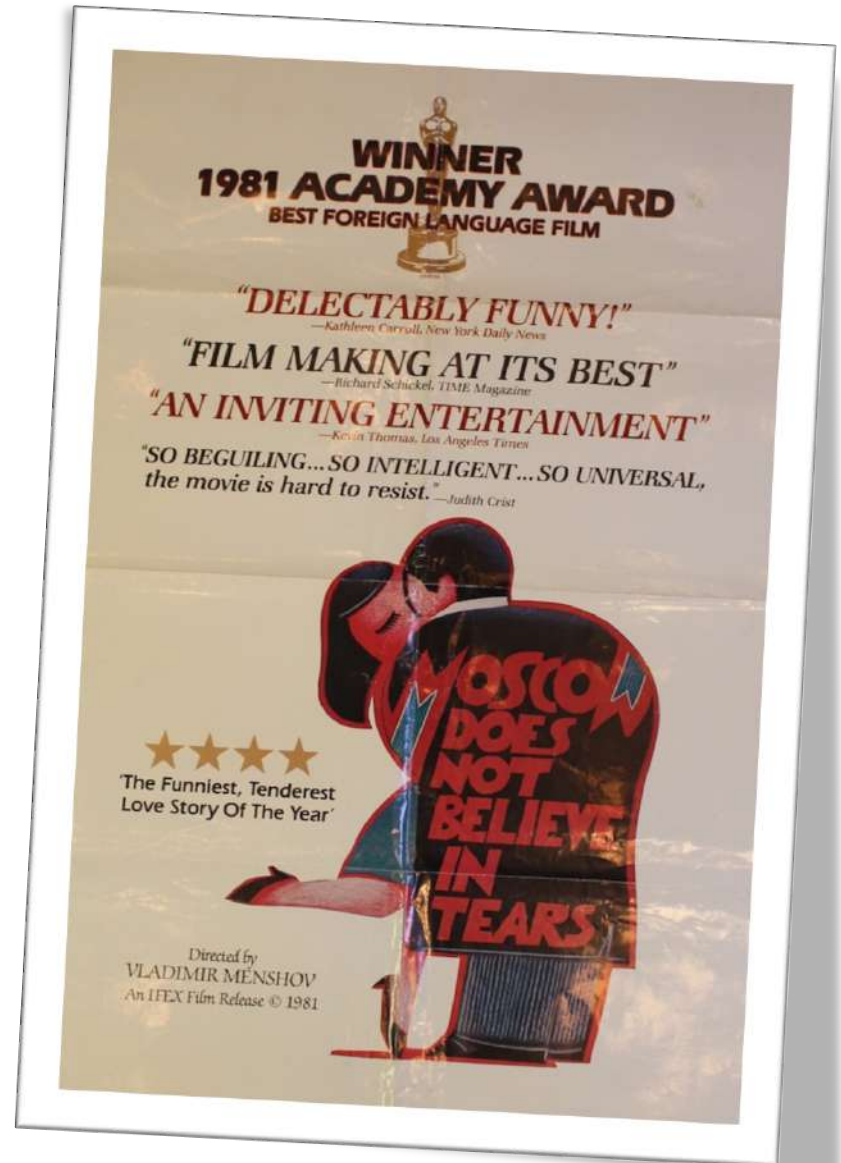


Why?

- The “description” fills in every spare second.
- The “description” overlaps not only music, noises and walla (rhubarb) sounds of the original soundtrack, but also dialogues
- Obvious sounds are described.
- Unnecessary details are described.

“Typhlocommenting”

How to spoil
an Oscar-winning film
with a bad
“typhlocomment”



Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears

“Typhlocommenting”

Character	Timing	Soundtrack	What is demonstrated on the screen
Ludmila	06.40	Can you just say “Hello” when he calls me?	Ludmila talks to a receptionist in the hostel.
Describer	06.42	At the monument...	Ludmila returns to her room
Receptionist	06.43	I must put it down.	The receptionist takes a pen.
Describer	06.44	...to Mayakovsky.	
Poet	06.45	Walla	Andrey Voznesensky, a famous Russian poet, reads his poem at the Mayakovsky’s monument

Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears

“Typhlocommenting

Katya	07.31	You say Tonya's life is bad, mine is bad, too.	Katya and Ludmila are walking along the street. They pass a young man who is giving a hug to his girlfriend.
Describer	07.33	Police Community Support Officers...	
Katya	07.34	What do you call “life”?	Police Community Support Officers approach the young man.
Police Community Support Officer	07.35	Stop hugging! You're in a public place! Don't you know that?	The young man takes away his arm.
Describer	07.39	...address the young man...	Katya and Ludmila are still walking along the street followed by two young men.
Ludmila	07.41	And your chemistry is such a boring science.	
Describer	07.42	...who placed his hand..	Katya and Ludmila pass large shop windows.
Ludmila	07.42	You deal with boring formulas.	
Describer	07.43	... on girl's shoulder.	Ludmila is adjusting her clothes and stumbles.

Turning point

- In such an environment RuFilms had to redefine AD so that it could be clearly different from typhlocommenting.
- The cue was taken in 2013-2014 from the early research in augmented reality productions.

One and only reality

- The way vision-impaired and blind people perceive the world around them is their one and only reality.
- AD/SDH/electronic devices are various tools for augmenting that reality in various directions.

AD as an AR tool

- There are several directions in which vision impaired people's reality might be augmented to the level when they can communicate about it with non-impaired people
 - Informative (this is where typhlocommenting is still working)
 - Emotional (vision impaired people can not be deprived of emotions from natural sounds, music, richness of voices and good reading)
 - Experiential (the vision impaired people need to live through the plot and character experiences, scenes etc)

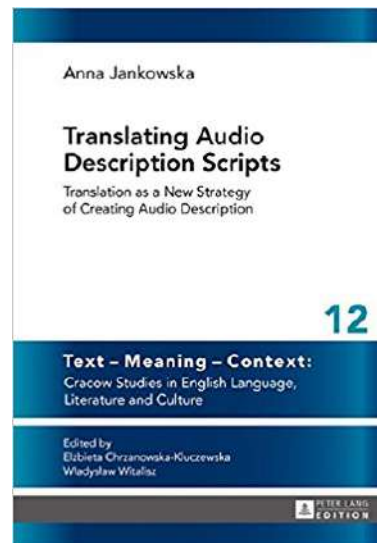
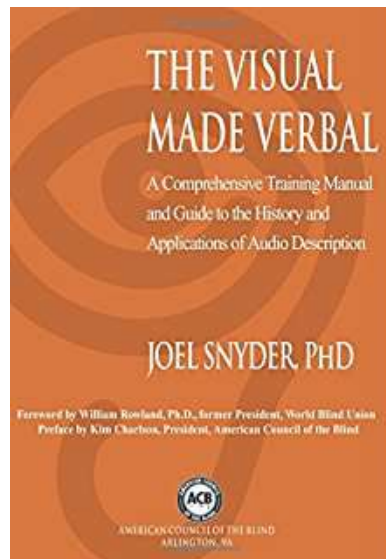
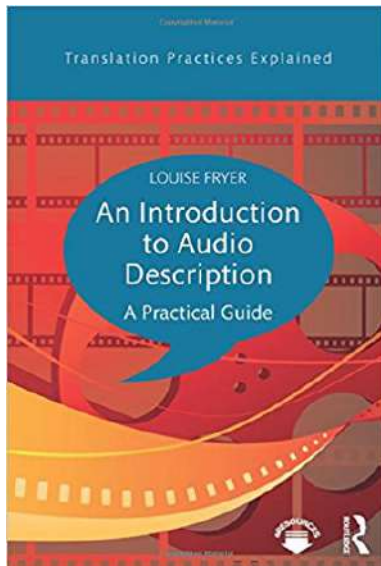
Moving out

- This approach allowed RuFilms to depart from the rigorous treatments of AV productions that typhlocommenting offered and start moving toward classical AD expanding its principles at the same time.

What can be done to improve the AD quality in Russia?

- The basic answer is clear:

LEARN AD and apply its principles



Audio Description vs. “Typhlocommenting”

Joel Snyder’s four principal elements of AD

- OBSERVATION
- EDIT
- LANGUAGE
- VOCAL SKILLS

Common sense and Chekhov's gun

- Oops! Not this one!



Common sense and Chekhov's gun

How ~~Chekhov's~~
~~Gun~~ Can Help
You With
Description



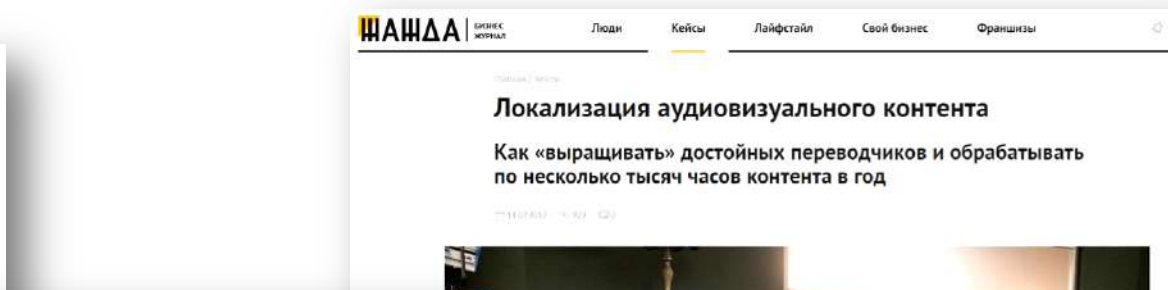
Chekhov's gun

- **“Remove everything that has no relevance to the story.** If you say in the first chapter that there is a rifle hanging on the wall, in the second or third chapter it absolutely must go off. If it's not going to be fired, it shouldn't be hanging there.”

— Anton Chekhov

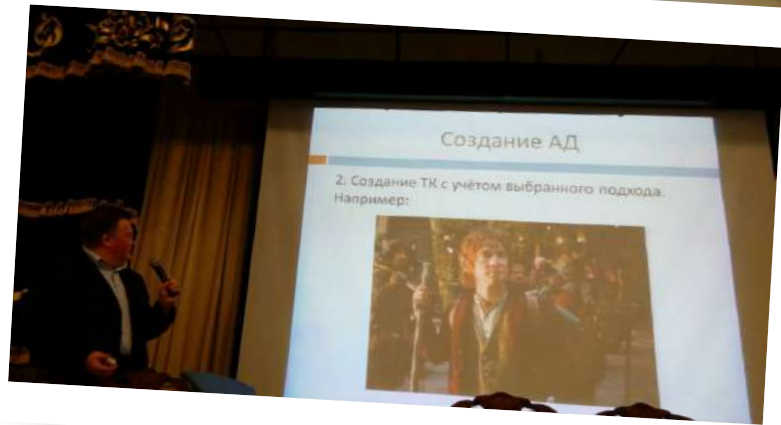
What can be done to improve the AD quality in Russia?

- Raise public awareness towards new approaches



What can be done to improve the AD quality in Russia?

The Rufilms School of Audiovisual Translation promotes the AD in leading Russian universities



What can be done to improve the AD quality in Russia?

- The School for Audiovisual Translation invites international specialists in the field to teach Russian translators and recently held a unique AVT course that featured in its AD part
 - Joel Snyder
 - Anna Matamala
 - Pilar Orero
 - Pablo Romero-Fresco
 - Anna Jankowska
 - Agnieszka Szarkowska

Students' Feedback

- Raushana K.:

“... a unique opportunity to listen to lecturers from all over the world...”

- Maria B.:

“... a team of enthusiasts who are devoted to their work and do it with all their heart”

- Elena E.

“... it was great to learn the AD from the best experts in this field...”

2018 as the year of legitimisation of AD

- Right now RuFilms AD experts are working in the national group on the establishment of the standards of the profession of a translator/interpreter and successfully promote the AD/SDH as a part of the AVT professional cluster.
- The standards will be adopted by the Government in December, 2018 and this will open up the Russian educational system and professional communities to the new approaches.

RuFilms AD projects of 2016-2017

Dozens of films including but not limited to:

- *Masha and the Bear*, a Russian animated television series
- *Matilda*, a historical drama about the last Russian Tzar, Nickolas II.
- *Loveless*, A.Zvyagintsev's film, an Oscar nominee
- AD for the Aeroflot in-flight entertainment program
- The first Russian music video with the AD ("*Please*", *Amelie-Na-Meli*)

Conclusion

- One can say that AD at this point has firmly established itself in Russia as a distinct branch of research and an AVT discipline
- The definition of AD as an AR tool proves to be a good tool for the introduction of AD in new medias (3D, VR, games) as it allows to classify the levels of the reality augmentation and analyse their perception.