

Professional audio descriptions:
same film, same assignment
= same quality?

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ARSAD 2017

Barcelona, 16-17 March

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Research on AD quality

- Orero (2012)
 - Quality has been sacrificed to quantity
 - Regulatory bodies (Ofcom or AENOR)
 - have developed standards
 - haven't developed ways to assess quality
- Specific approaches on AD quality
 - Walczak (2014) → engagement=quality?
 - Rodríguez (forthcoming) → sound quality
- Lack of an overall approach

Research on AD quality

- This on-going research
 1. Develop a measurement scale for AD quality
 - Based on non-contradictory items from different standards
 - Set aside stylistic issues
 - Involve researchers and professionals
 2. Assess professional AD
 - VIW project (ES, EN, CA)

Research on AD quality

- This on-going research
 1. Develop a measurement scale for AD quality
 - Based on non-contradictory items from different standards
 - Set aside stylistic issues
 2. Assess professional AD
 - VIW project (ES,) → Validate

Measurement scale for AD quality

- Non-contradictory items from different standards
 - ES: Spanish standard UNE 153020 (AENOR 2005)
 - EN: ITC Guidance on Standards for Audio Description (Ofcom 2000)
 - CA: Bases per a un futur protocol d'audiodescripció per a l'àmbit català (Puigdomènech, Orero & Matamala, 2007)
 - A Comparative Study of Audio Description Guidelines Prevalent in Different Countries (Sonali, Greening & Petré, 2010)
 - Germany, France, US, Greece

Measurement scale for AD quality

- Set aside stylistic issues
 - Applicable to different languages/AD traditions
- Aim
 - Functional tool

Measurement scale for AD quality

- After reviewing the different standards
 - Classification of non-contradictory AD items:
 - Content
 - Language
 - Sound

Measurement scale for AD quality

- CONTENT
 - Synchronization: No dialogue/important sound overlapping
 - Time/place: localization & changes
 - Character ID: name, avoid pronouns when many appear
 - Written information: include (subtitles, text, credits...)
 - Accurate information (left/right, etc.)

Measurement scale for AD quality

- CONTENT
 - Patronizing issues:
 1. no description of what is obvious from the original soundtrack (actions, names, sounds...)
 2. no addition of extra information
 - Narrative:
 1. never give away the plot nor preempt mystery/tease
 2. describe visual items which are important for narrative
 - Subjectivity: never voice a personal opinion nor use 'we'

Measurement scale for AD quality

- LANGUAGE
 - Use of a/the according to AD rules
 - Grammar issues
 - Pronunciation issues
 - Use of language (interferences, etc.)
 - Wrong vocabulary/confusing phrasing
 - Cacophony/redundancy
- SOUND
 - Voice talent
 - Good equalization AD-soundtrack
 - Good transitions AD-soundtrack

Measurement scale for AD quality

- SCALE DESIGN
 - Additive spreadsheet
 - Errors divided by classification
 - 1 point per error
 - Results
 - Partial content-language-sound scores
 - General score
 - The higher the score, the worse the AD quality

The corpus: the VIW project

- Matamala & Villegas (2016)
 - Open access AD research corpus
 - 12-minute *ad hoc* short film
 - English and dubbed into Spanish and Catalan
 - AD commissioned to professionals
 - 10 x EN, 10 x ES, 10 x CA
 - <http://pagines.uab.cat/viw/>

The corpus: the VIW project

- For this on-going research
 - Pilot test analyzing 5 Spanish professional AD
 - Aim:
 - Check functionality of the scale
 - Identify any lacks in it
 - Future validation/improvement with professionals' and researchers' input

Preliminary results

	ES1	ES2	ES3	ES4	ES5	TOTAL
CONTENT	7	5	9	6	4	31
LANGUAGE	1	2	0	2	4	9
SOUND	0	0	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	8	7	10	8	8	

Preliminary results: Content

Item	Total errors	Percentage
Time/place	5	16,13%
Written information	2	6,45%
Accurate information	4	12,9%
Patronizing (obvious)	7	22,58%
Patronizing (addition)	11	35,48%
Narrative 1	1	3,1%
Subjectivity	1	3,1%
Total	31	100%

No errors for: synchronisation, character ID, narrative (important elements)

Preliminary results: language & sound

- Language:
 - Some minor redundancies and use of language (abuse of pronouns)
- Sound:
 - The equalization of one of the Ads was improvable

Further steps

- Improvement of scale
 - Some ambiguous categories
 - Validation with professionals and researchers
 - Extend analysis to all ADs in ES, CA, EN
 - Perform interlingual analysis
 - Extend scale with language/country-specific standards
 - Export to 0-10 scale for comparison purposes among different duration products

References

- Orero, Pilar (2012) "Audio Description Behaviour: Universals, Regularities and Guidelines" in International Journal of Humanities and Social Science: 195-201.
- Matamala, Anna & Marta Villegas (2016) Building an Audio Description Multilingual Multimodal Corpus: The VIW Project. UAB.
- "This paper/presentation is part of the project NEA (Nuevos Enfoques sobre Accesibilidad, New Approaches to Accessibility), funded by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad (reference code FFI2015-64038-P)"

Thank you! Any comments welcome!