

## Theses of the Research

The purpose of my doctoral research is to set up the Hungarian model of Audio Description on audiovisual contents in consideration of the American and European guideline and to formulate the set of minimum requirements essential for quality assurance.

I explore what are the technical, artistic and aesthetic issues raised by Audio Description (AD), which has been implemented in member states of the European Union from 1 January 2014, on the side of the author, the transmitter and the receiver. I shall fit certain practical elements - with the exception of culture-specific elements - of the currently applied AD guidelines into the Hungarian model, thereby ensuring the European compatibility of the Hungarian model. I am searching for answers, in consideration of culture-specific elements and the domestic media consumption habits, what are those fundamental physical, technical laws that need to be taken into account by those Hungarian authors who create according to the AD standard, so that the visual and audio world of audiovisual content should provide the fullest aesthetic, cultural and artistic experience, not only at the level of perception, but also as a result of artistic consciousness, to those challenged native Hungarian speakers who are partially sighted or blind.

In consideration of the *AVMS directives of the European Union*, as of 1 January 2014 *OFCOM* started the implementation of the required new services. In accordance with the requirements, subject to the technical framework of digital transmission, the audiovisual programs aired by members subject to the supervision of the agency must be expanded by new services (access services) in a specified percentage (according to an annually increasing quota). This category includes *HOH*, meaning *Hard of Hearing* (film legends expressly created for persons with hearing impairment), *Signing* (i.e. interpretation in sign language expressly for the deaf, shown under films, television programs) as well as *AD*, i.e. *Audio Description*, which makes the program flows of audiovisual contents “accessible” for the blind or partially sighted.

Using the remote controller of the SET-TOP-BOX connected to the television sets it is possible to select which is the additional service that persons living with challenges intend to access. It must be presented verbally according to the rules of Audio Description what is visible in which part of the screen and what is happening. This additional narrative may be voiced in the “temporal gaps” (pauses) of the dialogues of the film, and is presented entirely

separated from the diegesis of the film. The preparation of the additional narrative band requires knowledge of complex film language.

When the Hungarian model and protocol were developed, I rely on the proposals of the World Blind Union (Audio Description Toolkit), the results of the ADLAB project, the critical analyses of the American and British experiences, “guides”, essential for a Hungarian perspective - taking into account the differences between the culture and media consumption differences, culture-specific habits of these countries.

My research starts with formulating the definition of Audio Description. After the definition of the target group I briefly describe, through the legal approach of disability, the British and Hungarian media regulations, in an effort to demonstrate the justification and timeliness of the implementation of the model. The short chronological, historical presentation provides an insight into the development of AD in the United States and in Europe. The presentation of the encoder and decoder side of AD continues with the physical and biological processes of detection and perception, laying the foundation for knowledge supporting the psychological and philosophical approach of the Hungarian model.

With regard to the fact that Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council mentions silent films and sound films separately, therefore through the birth of the silent movie I will highlight the contemporary film tools suitable for being incorporated into AD by the presentation of the technical and sound editing principles of the time. My research continues with the birth of the sound film, an assessment of the tools of expression of the new medium, with the presentation of the most significant film theorists, then ends with the analysis of sound design, visual and audio world, which is one of the pillars of the AD protocol. Concerning the implementation of the Hungarian AD protocol, I shall present the technical opportunities that are now accepted all over the world, comparing them to the Hungarian alternatives. Through the description and analysis of the flow chart of the Hungarian AD protocol I provide practical guidance to utilization. Finally, I formulate the system of quality requirements of the Hungarian protocol.

The fundamental conventional guideline of Audio Description is the following: W.Y.S.I.W.Y.S. – “WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU SAY” Audio Description includes an analysis of the visual and sound means of expression of the original cinematographic work. The two channels of the film (image and sound) simultaneously convey the intention of the author, their artistic message in such a manner that it highlights, prioritizes, summarizes elements from the hierarchical code system of the motion pictures that have been seen and

heard. For the highlighting, summarization everything must be heard and seen that the authors assigned to the given series of picture frames. The language of the sound film requires the enhancement of the *way of seeing and hearing*, and it is only through a skilled audio describer (audio narrator) that it can be conveyed verbally to blind or partially sighted persons.

The Hungarian AD model builds on the differences owing to the determined status of the language, in contrast with the American and the British model, where English is the source language, therefore the content is not “transposed”, only conveyed. The status of being determined by language essentially affects the system of aspects that I use as a basis for setting up the Hungarian model and protocol. Although the structure, build-up of the model show similarities with the models of other countries, the primary difference still lies in the different features of the source language in the target language, which also incorporates differences in the ways of thinking, cultures and societies.

In my research I explore the opportunity of translation of audiovisual contents, since in AD we convert visual codes into verbal codes. The visual codes appear in the form of “images.” In order to translate the images, I first explore the possible definitions of an image, i.e. what we mean by “image.”

I assess the receiving side through the approach of constructivist perceptual-cognitive theory and the behaviorist school.

In consideration of the set of rules by Erdélyi and the method of analysis by Ferenc Lohr, I propose to set up the following system of quality criteria for the assessment and understanding of audio narration.

1. The sound channel of the original cinematographic work and that of the Audio Description are two distinct sound channels that are well-separated physically and technically and can be distinguished from each other.
2. The tone, style of the Audio Description conveys the tone, style of the original film but is not an essential part of the cinematographic work, rather, Audio Description constitutes a separate, stand-alone work of art.

3. In terms of voice dynamics the Audio Description does not follow the world of sounds that is essentially related to the visual world of the film. It is neither crass, nor moderate, rather balanced and objective.
4. It only formulates the proximity, distance of the events presented by the image and sound world verbally.
5. The text of Audio Description builds on the common knowledge expected to be possessed by the receiving blind and partially sighted persons, predefined target groups (children, adults, persons with multiple disabilities or suffering from a rare disease, etc.) and uses, in accordance with the rules of Hungarian language, the set of words and expressions expected to be known by the target group and commonly used in everyday parlance, avoiding misunderstandings, in a way that can be easily understood at first hearing.
6. The amount of the Audio Description text is restricted to the amount necessary for the description of the scene, it is only set in the temporal pauses of the dialogues, overlapping is not allowed, it does not prevent reception of the entire world of sound of the film.
7. The purpose of Audio Description is the verbal conveyance of the original cinematographic work, through the presentation, description of the characters, the place, form, movement, sounding, perspective and additional information.
8. Audio Description avoids interpretation.
9. In each showing Audio Description must convey the same information necessary for the reception and understanding of the film, and must always elicit the same effect (such as fear, sympathy, etc.).
10. The sound quality of Audio Description must meet the technical parameters defined in standards applying to cinemas and television transmissions. It must be distinct from the original sounding in terms of sound dynamics, tone, mixing, it must not contain sound errors (such as cracking, popping, loss of sounds, distortion, and underlying noise of creaking or purring, too many high or low sounds). Audio Description must strive for verbally conveying the original artistic values of the film.