Creativity in AD

Creative expression or subjective intervention?

2019
Evangelia Liakou, PhD candidate, Ionian University, Department of Foreign Languages, Translation and Interpreting
Part of the doctoral dissertation: “Audio Description Techniques for Greek cinema”
Theoretic background

- Monaco’s film reading theory (2009:174)
- Szarkowska’s auteur description (2013)
- AD guidelines- American Council of the blind (2009)
- Holland on impartiality in audio description (2009)
- Udo and Fels (2009: 179)
- Joel Snyder on creative AD (2005)
Methodology

- Description of a Greek drama (*Journey to Mytilene*, 2010, Lakis Papastathis)
  - Basic filmic feature: nostalgia
- Projection to BVI audience
- Question on their preference by offering examples from the film (language & tone) and possible alternatives
- Projection of the film to the director
It was decided to...

- Incorporate the AD in the film as part of the end artistic product—*not just a service*
- Reflect the nostalgia and filmic atmosphere in the AD
  - Use more “free” language (vocabulary, syntax, metaphors, similes etc)
  - Broadcast the descriptions in tone relevant to the plot (faster, slower, sorrowful, dramatic etc)
Examples (language and vocabulary)

- “He approaches the beggar who is gazing at the sea with her empty, tired eyes. Behind her, the pink and blue dawn”
- “The uncle looks through the car window feeling lost. Time has left a wrinkled mark on his face”
- “She slowly turns and stares at Kostas with her sunken, wrinkled eyes wide open”
- “From afar, he is seen to stand erect on the edge of the cliff, as the big blue surrounds him”
- “He approaches the beggar. She looks at the sea. Dawn”
- “The elderly uncle looks through the car window”
- “She stares at Kostas”
- “He stands at the edge of the cliff. Underneath the sea”
Examples (tone and narration)

- When the mother abandons the family because of her mental illness, the tone of the narration gets very slow and dramatic. The language is again more literary to fit the built up emotion of her fleeing: “Marigoula (mother) smiles at her son for the very last time”.

- When the father gets prepared to commit suicide, the description in the scenes that lead up to it is expressed in a serious, sorrowful, sometimes anxious tone.
Feedback

- All participants (20) stated that they preferred the creative approach than the objective alternative.
- They said that a distant tone would be boring and tiring.
- This approach helped them stay focused (*engaged*) to the film, enjoy and understand it better.
- Director: enthusiastically agreed on the approach.
  - He found the end product to be artistic and in keeping with his intentions.
Conclusions
Food for Thought?

• Greek audience: in favor of a more free and creative approach
  • Reasons: geographical, socioeconomic, historical, cultural?
  • Previous experience of the audience: are they used to AD?
  • Could further comparative research be the key to understanding the difference in preference?
References


