



**RADIO
TELEVIZIJA
SLOVENIJA**



Audio description at RTV SLOVENIJA

Work in progress: Practical approach to audio description

About RTV Slovenija

Radio and Television Slovenija is a Public Institution. According to the Law, public services of RTV Slovenija includes the creation, preparation, archiving and broadcasting of:

- 3 national TV programmes (Channel 1, Channel 2, Channel 3)
- 2 regional TV programmes (TV Koper – Capodistria and TV Maribor) for the Italian and Hungarian minorities
- 3 national RA programmes (Channel 1, Channel 2 – Val 202, Channel 3 – Radio Ars)
- 2 regional RA programmes (Ra Koper – Capodistria, Ra Maribor)
- Radio programmes for foreign public (Radio Slovenia International – Radio SI)
- Multimedia Centre (MMC): teletext, subtitling, websites (www.rtv slo.si), mobile portal (www.rtv slo.si/pda), 3 info channels (children's, entertainment and informative), platform RTV 4D (video and radio archive).

Accessibility at TV Slovenija

- ▶ RTV Slovenija is bound by law to transmit programmes using technologies adapted for both the deaf and hard of hearing, and for the blind and visually impaired.
- ▶ We subtitle 74% of the programmes on the Channel 1 and 62% on the Channel 2 for the deaf and hard of hearing.
- ▶ About 1000 shows annually of or informative, educational and documentary programmes are interpreted using Slovene sign language.
- ▶ Approx. 20-25 hours of our programmes annually are **audio described** for the blind and visually impaired.

From the beginning ...

- ▶ Year 2000: no experience of audio description
- ▶ Dr. Marko Prpić (ex. consultant to the Director - General at RTV SLO and visually impaired) visited the Dutch TV house where they were already utilising AD.
- ▶ Mr. Prpić invited the radio and TV announcer, Ms. Maja Moll, to put together an AD of the documentary film about Slovenia's greatest poet, France Prešeren.
- ▶ They wrote the text, but the problem was:
how to broadcast the film with the AD?

First attempt of audio describing

- ▶ First step: preparation of the text
- ▶ Second step: LIVE BROADCASTING!

Marko Prpić and Maja Moll sat in a small radio studio with a TV screen – while watching the film, Maja read live the AD which was then broadcast via radio frequencies.

HOW DID THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED FOLLOW THE FILM WITH AD?

- ▶ The viewers had to have their radio and television ON –
On the radio they listened to the AD, and on the TV they listened to the original sound and followed the video.

QUALITY?

- ▶ The live read of the AD on radio was broadcast with a slight delay. The radio and the TV signal weren't completely synchronized, so this caused some confusion.

Second attempt

- ▶ In 2010 Marko Prpić and Maja Moll prepared the AD for the Slovene film *Petelinji zajtrk* (Roosters's Breakfast).

- ▶ **Improvement of the production:**

The AD was read and recorded in a synchro studio on the 3rd and 4th audio channel (the original sound is on the 1st and 2nd channel).

- ▶ **Broadcasting:**

The AD was transmitted through certain radio frequencies and the original sound on the TV.

- ▶ **Quality?**

Better. The delay was shortened, but the problem of having to listen at the same time on the radio and watching the TV persisted, and consequently the discordance between the radio and TV signal.

Systematic approach

- ▶ Since 2013 – we started to deal with accessibility issues more systematically

Mrs. Mateja Vodeb was named as the accessibility project manager and coordinator of the programme contents, dedicated to people with disabilities, and also for the implementation of new technologies for accessible TV and multimedia. We started a web page www.dostopno.si, which follows the existing accessibility standards, increased the percentage of subtitled programmes and of programmes in Slovene sign language and started to broadcast programmes with AD once a month.

- ▶ **What was done in the field of AD?**

- ✓ Formation of the group of four audio describers
- ✓ Implementation of new work process
- ✓ 20-25 hours of AD programmes per year, broadcast on Channel 2

RTV's audio describers are:

- ▶ Maja Šumej, Carmen L. Oven, Mojca Mavec and Miha Zor.
- ▶ Linguists, excellent narrators, the most recognizable voices amongst radio and TV speakers in Slovenia.
- ▶ They prepare and read AD.

Education on AD?

- ▶ No formal education of AD in Slovenia.
- ▶ Our audio describers attended two seminars given by Joel Snyder in Ljubljana and studied the theory from articles by Pilar Orero, Anna Matamala and other experts from the project ADLAB.
- ▶ They rely on their radio and TV experiences, knowledge of TV narration, intuition and finally common sense.

Every film is a challenge

- ▶ AD of a popular Slovene TV series The Lives of Tomaž Kajzer (Življenje Tomaža Kajzerja)
- Six episodes of 50 minutes

In each episode, Tomaž Kajzer is somebody else: a debt collector, a lawyer, ...

- Excerpts from the episode in which Tomaž Kajzer is a chef, determined to receive a Michelin star.

The restaurant is his child, while his girlfriend who supports him and takes care of all the finances wants a peaceful, quiet life, a child, but they can't conceive. They are in debts, she's realistic trying to tell him that this is a sinking ship, but he's too blinded by his own ambition. He enters into partnership with a swindler, and this eventually leads to his downfall.

Video clip: BLONDINKA

What to tell and what to avoid?

- ▶ Description „a prima vista“ –
to avoid unnecessary details, since the visual mode is always impressionistic, and even sighted viewers do not process everything they see in a film in detail.
- ▶ From general descriptions to details
 - Example: preparation of food, ingredients

Video clip: TESTENINE

Specific features of the Slovene language

- ▶ Slovene is spoken by a small number of speakers, only 2 million, but it is a language with around 50 dialects.
- ▶ Filmmakers tend to use colloquial language not to sound too artificial.
- ▶ Audio descriptions are in **standard Slovene** as the language on RTV Slovenija must be in compliance with the norm, that is the literary style of the Slovene language.

Video clip: VINSKA KLET

Us: is it dual or plural?

- ▶ First person plural pronoun WE.
- ▶ Sometimes Alenka and Tomaž refer to everybody involved, but even more so, they refer to themselves. Slovene is one of the very rare Indo-European languages to use **dual grammatical forms** for referring to two people, objects and concepts, in addition to the singular and the plural.

The sound of AD in Slovene

- ▶ Slovene intonation is not as musical as intonation in some other languages.
- ▶ English, for example has a noticeably wider pitch range than Slovene. What is a natural neutral pitch movement for a Slovene may sound to the English speaker as a lack of interest.

Video clip: ŠKAMPI

Slovenia is a subtitling country

- ▶ For the moment we only produce AD for films, documentaries and youth programmes in the Slovene language.
- ▶ The speech synthesis for the Slovene language was developed last year, and we are currently testing it. Meanwhile we have to be very creative as was Mojca Mavec at audio describing the youth documentary series **And Who Are You?**, which has many graphical elements and the protagonists also speak in foreign languages.
- ▶ The example has English subtitles and Slovene AD.

Video clip: KDO SI PA TI? JAY, TAJSKA

Quality and quantity

- ▶ Surveys amongst the blind and visually impaired viewers shows that they are very satisfied with the quality of our AD, but not so much with the quantity.
- ▶ We plan to improve both.

Quality

- Focus on the training of audio describers (we are part of the Erasmus+ project ADLAB PRO).



Quantity

- Implementation of the additional sound channel.
- Implementation of speech synthesis.
- Changes regarding working process.

Current state and the near future

▶ **Production of AD now:**

Preparation of AD text – recording in the studio on the 3rd and 4th audio channel (original sound on the 1st and 2nd) – final mix – broadcasting on Channel 2 once a month or once a week during the summer and winter holidays (all the viewers hear the AD).

▶ **New working process** after the implementation of the **additional sound channel:**

Preparation of AD text – recording in the studio on the 7th and 8th audio channel – broadcasting on the regular programme on the additional sound channel, with the possibility of turning it on or off

One step further: the implementation of speech synthesis (read on the additional sound channel)– start of the production of AD for foreign films, documentaries ...

Thank you for your attention!

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