

Article

How Visually Challenged People Understand the Film with Audio Description

Prathyush Raj R

Post Graduate Student, Department of Visual Communication, School of Media Studies, Loyola College (Autonomous), Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India.

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I N F O

E-mail Id:

rprathyushraj@gmail.com

Orcid Id:

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0320-5290>

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A B S T R A C T

This research study focuses on how Audio description helps the visually challenged students to understand the narration of a movie. The researcher used qualitative research method to collect the data, he conducted an in-depth interview with 52 visually challenged school students who are aged between 10 to 16 years old from poonamalli blind school which is in Chennai. The researcher took convenience sampling which is a type of non probability sampling method in drawing the population. The researcher conducts screening of a episode from a Tamil web series named Suzhal the vortex with and without Audio Description. The researcher asks 25 open-ended questions and collect information from every 52 participants individually. The researcher finds that the research is successful in finding out results positively using Audio Description.

Keywords: Audio Description, Narration, Visually Challenged

Introduction

Visual and Audio descriptions have similar meanings in the context of media. The audio descriptions can be heard at any time in the frame, even when there are pauses in the sound, occasionally even while a character is speaking. The purpose of audio description is to provide information that is either live or recorded and provided by a trained describer so that persons who are blind or having low vision can access events. This information is not included in the standard recording or live performance, despite being synchronised to avoid interfering with the main action.

Those who are visually challenged can understand the plot of the movie with the help of audio description, which recounts the scenes and actions that take place in the frame. Understanding the narration is audio Descriptions e easier by Audio Description.

Audio description is a commentary and narration that is placed between conversations or musical selections

and is used in theatres, museums, with accompanying television, film, video presentations. Audio descriptions describes on-screen text, actions, locations, character looks, body language, clothing, lighting during natural pauses in the background music. They offer the effective audio description when there are no aural indications.

Objective

To find out, how visually challenged school students understand Audio Description for an episode from the Tamil web series named Suzhal the vortex.

Review of Literature

Evaluating visual information provided by audio description written by Eli Peli, Elisabeth M Fine, Angela T Labianca, in the year 1996, the researcher findings shows that when Audio Description may inform visually challenged audiences of important visual details, some of the information in the Audio Description can be acquired from the standard

audio. Television (TV) and other video outlets are crucial for acquiring knowledge and participating in a society's culture. According to the results of this experiment, viewers who are blind or have impaired eyesight or who only hear the audio of a program will properly answer questions than viewers who are sighted.

Audio Description in the UK: What works, what doesn't, understanding the need for personalising access written by Mariana Lopez, Gavin Kearney, Krisztian Hofst. Audio Descriptions in the year 2018. The researcher examines results of a survey and focus groups in which people with visual impairments. Advantages and disadvantages of Audio Description are analysed in this paper. It highlights the range of requirements and difficulties that visually impaired groups encounter, as well as their desire for change. For visually challenged people who want to view movies and television, Audio Description (Audio Descriptions), a recorded audio commentary that provides information that help the plot make sense, such as descriptions of actions, gestures, places, is now the only accessibility option available. This document discusses a survey and focus groups that were held as part of the Enhancing Audio Description project in order to suggest design approaches that could be utilised to produce a substitute for Audio Description.

The impact of audio description style on presence in visually impaired audiences written by Agnieszka Walczak, Louise Fryer in the year 2017. This study looked at the relationship between spatial presence, ecological validity, participation, negative effects. The participants viewed two excerpts from a naturalistic drama that were labelled as "standard" and "innovative," respectively. The former maintained to the idea of objectivity, while the later was a novel kind of Audio Description that included elements of camera work and subjective descriptions of the characters, their actions, moments crucial to the plot. The findings suggest that everyone's levels of presence were raised by the emotional Audio Descriptions. The new Audio Descriptions style was generally thought to be more natural by individuals who audio Descriptions just lost their vision. The research's conclusions suggest that creative scripts may evoke presence, increasing the possibility that Audio Descriptions users will have a more immersive viewing experience.

Research Methodology

In the study, the researcher determines how visually challenged school children can understand the narration with audio description in the first episode of the web series Suzhal the Vortex. The study was carried out at Chennai's Poonamalli Blind School. All the participants in the research were boys from the age between 10 to 16 years old. During the study, participants were questioned about their understanding of the Suzhal the Vortex web

series' plot, storyline, character behaviour. The researcher screened the first episode of the Tamil web series Suzhal the vortex with Audio Description for the 52 respondents, all of whom were visually impaired school kids. Later, the same 52-person group watches the same programme without the audio description. The researcher employs this technique to ascertain whether or not visually challenged school children are better able to comprehend the episode's narrative with audio description than without it. To get samples from respondents, the researcher employs the qualitative research methodology. He collects responses individually from visually challenged people using the convenient sampling technique.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher uses Johnson-Laird's Mental model theory to find out how Audio Description helps visually challenged students to understand the narration of the episode from a Tamil web series Suzhal the vortex.

Mental Model Theory

Mental model theory is a connected set of assumptions that affect how someone develops expectations for the future and perceives the environment. Everyone has ideas and convictions about how systems are set up and how the problems they contain operate. These ideas and principles are known as mental models.

Variables in the Study

Independent Variables

Expectations, Perceptions, Ideas, Actions and Understanding are the independent variables of the study.

Dependent Variables

Socio economic background, Age, Gender, Education, Geography and Disability are the dependent variables of the study.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

An in-depth interview comprising 25 open-ended questions regarding the Tamil web series they watch which is Suzhal the vortex, was asked to 52 participants whom were visually challenged school students, All the participants are boys from the age between 10 to 16 years old. The researcher conducts a screening of the first episode with and without Audio Description and then he uses qualitative method and conducts in-depth interview with every 52 participants individually. The paper finds that visually challenged school students understand the narration better with Audio Description than without Audio Description. For the questions below, the researcher took random 5 responses from 52 respondents.

Question 1: Respondents describing about how well they have understood the narration with Audio Description.

Do you understand the narration of the episode from the Tamil web series named Suzhal the vortex with Audio Description?

Respondent-1: Yes, I can understand clearly. At first, I was unable to keep up with the narration's pace, but after starting to listen to the audio description, I was able to do so. The narration explained me the visual elements as well and it helped me a lot to understand the narration in the film.

Respondent-2: Of course, I was able to understand the narration with the aid of audio description; it was similar to the narration in a children's book. The narration was described well and it helped me to visual the running frames more clearly.

Respondent-3: Yes, the audio description makes it much easier to follow the narration. it helped to understand every movement which happens in the frame. The plot of the episode was able to understand well with Audio Description.

Respondent-4: Watching in audio description was undoubtedly a pleasant experience; I could make out what was going in the scene and it helped me to comprehend the narrative and enjoy the content.

Respondent-5: Although there was a lot of explanation, I believe I understood. Too much description audio Descriptions made me feel bore and distracted, Audio description Audio Descriptions dominated the background score and music.

Findings

The respondents who watched the episode with Audio Description had understood the narration better. Respondent-1 understood Narration with Audio Description as he describes it helped him understanding narration and understanding the visual elements. Respondent-2 visualise the running frames with Audio description, as he describes Audio Description as children's book narration which explains every frame. Respondent-3 understood the plot from the episode with Audio description as it describes everything in the frame which made him feel that the narration is easy. Respondent-4 enjoyed the content as he describes that audio description made him to comprehend the narration of the movie. Respondent -5 did not understand as he describes that there were too much of descriptions, The respondent also felt bore and got distracted for few seconds as there were too much description dominating music and background score.

In the study, from 52 respondents, majority of the respondents agreed that they could effectively follow the story with the aid of audio description. Some others believed that the too much of Audio Descriptions makes them bored and took their attention away from the narration. With audio description, the majority of respondents found it easier to understand the narration.

The responders frequently stated that audio description would help participants comprehend the narration more clearly. The least common response was that the excessive amount of description audio Descriptions made them feel bored and a little confused.

Question 2: Respondents describing about how well they have understood the narration without Audio Description.

Do you understand the narration of the episode from the Tamil series named Suzhal the vortex without Audio Description?

Respondent-1: Proper narration cannot be understood without Audio Description. I was able to understand the main concept where Shanmugam gets arrested for setting fire to the factory.

Respondent-12: No, I cannot understand the narration without Audio Description. The places where it remains silent, was hard to understand but the music in that time explains the mood and helps in conveying the emotion.

Respondent-35: Without Audio Description it is quite difficult to understand the narration. I listened to the whole movie, I could understand the scene with the help of dialogues and the way the character expresses through his vocals.

Respondent-47: I would say that without Audio Description, it is very hard to follow the narration. Listening to background score made me feel the emotion of the scene and through emphasizing the dialogue. I was able to understand the pain of the character as well.

Respondent-51: Yes, I could understand the narration without listening to the Audio Description. The basic story and the narration can be understood with the help of Dialogues and music, one could understand the emotion in the narration with it.

Findings

The respondents who watched the episode without Audio Description did not understand the narration of the episode completed. Where Respondent-1 did not understand Narration as he describes he was only able to understand the main concept of Shanmugam getting arrested for setting up fire to the factory, Respondent-12 find difficult to follow the narration as he describes that silence during few scenes were hard to follow but he also mentions music to help him in explaining the mood and conveying emotions. Respondent-35 find hard to understand the narration as he describes that he could understand with dialogues as the character expresses through his vocals. Respondent-47 says Audio description was helpful as he describes that it was hard to follow the narration without Audio Description, he mentions that background score helps in understanding the emotion and able to feel the pain of

a character. Respondent- 51 responded positively as he can understand the narration without Audio Description as he describes that he could understand the basic story with the help of dialogues and Music.

In the study, from 52 respondents majority of them agreed that they could effectively follow the story with the help of Audio Description. Some others believed that there was too much of Audio Descriptions which made them feel bored and took their attention away from the narration. With audio description, the majority of respondents found it easier to understand the narration.

The common responds which the respondents answered was that the participants felt it was hard to understand the narration without Audio Description. The least responds which the respondents responded was that the participants were fine without Audio Description, they were fine with understanding the basic narration of the episode.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study is to find out how Audio Description helps visually challenged School students in understanding the episode's narration of the web series Suzhal the vortex. The study's findings shows that majority of the respondents who watched the episode with Audio Description responded positively saying that they were able to understand the narration better. The students were able to visualise the scenes better while listening to audio description.

Participants watching the same episode again, but this time without Audio Description felt hard in understanding the complete narration of the episode. Some of them understood the multiple plots partially and majority of the respondents didn't understand the scenes which remained silent, Music and background conveys emotion and pain. The story was misunderstood by few of the participants.

Thus, visually challenged school students understands the narration of the episode from web series, Suzhal the vortex better with Audio Description than without Audio Description.

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