

Films with audio description as an additional didactic tool  
in foreign language learning.  
A case study with school children  
with and without vision impairments.

Barcelona, 13-14 March 2013

**Agnieszka Walczak**  
University of Warsaw

# Presentation outline

- Aims of the study
- Audiovisual material used
- The study
- Study results
- Conclusions

## Aims of the study

- key aim: examine whether films with AD could be used as additional didactic tools in foreign language teaching
- verify whether AD is of educational value for school children with and without vision impairments
- investigate whether the same educational materials could be used for school children with and without vision impairments

# Audiovisual material used

- not a feature film
- 4 films from educational animation series *Say it with Noddy in English* dubbed into Polish
- episodes titled *Hammer, Moon, Present, Paint*



## ***Why Say it with Noddy...?***

- short films (2 mins)
- only 1 word per film
- command requiring interaction:
  - *Say the word with Noddy.*
- no commands like:
  - *When you see, say...*
  - *Can you see it? Repeat.*
  - *Look on the left/right and repeat with us.*

# Study structure

- two weeks
- 4 visits at 2 schools
  - Didasko Private Primary School
  - Zofia Galewska Special Educational Centre for Visually Impaired Children
- two visits per week at each school



# Study participants

- children aged 7-10 (classes 1-3 of primary school)
- 36 children in total
  - 18 with vision impairments
  - 18 without vision impairments
- 6 children per each class
  - 3 watched films with AD
  - 3 watched films without AD

# Study procedure

- presentation of 1 film per visit
  - AD group: short introduction + film
  - introduction: description of the characters
- questionnaire:
  - personal characteristics (age, gender, vision impairment or not)
  - new word learnt (English/Polish)
  - description of the characters (Noddy, Wizz, Mister Sparks, Dinah Doll, Sly and Gobbo, Martha Monkey)
  - content of the film



## Study results

- *A visually impaired child is mentally normal, as long as the cause which has deprived them of eyesight, has not also damaged the cerebral cortex.*

(Grzegorzewska 1930 qtd. by Bajorek et al. 2008: 247)

- The above words of Maria Grzegorzewska, a pioneer of special education in Poland, only confirm that a visually impaired learner is like any other learner.

# Study results

WORDS	AD	SIGHTED	PARTIALLY SIGHTED	no AD	SIGHTED	PARTIALLY SIGHTED
hammer	12/18	7/9	5/9	11/18	7/9	3/9
moon	14/18	8/9	6/9	12/18	7/9	5/9
present	17/18	9/9	8/9	17/18	9/9	8/9
paint	14/18	8/9	6/9	12/18	8/9	4/9

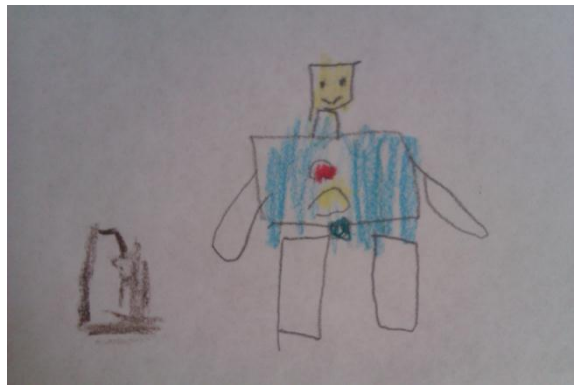
57/72	32/36	25/36	52/72	31/36	20/36
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

# Study results

AD GROUP	NON-AD GROUP
more elements of the plot described	fewer elements of the plot described
more detailed descriptions of the characters	less detailed descriptions of the characters
described the appearance of characters rather than their actions (or the appearance first, then their actions)	described rather the actions of characters than their appearance (appearance rather rarely, if described at all)
when describing characters, children used phrases from AD, e.g. eyebrows like two earthworms, skin like chocolate, head on spring, dungarees with a belly pocket, body like two boxes, roller blades instead of feet, pointed noses, bow tie and bowler hat and the like	children describe characters in their own words, missing many details, using rather adjectives, e.g. indecisive, silly, weird, happy, cheerful, decent, bad and the like

# Study results

- children with vs without vision impairments:
  - partially sighted children more enthusiastic about the project
  - partially sighted children more interested in the films presented
  - partially sighted children more eager to participate in the project



# Study results

- AD – spotted or not?
  - partially sighted group: only one child from the third class spotted AD
  - sighted group: only children from the third class spotted AD
  - group watching possible? -> integration

# Conclusions

- films with AD have the potential of becoming additional didactic tools
- entertaining and educational function of the films
- educational role of AD (vocabulary development)
- integrating function of films with AD
- positive feedback from study participants
- positive opinions of the teachers about the study

Thank you!



[agnieszka.walczak.uw@gmail.com](mailto:agnieszka.walczak.uw@gmail.com)

[www.avt.ils.uw.edu.pl](http://www.avt.ils.uw.edu.pl)