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Inclusive Advertising through the Soundtrack: Insights from People with Visual Impairments

Abstract

Today's audiovisual advertising is heard more than seen, as many viewers feel overloaded with visual information or engage in multitasking while viewing. The fact that many viewers are not watching the screen is a problem that should concern the entire advertising industry. Are there technological solutions that enable us to hear what we do not see? Audio description (AD) is an established option in the field of visual impairment, but is it the only option to make advertising accessible to people who are not looking at the images? This study considers these questions, applying a methodology based on Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) and combining Grounded Theory and the focus group model as a data collection technique. Three focus groups –two comprising people with a visual disability and the third made up of people without one explored the question of whether contemporary advertising has been drifting towards an exclusion of spectators with visual impairment. Participant responses were split between the view that commercials should incorporate AD but with clear improvements that take viewer opinion into account and the belief that advertising should return to its origins and make its soundtrack more explicit, perhaps rendering AD unnecessary.

Keywords
Inclusive advertising, accessible advertising, visual impairment, audio description, Qualitative Data Analysis, Grounded theory.

1. Introduction

The concept of inclusive research epitomizes the transformation away from research *on* people, to research *with* them (Nind, 2017, p. 278). There are three main ways of doing inclusive research: (i) Where people with an intellectual disability give advice about what to do; (ii) Where people with an intellectual disability lead and control research; (iii) Where people with and without intellectual disability work together as a group with different jobs based on their different interests and skills (Bigby, Frawley & Ramcharan, 2014, p. 3). This research assumes the third option.

The advertising industry has grown and evolved by listening to consumers. However, it has generally ignored consumers with disabilities, based on the belief that they represent only a small proportion of the market, although the demographics indicate otherwise (Deighton, 2020). And advertisers should listen to the visually impaired because their perception of "sound without image" can provide useful input for improving the message. Visually impaired people have a sixth sense that is rarely taken into account either by advertising professionals

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or by academics (Olivier, 1996; Bolt, 2013). Moreover, people with visual impairment are not the only ones who experience audiovisual advertising without images, as today, with the possible exception of advertising in the cinema where viewers are held captive in the magical darkened room (Teixeira, 2015), viewers may often be so distracted from the screen that they cannot be said to be "watching" the advertising at all. Advertisers who fail to grasp this may have difficulty working out why their audiovisual ads are not having the desired impact.

1.1. *The role of the soundtrack in inclusive advertising*

The concept of "inclusive advertising" has two dimensions. On the one hand, it refers to advertising designed to raise public awareness about disability, and in which disability is the focus of the story (Cumberbatch & Negrine, 1992; Thomas 2001; Haller & Ralph 2006; Scott & Cloud, 2008; Bolt, 2014). And on the other, it refers to advertising that is made accessible to the disabled (Kaufman-Scarborough & Childers, 2009; Robare, 2011; Teixeira, 2015; Ellis & Kent, 2015). This study explores the second dimension, focusing on the visually impaired not as an object of social representation but as a target of advertising communication.

Radio advertising is probably the format that best suits the needs of people with visual impairments, since it equalizes its listeners in terms of their visual abilities, treating them all as "blind." The soundtrack to radio advertising is thus usually explicit enough to be understood without images and, therefore, does not require a complementary descriptive technique to support it (Martín, Reinares & Muela 2015; Harsch, 2018; Kuyucu, 2019).

There are anthropological (Haller & Ralph, 2001) and musicological (Oakes, 2007) reasons why advertisers have not recognized the need to make audiovisual advertising more accessible. In the first era of audiovisual advertising (1950-1990), the soundtrack (voice, music, and sound effects) was characterized by:

- jingles describing the product properties in their lyrics;
- narrated text specifically citing the brand, and asking the consumer to take a specific action "*ma'am, buy…*"; and
- sound effects combining with the musical jingle and voice narration.

A soundtrack with these characteristics does not need any type of supporting description because the audio is "explicit," conveying the message without the need for a complementary image (i.e., the blind do not need the image to understand an audiovisual message with an explicit soundtrack). The concepts "implicit" and "explicit" in relation to sound and image are questioned in the theory of reciprocity posited by Michel Chion (1994), who argues that the sound cannot act upon the image without being changed itself. Each one changes our perception of the other, but always in an equal proportion.

In contrast, the 21st century advertising soundtrack generally features:

- pre-existing music borrowed from other artistic contexts (covers or originals) that do not explicitly describe the product but convey its values;
- narrated text that does not usually mention the brand but expresses a powerful audiovisual narrative, telling a story unrelated to the properties of the product; and
- sound effects associated with the story.

This contemporary audiovisual soundtrack approach is problematic for the blind because they have to interpret different elements of voice, music, and sound effects with meanings that are less explicit, sometimes masked, or absent altogether. As a result, this audience needs some type of support to make sense of the message.

1.2. *Expanding accessibility to gain a market: audio description*

In today's society, the inclusion of people with disabilities in all areas of communication is an established expectation (UN, 2006; Fletcher-Brown *et al.*, 2021; Dodds *et al.*, 2022). Audiovisual advertising needs to be made accessible to people with disabilities, especially visual disabilities. At least 2.2 billion people in the world today have a near or distance vision

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impairment (WHO, 2021), a disability that makes it more difficult to interact with screens. Assistive technologies for visual impairment that convert written text into speechglasses, rings, scanner pensare more advanced than those that can translate image into sound. Of these technologies, audio description is the most developed, and it has been around for long enough to prove its effectiveness.

The American Council of the Blind defines audio description as:

> [N]arration added to the soundtrack to describe important visual details that cannot be understood from the main soundtrack alone. Audio description (AD) is a means to inform individuals who are blind or who have low vision about visual content essential for comprehension. AD of video provides information about actions, characters, scene changes, on-screen text, and other visual content. AD supplements the regular audio track of a program (ACB, 2013).

AD uses sound (voice, music, or sound effects) to describe what is happening in a movie scene, the plot of a novel, the purpose of an ad or what a sign says. The appearance of audio description in the open commercial market has been the result of the sole effort of users' associations (Orero, 2007, p. 196). It is a communication support system using scripts and audio production techniques, providing adequate sound information that translates or explains the images so that recipients with visual impairment can perceive the message as a harmonious whole, including an extra level of narration played over the original audio (Vázquez, 2019). This narration describes the unspoken action of the video: who the characters are, where they are and what they are doing, the spatial context, gestures, attitudes, landscapes, clothing, etc.

In the history of audiovisual production, accessibility for people with visual impairment has been extremely varied (Orero, Pereira & Utray, 2007; Díaz-Cintas, 2010). While films, documentaries, fiction series, and online news have long incorporated the AD technique (Davis, 2003; Romero-Fresco, 2013; Thompson & Wassmuth, 2001; Nenegroo & Kuppusamy, 2019), other types of audiovisual products still have a long way to go to meet the accessibility needs of people with visual impairment (Deighton, 2020). Especially far behind in this sense is advertising, which, with a few notable exceptions, does not generally feature AD. Legally, advertisers are not required to include it. Various general laws in Europe and the United States enshrine the rights of people with disabilities, particularly the right for TV consumers to have a certain number of audio-described hours per week (in programs, newscasts, movies, and series), but as this obligation does not directly affect advertising, there is no legal obligation to make ads accessible to people with visual disabilities, and the creative challenge associated with it constitutes a disincentive.

Nevertheless, various international brands added AD to their ads in 2019: Amazon, eBay, John Lewis, Tesco, Sky, Morrisons, ASDA, Aldi, O2, Microsoft, Dunelm, Very, and TKMaxx. A few others, notably the Mark & Spencer brand, have integrated accessibility into the creative treatment, making their ads accessible by voicing graphics or producing audio-led ads that obviate the need for AD (RNIB, 2021).

The use of AD in advertising is hindered by both technical and creative factors, such as:

- The brevity of ads (20"/30"/45"/60") limits the space for audio description. Ads often have a frenetic pace, assaulting the viewer with a barrage of ideas in a short space of time.
- The subtler and cleverer the advertising message is, the more difficult it is to come up with an alternative description of the images.
- The presence of other narrative voices in the ad may raise doubts about how best to audio describe: in a robotic way, without intonation, to differentiate it from the narrator of the ad; or "audio describing" the text with natural modulation, producing a mix of voices that may cause confusion for the listener.

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- The versions of ads on social networks and other digital platforms often do not carry the AD track (with the exception of YouTube, which sometimes offers both versions).

Therefore, if the aim is to achieve a balance between the AD and the ad soundtrack so that the former does not undermine the latter, the creatives involved should conceptualize the audiovisual spot with AD from the storyboarding stage. This approach could result in two versions that may raise the technical and creative level expected of today's competitive advertising. It may even help the creative team to find more "explicit" solutions in both versions, potentially rendering the audio description unnecessary.

1.3. *Paying attention to consumers: do we need audio description?*

This study analyzes the advertising soundtrack in relation to the meaning of the image, by examining the perceptions of a) people with visual disabilities, and b) people without disabilities but with the ad image in black screen. The analysis considers the following questions:

- How to make sense of the voice, music, and sound effects in audiovisual ads in black screen without any element describing the image;
- How to make sense of the voice, music, sound effects, and audio description voiceover in audiovisual ads in black screen with audio description.

It is hoped that the analysis of these perceptions may provide the advertising industry and government agencies with insights into how to engage a global audience of close to 2.2 billion people.

Based on the above, this study considers the following research question related to the perception of the audio description technique and its lack of use:

RQ1. Has the creative reduction of the "explicit" in contemporary audiovisual advertising communication resulted in a drift towards an exclusion of viewers with visual disabilities?

2. Methodology

The methodology applied in this study is based on Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) and combines grounded theory and the focus group model as a data collection technique.

Grounded theory is one of the most widely used naturalistic methods in qualitative research, using a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived theory about a phenomenon, and it is particularly useful for focus group data analysis. This method emphasizes the development of analytical ideas and offers tools for extracting evidence in the analysis and explaining processes. In the data collection process, each piece of information is reviewed, compared, and contrasted with another (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This process of constant comparison reveals the commonalities and differences between the categories of information, facilitating the inductive development of a theory explaining the observations. The questions that will be answered through grounded theory are therefore not related to specific domains but to the structural organization of the findings (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

There are three systems for applying grounded theory methods. The first is the emergent design created by Glasser in 1967, which involves a predominantly inductive approach ("all is data"), whereby the data obtained is to develop the theory rather than to describe it. The second is the systematic design introduced by Strauss and Corbin (1990), which combines induction and deduction to develop an explanatory hypothesis (Rennie, 2000). And the third is Charmaz's constructivist system, a rejection of positivism that questions the objectivist foundations of the other two approaches, instead prioritizing the subjective experience of the researcher and the social conditions of the object of study. This study takes an objectivist approach (Glaser & Straus, 1967; Straus & Corbin, 1990) for the first stages of data coding, and a constructivist approach to develop the theory, in an effort to tell a story about people with visual disabilities and their relationship with today's audiovisual advertising and the audio

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description system, a story that "does not simply unfold before the eyes of an objective viewer" but "reflects the viewer as well as the viewed" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 522).

The data collection technique selected for this study is the focus group, a qualitative technique structured around a set of carefully predetermined questions allowing a free-flowing discussion (Morgan, 1996; Elliot, 2015), with the objective that the participants' comments might stimulate and influence the thinking and sharing of others (Wimmer & Dominick, 2014).

The type of focus group questions asked in the study are what are referred to as *engagement questions*, which introduce participants to the topic of discussion (in this case, about inclusive advertising based on the soundtrack) and make them comfortable with it.

It takes more than one focus group on any one topic to produce valid results. For this study, three homogeneous groups were organized, each one intended to complement the other: the first and the second group (FG1–FG2) was made up of people with various degrees of visual disabilities; and the third (FG3) was a group of people without visual impairment but who were exposed to different ads under the same conditions as the other groups, listening to them without images.

2.1. *Subjects*

A total of 22 European people took part in the three focus groups (FGs): seven people in FG12 partially sighted (B2) and 5 severely sight impaired (B1) seven people in FG24 partially sighted (B2) and 3 severely sight impaired (B1) and eight in FG3not sight impaired, experiencing the ads in black screen. Most researchers recommend working with six to eight participants so that the moderator can manage the discussion (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The participants were balanced by gender and age (>30<), both in FG1, FG2 and in FG3. All sight impaired participants had used AD for several years and continue to use it regularly for viewing internet content, films, and TV.

All participants took part voluntarily and felt comfortable discussing the topic for 90 minutes, a recommended time span that offers the flexibility to host three groups in one day, limits respondent fatigue, and keeps participants engaged (Kuhn, 2018).

2.2. *Procedure*

In accordance with the standards of the focus group technique (Greenbaum, 1988; Curry, 2015), the workflow for the groups (FG1/FG2/FG3) was as follows:

    a) Presentation of the focus group objectives and dynamics.
       Recording permission request. Recording start.
    b) The participants listen to six TV ads in black screen.
       The first two, Video Listening (VL) with an explicit soundtrack without audio description:
- VL1 Moussel (2014) https://youtu.be/yuFgyIeQy3o
- VL2 Tea Don Simon (2021) https://youtu.be/ya9tO6yJcoc

       Next, two with non-explicit soundtrack and without audio description:
- VL3 BMW (2000) https://youtu.be/5S-fwqoV-Tk
- VL4 Coca Cola. (2011) https://youtu.be/OdiWUhosIyc

       And the last two, both with audio description:
- VL5 P&G Dodot pants (2018) https://youtu.be/_R8y2jEoIug
- VL6 Oral B-IO (2020) https://youtu.be/ESEA7bs5g8Y

    c) Open questions after listening to each ad. The "questioning route" recommended should contain about twelve questions (Krueger & Casey, 2000); in our case, eleven Open Questions (OQ) were asked. The questions were simple and unambiguous, guiding the participants, and shifting from general questions to more specific questions (Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015):

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OQ1. Do you recognize the brand? Which element of the soundtrack gave you the clue to recognize it?

OQ2. What makes you pay attention?

OQ3. What makes you disconnect from the ad?

OQ4. What kind of voice do you identify most with?

OQ5. What kind of music engages you?

OQ6. What kind of sound effects shock you?

Only VL5-VL6:

OQ7. Do you appreciate the efforts of brands to advertise with audio description?

OQ8. What alternatives to audio description do you know/propose?

OQ9. What would you recommend for improving the AD system in advertising, considering people with visual impairment?

OQ10. What would you recommend for creating audiovisual ads without audio description, considering people with visual impairment?

Only FG3:

OQ11. What do you feel when you hear the soundtrack without the image?

d) At the end of the six discussions, the moderator concludes by inviting participants to share any final thoughts.

e) The moderator summarizes the most important remarks about explicit/implicit soundtracks and creativity, and issues related to audio description.

f) Recording end. Acknowledgments.

The process of analyzing the qualitative data of the focus group is vital in the achievement of the objectives of the research. There are various types of software and methods available to carry out an objective analysis of the information collected. This research has used Atlas.ti software, version 8 (ATLAS.ti, 2020). The main source of data was the recorded conversations, the subsequent reflections, and the notes on non-verbal communication made by the members of the two groups. All of these elements provided important information for analysis (Smithson, 2000).

The data collected in the focus group interviews was then coded to facilitate its use to answer the research question. Although there is no specific system for coding information in the data analysis stage (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996), the procedure followed was the one set out by Atlas.ti, which allows open and axial coding. The software was used exclusively in the first phase of analysis to create concept maps. For Strauss and Corbin (1990), open coding makes it possible to process the primary data to establish coded concepts, which is recommended for the beginning of the data systematization process. The code creation process was followed by axial coding, which would facilitate the identification of connections between the different codes created in the initial process.

The final stage was selective coding, which involved identifying the conceptual and theoretical relationships between the codes that are specified in the theorization and integrating these relationships in a report of propositions.

3. Results

There are no notable differences between the three focus groups' reactions to the topics discussed. However, FG1/FG2 revealed a certain degree of expertise when talking about audio description, with more critical appraisals and evaluations of the technical properties of the AD system. These groups also listened more attentively to the sound details of the ads (effects and voices in the background), probably because they are more accustomed to listening without visual aids. In the case of FG3, the participants without visual impairment expressed themselves in greater detail in the analysis of the advertising soundtrack, providing valuable reflections on implicit and explicit elements.

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Our theoretical sampling is representative of the total number of research participants, determined by theoretical saturation, a concept in grounded theory referring to the point where nothing further can be learned about the topic by collecting and analyzing additional data because the data becomes repetitive. The three focus groups engaged in substantial discussion of audio description in relation to the soundtrack. All the groups gave a positive evaluation of the efforts of the advertising industry to be more inclusive.

The first outcomes are shown identified by topic (Table 1). With open coding, the data is broken down into discrete parts and codes are created to label them. The purpose is to enable constant comparison of similar concepts in the data by collating all pieces of data that were labeled with a particular code. This process helps to expose preconceived notions and biases in our own research.

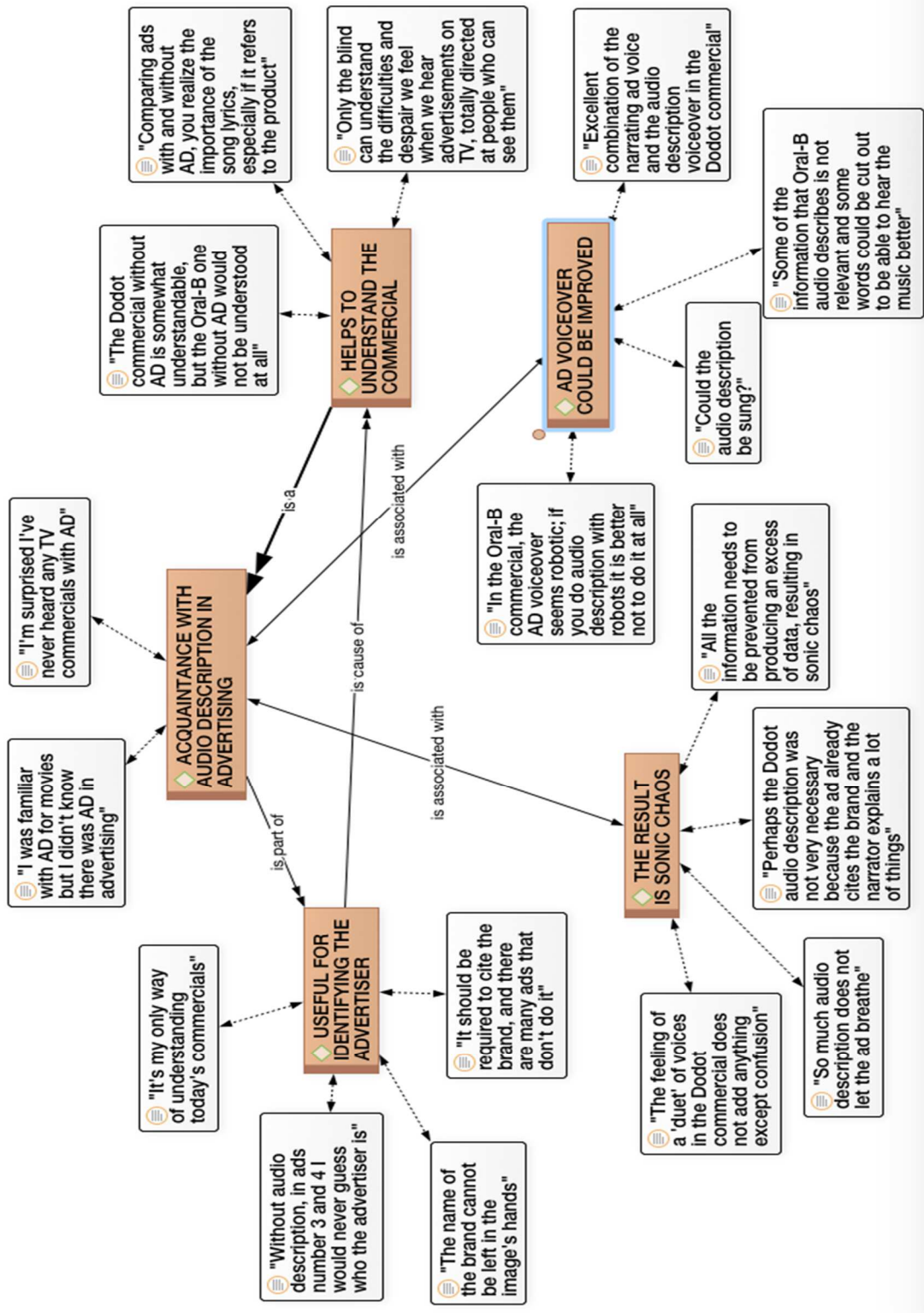**Table 1**: Open coding FG1 and FG2.

General topics	Codes	Number of times Issues / Outcomes were identified
Audio description (AD)	Acquaintance with audio description in advertising	4
	Useful for identifying the advertiser	3
	Helps to understand the commercial	2
	AD voiceover could be improved	2
	The result is sonic chaos	1
Total outcomes identified by topics/codes		12
Audiovisual advertising and soundtrack	The role of music and its lyrics is essential	3
	Traditional commercials are understandable without audio description	3
	Soundtrack of current advertising is not strategic	1
	The more explicit the advertising is, the more I understand it	1
Total outcomes identified by topics/codes		8
Inclusive audiovisual advertising	Advertising with audio description is a social necessity	2
	Advertising is excluding people with visual impairments	1
	Companies should be socially responsible in relation to visual impairment	1
Total outcomes identified by topics/codes		4

Source: Own elaboration.

In the recordings, a total of 86 literal sentences were collected from the participants, which were transformed into in vivo coding. Jointly with several memos (our subjective pre-coding), the analysis program collected all the information and initiated the crossover process.
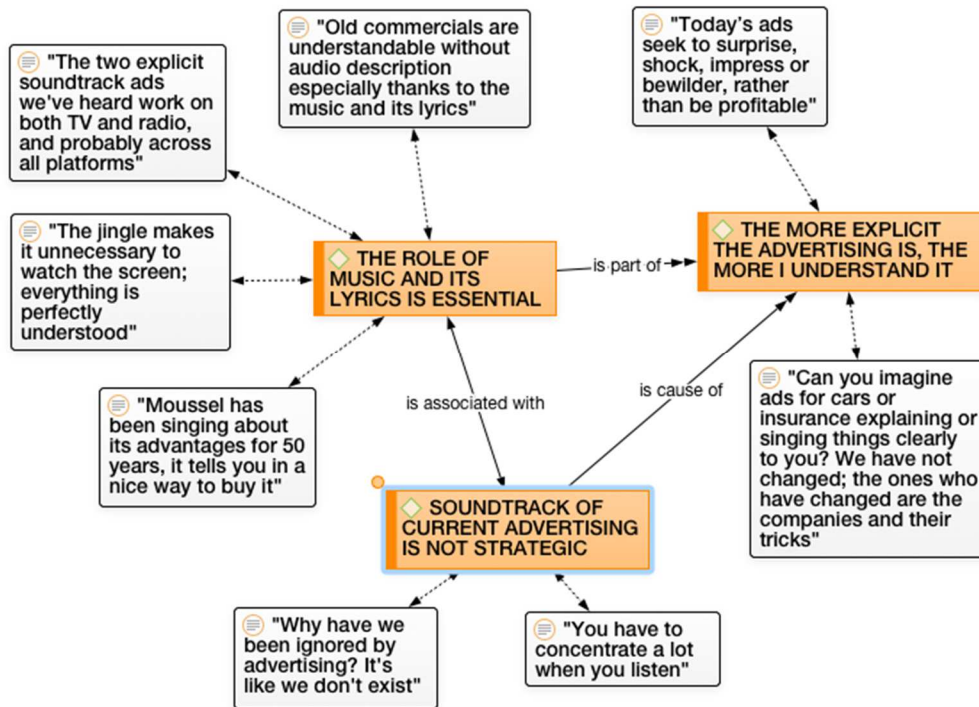
The second step of axial coding involved drawing connections between codes developed in the open coding stage, reading over the codes and the underlying data to group them into categories. In this stage, the Atlas.ti program offered invaluable help in the active and systematic search for relationships between codes and code families. The result is presented in the following three concept maps (Figures 1 to 3), a key strategy in qualitative research because it helps to focus on meaning, as well as the connections between the opinions and ideas expressed by the participants.

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Figure 1: Axial coding. Concept map Audio Description.

Source: Own elaboration.

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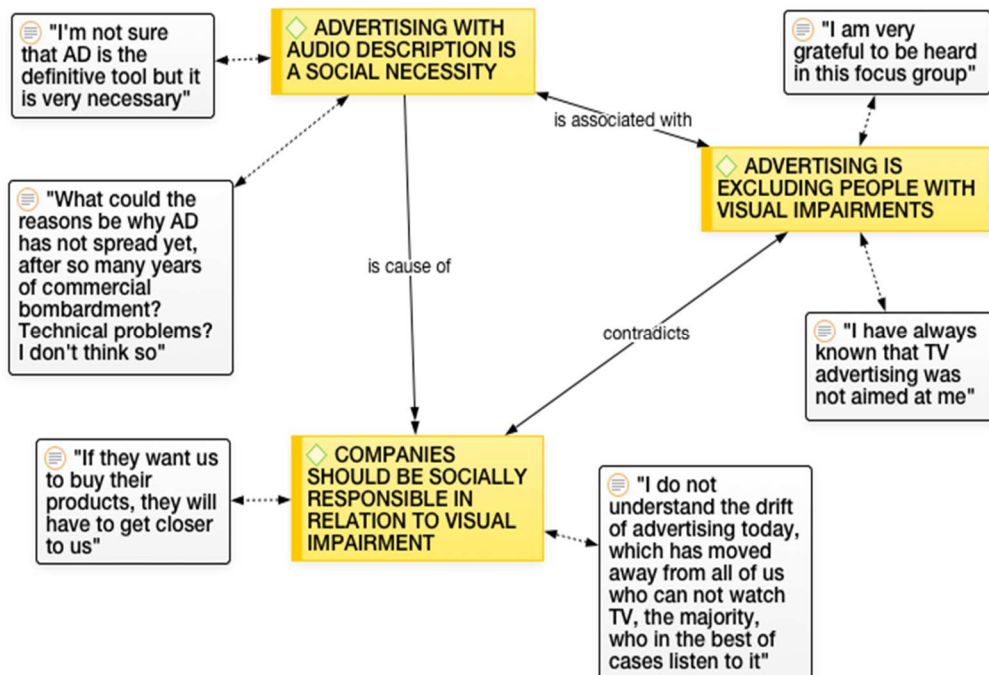
Figure 2: Axial coding. Concept map Audiovisual Advertising and Soundtrack.

Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 3: Axial coding. Concept map Inclusive Audiovisual Advertising.

Source: Own elaboration.

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A relational framework is presented for the use of audio description in advertising based on the research question (see Table 2). The resulting coding paradigm proposes questions about the data related to causes, conditions, phenomena, contexts, action strategies, and consequences between categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Table 2: Coding paradigm. Inclusive audiovisual advertising.

Causes	⇒ Globalization has not helped make the invisible people visible. ⇒ Contemporary audiovisual advertising is not easy to understand for people with visual impairment.
Phenomenon	⇒ The advertising industry needs to publicize its efforts to make its Corporate Social Responsibility more explicit, especially for people with visual impairment.
Context	⇒ In today's advertising there are many ads where aesthetics prevails over the concept, with less explicit communication than in traditional advertising. ⇒ The fundamentals of audiovisual advertising have not been reassessed for years. ⇒ The opinion and advice of people with visual impairment are not taken into account to resolve creative and technical issues in audiovisual advertising communication.
Intervening conditions	⇒ Advertisers ignore the large number of people with visual impairment that exist in the world and what this represents for the brands. ⇒ Advertisers need to address the feeling of detachment and indifference among consumers with visual impairment.
Action strategies	⇒ Identifying the advertiser in the Audio Description is a competitive advantage, above audiovisual aesthetics. ⇒ As long as there are no alternatives to AD, accessibility in advertising is a pressing need for a large number of consumers. ⇒ With input from people with visual impairment, AD can evolve towards profitability.
Consequences	⇒ The advertising industry will win over people with visual impairment. ⇒ The advertising industry will consolidate its inclusive discourse. ⇒ With the proselytizing of inclusive brands, the world will be better.

Source: Own elaboration.

In the third stage, selective coding, the codes and the families of codes were interrelated and theorized, integrating them into a story that contains a set of propositions. This requires the use of theoretical sensitivity, the ability to discern, understand and make sense of the data in the audiovisual field.

The open questions OQ9 and OQ10, which allowed participants to offer recommendations in the final stage of the discussion, served to categorize a set of propositions for improving the AD system in advertising, and for the creation of audiovisual advertisements without AD (see Table 3). The subjective view of the researcher contributed to the framework of propositions based on the use of simple language and straightforward ideas to make theory readable, in accordance with the principles of ground theory (Charmaz, 2000, p. 527).

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Table 3: Selective coding. Report of propositions.

REPORT OF PROPOSITIONS	
Propositions for improving the audio description system in advertising considering people with visual impairment	**Propositions for creating audiovisual ads without audio description considering people with visual impairment**
● **Audio description voiceover:** the spoken text should be shorter, with fewer words, more intuitive and less descriptive. The voice should have more the tone of a narrator than of an announcer, with a more empathic intonation, distinct from the usual robotic approach. The gender of the AD voiceover is not so important, but the voice should become one more protagonist of the story. ● **Launching ads simultaneously on all media channels:** today, everyone surfs the internet, so to reinforce the informative action, the advertising should be launched on social media and TV channels on the same day. ● **Listening to the opinions of people with visual impairment**: this focus group is an example of what people who are blind or partially sighted can contribute and what creatives should be listening to. Focus groups can help to address and resolve some creative problems through consultation with stakeholders.	● **Juxtaposed scenes:** the creative process should consider integrating descriptions into the creative structure. The musicand its lyricsand sound effects must be used more effectively. ● **Sound reference to the brand's name**: the brand name is the most basic, essential information and should be voiced in the original ad. Don't leave this responsibility to the audio description system. ● **Using music that explains product features**: if you don't have access to the image, it's hard to understand the subtleties introduced by the creative team. The music and its lyrics should facilitate the understanding of the message. For people with visual impairment, music in advertising should not entail a guessing game. ● **Sound effects that are understandable without the image**: sound effects should not be used just to recreate the image but should be at the service of the message and stay within that creative line.

4. Discussion

Developing the data into a story that centers around the overarching category, it is clear that audio description (AD) in advertising is still a great unknown among people with visual impairment; indeed, most of the participants did not know that AD in advertising existed. The discovery was a pleasant surprise, because they were pleased to know that some companies are taking them into account, although it is not a cause for great celebration, as they admitted that they don't like advertising. Companies ignore the large number of people with visual impairment that exist in the world and what this represents for brands. Advertisers need to address the feelings of disengagement and indifference among consumers with visual impairment. But the truth is that contemporary audiovisual advertising is not easy for them to understand, and part of the blame for this lies with the generational change of content creators. In many ads today, aesthetics predominates over the concept, with less explicit communication than in traditional advertising. Such an approach makes it difficult for the AD system to convey the intended message.

This study has confirmed that AD in advertising is not always necessary. The two ads discussed with AD would not have required it if a more creative approach had been taken, integrating the extra spoken content into the original ad (actor's text, music lyrics). It is believed that this integrated version would be more inclusive for all audiences.

The study also found that AD needs to go beyond merely explaining data. Mentioning the name of the brand on the AD track is essential, but it is not the only thing that advertisers need to focus on. While in films, TV programs, and most other narrative forms the most important thing is to understand the plot, in advertising it is more important to translate the visual sensation into audio, emphasizing the description of feelings rather than physical or technical details.

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It has also been confirmed that the opinions and suggestions of people with visual impairment are not taken into account in the solution of creative and technical issues in audiovisual advertising. In this respect, AD could benefit from their judgment and their particular "vision." FG1/FG2 participants (with visual impairment) believe their opinions are unique, and no advertising creative team would be able to detect the problems that they can identify in the audio description. Their views should be considered in ad development, perhaps designing a framework document for the creative industry and AD providers.

5. Conclusion

Modern marketing is inclusive marketing (Olsen, 2019), which means creating information and content that is more representative of everyone, including people with visual impairment. And it is not just about appearances, but about making advertising content more universally accessible and improving not only the quality of the content but the experience for the user. In response to the research question indicated above, this study offers some clear evidence that the creative reduction of the explicit in 21st century audiovisual advertising has resulted in a drift towards an exclusion of spectators with visual impairment. In this particular case, the participants in this study have made an appeal for the return of the advertising jingle, with specific lyrics that make literal sense for people with visual impairment. They also call for a return to the clearer messages of traditional advertising, suggesting that it was in fact more inclusive than contemporary advertising, which they feel fails to take their physical condition into account.

Given that the changes to the communication approach means that the traditional explicit advertising soundtrack is unlikely to return, the alternative is either to incorporate audio description definitively into the ad, or to take spectators with visual impairment into account from the ad design stage, ensuring that the message is accessible to them by making the soundtrack more understandable.

If the solution of incorporating audio description definitively into the ad is adopted, it will be important to review whether the measures currently being taken are improving the visual experience of sight-impaired people. The unique approach to advertising audio description adopted in the United Kingdom, the United States, and Spain since 2015 (Charlson, 2021) should be maintained and coordinated with efforts to share experiences and research.

If instead the option of creatively revising audiovisual advertising is taken up, the original ad could include all the sound elements that would allow people with visual impairment to understand it, with a clear and concise narrator text every time, using music with lyrics that explain product features and sound effects that are understandable without the image. In short, voice, music and sound effects need to be used more effectively, always at the service of the message. Creatives could find a way to describe all the visual content through the soundtrack so that perhaps AD would not be necessary; in a very short audiovisual piece, this would be complex but feasible, whenever the brand or soundbrand is mentioned in the audio track.

But if a complementary meaning description is necessary, AD voiceovers should use fewer words, with a more intuitive and less descriptive approach. The tone should be more of a narrator than of an announcer, with a more empathic intonation, becoming one more protagonist in the story. Mixed formulas adapted to current advertising styles need to be found, such as optimizing the video images using strong alt text descriptions, updating alt tags, or creating and using special algorithms (Olson, 2019), so that the audio description will provide enough added value to justify the investment in costs and creativity. In the absence of alternatives to the AD system, accessibility in advertising is a pressing need for consumers with visual impairment. As demonstrated by the input from those involved in this research, with the contributions of such consumers there is no doubt that an inclusive discourse can be consolidated, and AD will ultimately be made profitable.

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This study raises new questions that will need to be explored in future qualitative research, testing the open theories posited here, mostly related to the inclusive advertising paradigm. But all such research will have to be outcome-oriented, whether those outcomes involve the perceptions of the stakeholders such as those offered in this study or sales figures. Because for the advertiser, being socially responsible must be profitable. And inclusive strategies will always ensure a profit-earning capacity.

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