

Thinking Inside the Box

Audio Description for Cognitively Diverse Audiences

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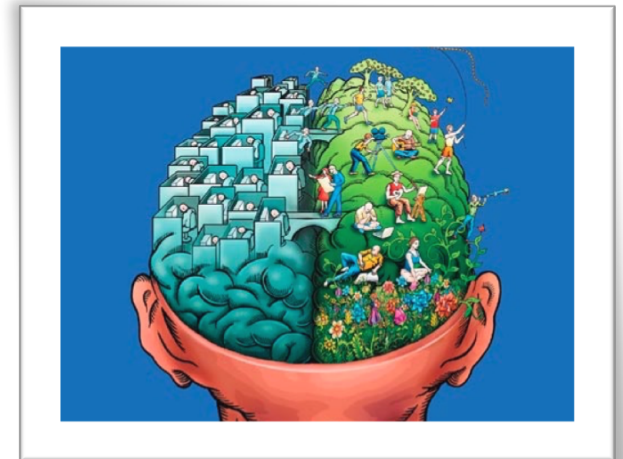
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Does AD have a role to play in assisting audiences with accessibility requirements other than visual restitution?

- Is standard BVI-AD an effective supplementary text for audiences with accessibility needs beyond visual (i.e. physical) mitigation?
- If not, then by adopting a **functionalist** approach, can AD be re-modelled to meet a brief defined specifically to fulfil the needs of cognitively challenged audiences?



Two-Phased Approach

Conceptual Study (S1)

- Re-modelling AD using functional principles to produce bespoke texts for assisting audiences experiencing emotion-recognition difficulties (ERDs).

Empirical Study (S2)

- Applying ERD-AD to multimedia texts and testing efficacy, in parallel with standard BVI-AD, in a reception study with young autism spectrum individuals.



(S1) Conceptual Study

Adopting a functional, 'skopos'-based, theoretical framework, three **functionalities** were entertained:

- AD designed to assist those with **emotion-recognition and 'theory of mind' deficits.**
- AD designed to assist those with additional emotion-recognition and 'theory of mind' **contextualization deficits.**
- Standard AD formulated to meet the needs of **BVI audiences.**



By reference to Reiss's text-typology (Nord, 1997: 37), the source text was first **deconstructed** to reveal **three pertinent layers of sub-text (laminations)**, each reflecting fundamental bias in primary communicative purpose:

Visual Text:

Informative-Expressive

Informing the audience with regard to
“objects and phenomena” (Nord, 1997: 37).

Applying descriptive aesthetic as secondary
purpose.

Emotive Text:

Operative

“[...] both content and form are subordinate to the **extra-linguistic effect** that the text is designed to achieve.”

(Nord, 1997: 38).

Contextualised-Emotive Text

Operative-Expressive

Primarily effect driven, paired with the expressive remit that: **“the stylistic choices made by the author contribute to the meaning of the text”** (Nord, 1997: 38).

Following isolation of the **source sub-texts**, the **strategies for production of each target text** were derived by:

- Determining the **functionality required to meet each 'commission'** (Vermeer, 2004) according to the expectations, socio-cultural background etc of the particular audience (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984: 101 in Nord, 1997: 22).

★ Audience: Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI)

Strategy: Visually-descriptive

Outcomes: Mitigation of lost visual cues; target **text aesthetic relevant** but less important than **description** of salient visual narrative markers.



★ Audience: Emotion-Recognition Impaired (EMO)

Strategy : Emoto-descriptive

Outcomes: Explication of **socio-emotive markers** resulting in improved access to narrative through enhanced **emotion recognition** and engagement with ‘theory of mind’.

★ **Audience: Emotion-Recognition Impaired Context Dependent (CXT)**

Strategy : Emoto-interpretive

Outcomes: Broader engagement with socio-emotive narrative and ‘theory of mind’ derived from **causal associations** as a basis for encouraging empathetic responses.

Emotion: Anger (CXT)

CONTEXTUAL AD

Addie's slumped at the table. She's not looking at Moses because she's cross with him.

Addie's very angry with Moses because he's taken her money.

Addie's extremely angry.



(Paper Moon, 1973)

Emotion: Anger (EMO)



(Paper Moon, 1973)

EMOTIVE AD

The waitress looks friendly.

Addie's extremely angry.

Emotion: Anger (BVI)



(Paper Moon, 1973)

BVI AD

Addie and Moses are sitting in a café by a large window.

Addie is slumped on the table.

A smiling waitress brings Moses cake and coffee.

Analysis of TT: Anger

EMOTIVE AD	CONTEXTUAL AD	BVI AD
<p>“Addie’s extremely angry.”</p>	<p>“Addie’s very angry with Moses because he’s taken her money.”</p>	<p>[Nil]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key emotion identified and labelled. • Isolated emotion is quantified, as extent is narratively significant. • Descriptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Theory of mind’ identified and rendered as causality. • As an intratextual coherence prompt, causality assists with access to narrative. • Interpretive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source text verbal signifiers (e.g. prosodic) deliver ‘angry’ emotion for BVI audiences; intersemiotic transfer would be superfluous.

Comparing the application of AD re-modelled for cognitively impaired audiences with the standard BVI *skopos*:

- areas of **strong divergence** exist between translation strategies for creating TTs where verbally expressed (or non-verbal audio) emotion markers are present in the source text;
- areas of **coincidence** occur where divergent functionality does not require divergent translation strategy i.e. visually cued emotion markers;
- **feasibility of merging skopoi** to create a one-size-fits-most TT meeting the needs of both visually and cognitively impaired audiences?

S2: Reception Study - Audience

- boys, 9 -14 years of age
- diagnosed on autism spectrum (SCQ)
- tested for ERDs (TAS-20)
- IQ average or above
- good reading, writing and articulation skills



S2: Reception Study - Process

- mixed methods approach
- 10 multimedia source texts: film/TV extracts
- each extract representing one emotion
- live action, cartoon, non-verbal and verbal texts
- all three AD conditions applied to each text
- class rotations: varying viewing sequence
- multiple choice ERD quiz
- post-viewing interviews (semi-structured)

Preliminary Findings (1)

Early stages of data analysis and sample size both suggest caution in reaching any concrete conclusions, however:

- **AD was readily adopted** as alternative information channel by ASD-ERD audiences.
- **BVI AD** scored as significantly **less effective** than other AD variants.
- **EMO AD** proved marginally **more effective** than the more expansive **CXT AD**.
- **Complex emotions and states of mind** (e.g. 'guilt') appeared to prompt higher EMO and CXT AD scores than either BVI or zero-AD.

Further issues to be addressed:

- Class rotation **scores** were **significantly lower** for one subgroup, suggesting further investigation is necessary.
- Possible explanation may be that this group received BVI-AD for **more nuanced emotions** e.g. ‘uncomfortable’, prompting deeper exploration of results according to emotion and AD condition present in each case.
- Age, SCQ and TAS-20 **score correlations**, along with cognitive load (complexity, volume and speed of AD), also to be explored in relation to ERD proficiencies.

- Although **standard BVI-AD** does not appear to offer a ready solution for audiences with atypical cognitive accessibility requirements...
- This study suggests creation of **bespoke AD variants** for cognitively diverse audiences is worth further consideration as a newly emerging field of **dianoic** ('between minds') language transfer.
- By combining **digital delivery platforms** and bespoke AD, enhanced or modified narratives could be developed to serve a wide range of audience profiles and activities.

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