Commentating football for those who cannot see the match

**Audio Description
and Radio Commentary for access**

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Aim of the research

To understand the current practice of ADC in the UK, specifically England and Wales

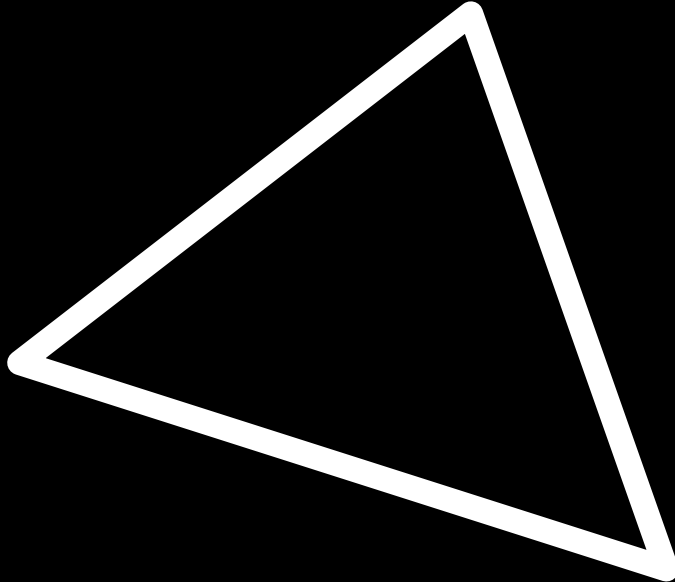In juxtaposition to radio, a **'blind'** medium

Aim of the research

Can ADC become more **inclusive**?
Can radio become more **accessible**?

ADC and Radio comparison

Listeners

Commentators

Commentaries

Study 1: ADC and radio commentators

Survey
Quantitative +
Qualitative
methods

Study 1: ADC and radio commentators

Survey	Commentators
Quantitative +	21 ADC
Qualitative	24 radio
methods	

Study 1: ADC and radio commentators

Survey	Commentators	Responses
Quantitative +	21 ADC	wide
Qualitative	24 radio	agreement
methods		

Study 1: ADC and radio commentators

Aim

to bring

an **emotional**

experience

Study 1: findings

Aim	Visual transfer
to bring	lowest rated
an **emotional**	[high median]
experience	

Study 2: ADC and radio commentaries

Method
Textual
analysis

Study 2: ADC and radio commentaries

Method	Data
Textual analysis	2 clubs
	9 matches
	ADC v radio

Study 2: ADC and radio commentaries

Method	Data	Corpus
Textual	2 clubs	4 x 5-min
analysis	9 matches	20 min / match
	ADC v radio	+66,000 words

Coding model – Stage 1

Coding unit: clause

Coding model – Stage 1

Goes over the keeper (event + time) // who then retains the ball (event + time) // It's going out for another corner (event + time) // Not the largest of goalkeepers (event + non-time) // and it's been an area (non event) that the opposition have found a weakness in this team's goalkeeper (non event) and news get it round, isn't it, in football (non event) of how goals are scored (non event)

Study 2: Stage 1 findings

	Time-critical	Not time-critical	Non-event
ADC	118.47 (29.92)	18.89 (13.31)	5.22 (5.76)
Radio	73.08 (29.86)	51.75 (17.46)	30.39 (26.23)

Number of clauses: Mean and (SD) per 5 minutes of commentary

Study 2: Stage 1 findings

Time-critical

Most prevalent in both ADC and radio

ADC has more than radio

Study 2: Stage 1 findings

Time-critical	Non-event
Most prevalent in both ADC and radio	ADC: nearly 4% *
ADC has more than radio	Radio: around 20% *

Not statistically relevant.

Stage 2: language

	OBJECTIVE	NON-OBJECTIVE	
	Objective	**Subjective**	**Figurative**
Football	Objective football	Subjective football	Figurative football
General	Objective general	Subjective general	Figurative general

Coding unit: unit of meaning

Language

	Objective	Subjective	Figurative
General	'Fans are on their feet'	'Confident start'	'Fasten your seat belts'
Football	'It's a throw'	'A totally wasted cross'	'So close to breaking his duck'

Stage 2: content

Coding unit: unit of meaning

Content

Action	Spatial	Opinion	Background
'free kick to Club X'	'edge of the penalty box'	'good defending'	'the Brazilian'

Content

Action	Spatial	Opinion	Background
'free kick to Club X'	'edge of the penalty box'	'good defending'	'the Brazilian'
Reinforcing	Visual	Auditory	Other senses
'three times now'	'the clean-shaven head of X'	'with a huge roar at Stadium X'	'it's a beautiful' // sunny day'

Study 2: language findings

Objectivity

ADC more objective than radio

ADC has more objective than non-objective language

Study 2: language findings

Objectivity	Specialisation
ADC more objective than radio	ADC more specialised language
ADC has more objective than non-objective language	Within objective, ADC has more football than general language

Study 2: content findings

Action

More units

in ADC

than radio

Study 2: content findings

Action	Spatial
More units	More units
in ADC	in ADC
than radio	than radio

Study 2: content findings

Action	Spatial	Opinion
More units	More units	More units
in ADC	in ADC	in radio
than radio	than radio	than ADC

Study 2: content findings

Action	Opinion
Most units	Most units
in ADC	in radio

In-stadium commentary 20-21 season

League	Clubs	ADC	Radio*	TV*	No comm.	N/A
Premier League	20	16	3	1		
Championship	24	13	8		2	1
League 1	24	12	5		5	2
League 2	24	6	6		12	

Provision of commentary for visually impaired spectators 15 June 2021.
Source: football clubs' websites, Level Playing Field

Study 3: in-stadium ADC and OC

Method
Textual
analysis
= coding model

Study 3: in-stadium ADC and OC

Method	Data
Textual	7 clubs
analysis	3 ADC
= coding model	4 Other

Study 3: in-stadium ADC and OC

Method	Data	Corpus
Textual	7 clubs	4 x 5-min
analysis	3 ADC	20 min / match
= coding model	4 Other	-40,000 words

Study 3: Stage 1 findings

Time-critical

Most prevalent in both ADC and radio

ADC has more than radio

Study 3: Stage 1 findings

Time-critical	Non-event
Most prevalent in both ADC and radio	ADC: 4.30% *
ADC has more than radio	OC: 8.9% *

Not statistically relevant.

Study 3: language findings

Objectivity
ADC more objectivity than OC
OC more opinion than ADC

Study 3: language findings

Objectivity	Specialisation
ADC more objectivity than OC	Same amount
OC more subjectivity than ADC	

Study 3: content findings

Action

Same units

in ADC

as OC

Study 3: content findings

Action	Spatial
Same units	More units
in ADC	in ADC
as OC	than radio

Study 3: content findings

Action	Spatial	Opinion
Same units	More units	More units
in ADC	in ADC	in OC
as OC	than radio	than ADC

Study 4: BPS and sighted

Survey

Quantitative +

Qualitative

methods

Study 4: BPS and sighted

Survey	Fans
Quantitative + Qualitative methods	59 BPS 95 sighted

Study 4: BPS and sighted

Survey	Fans	Experience
Quantitative +	59 BPS	live matches
Qualitative	95 sighted	radio
methods		[BPS] ADC

Study 4: BPS and sighted

Responses	BPS
wide agreement	prefer commentary from the P.O.V. of the team they support

Study 4: radio / ADC [BPS]

17 (12 blind, 5 PS) prefer ADC	19 (8 blind, 11 PS) prefer radio
'radio adds details like stats … that you just don't want to know'	'true emotion'
'more helpful'	'more entertaining'
	'more normal'

Study 4: ADC preference

'because it gives a real picture and they're actually my eyes and convey what's going on around. So much detail. So they've gone for a water break and they described the player's picked up the bottle and pour it over his head. Does it matter? It's what they can see. They make it important.'
(blind male, 58)

Study 4: ADC criticism

'The live audio description is never loud enough. There needs to be better devices, more description, and better control over what listeners need to hear. I have never found them useful in the live stadiums' (blind male, 37)

Conclusions

ADC and radio:
two close genres which can benefit mutually

Conclusions

In ADC, objectivity not as prevalent
as expected from guidelines

If the aim of commentary is to bring the emotional
experience to the listener,
is strict objectivity desirable?

Conclusions

Specialised language features strongly in ADC

Possibly due to time constraints and to contribute to a sense of community

Conclusions

BPS fans' split preferences toward ADC or radio

BPS favour the point of view of the team they support

Technical issues often ignored

Current approach to ADC might need to be rethought

Gràcies!
Thank you

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