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Christopher Taylor, Elisa Perego

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Eliana Franco, Vera Lúcia Santiago Araújo

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1. Introduction

It is impossible to talk about accessibility or audio description in Brazil without reference to the country’s political landscape and the worldwide crisis caused by the coronavirus since March 2020, when everyone went into quarantine followed by lockdown. Sadly, the country’s future now is uncertain, as well as the permanence of most of its achievements in the accessibility domain. The pandemic hit us, Brazilians, at an important moment of celebration. Since the second half of 2019, cinemas had been gradually equipped to offer the three accessibility services (audio description, SDH and sign language) to any person who asked for it and came to the cinema on any day, at any time. The feeling of listening to audio description at a cinema as “the new norm” was perhaps indescribable for those who had been part of a long process that led to this auspicious moment by the end of 2019.

Audio description has now arrived in the cinemas, but had been on television long before, reaching almost 24 hours of weekly programming on some public channels by the beginning of 2020, covering not only films, but also whole series, live political debates and concerts, and particularly the core item on the news. Brazilian Portuguese audio description in streaming TV programming has increased considerably and been watched also in Portugal. At the theatres, audio described plays, dance performances and classical concerts have become frequent on a weekly and monthly basis. Let us also mention sports events and the greatest Brazilian cultural celebration of all – the samba school parades during carnival. Although on a smaller scale, museums and cultural centres all over the country have joined the movement towards inclusion.

Private initiatives have given rise to film festivals where accessibility is the centre of attention. Companies that offer access services have multiplied from north to south and there has been room for all. On social media, a movement has also started with the hashtag #pracegover (seeing for the blind) – later followed by #pratodosverem and #pratodomundover (seeing for all), where audio description should be added to any photo, illustration or video posted. Academic research has taken the first steps into calling for blind people’s active participation in the audio description process and specialised training had made it possible also for the blind and visually impaired to consolidate themselves as professional AD consultants. In the background,
Brazil has had the support of a national plan for cultural policies, the *PNC – Plano Nacional de Cultura* (2nd ed, 2008), implemented in 2007 by the then Minister of Culture Gilberto Gil and carried out later by Juca Ferreira during President Lula’s mandate. PNC has underlined the value of culture, as well as that culture is for everyone. Since then, legislation has had to contemplate diversity in all its forms. One of the goals of PNC known as *Meta 29* has determined that “100% of public libraries, museums, cinemas, theatres, public archives and cultural centers should meet the legal requirements of accessibility and develop actions that promote cultural fruition by people with disabilities” (*our translation*).

We were Alices in WonderADland. The topic of accessibility had never been so lengthily discussed or present in the visual and audiovisual arts as in recent times. “Nothing about Us without Us” (*Nada sobre Nós sem Nós*) has become the motto of people with disabilities, more and more engaged in the struggle for inclusion. By 2013, “audio describer” had been included in the Brazilian Classification of Occupations by the Ministry of Work\(^3\) and December 13th, day of *Santa Luzia* – the guardian of the eyes, has been chosen by professionals as the Audio Descriptor’s Day. Such a positive pre-pandemic scenario did not, however, come about from one day to the next. It was the result of a trajectory of more than 15 years, which counted on the efforts of many different agents in the process of democratising the access to information and culture. This chapter aims at reporting on some decisive actions and strategies from the different sectors involved – academic, professional, receptor and regulatory – which have culminated in a notably inclusive context. These are presented in four sections: the first provides a brief overview of AD in the different media, the second focusses on training, the third deals with research and the fourth discusses AD professionals and the market. Finally, future directions are discussed.

### 2. A brief overview of AD in the media

#### Television

Since December 2000, when the Federal Accessibility Law 10,098\(^4\) was signed by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and later regulated by Decree 5,296/2004, Brazil has witnessed a series of other decrees, normative resolutions, regulatory ordinances, public surveys and civil actions until the Ministry of Communications (MiniCom) launched *Portaria 188* in March 2010, which set forth a chronogram for the implementation of accessibility by public broadcasters. According to this chronogram, from July 2011 on, digital television should broadcast two hours per week of audio described content, aiming at 24 weekly hours within ten years. Although far away from the target stipulated by previous determinations (2006 and 2008) – *two daily* hours of audio described programming and 100% of coverage – after ten years, TV channels have complied with instructions. In the beginning, some of them undertook the easy way by rebroadcasting audio described feature films again and again. But the situation has changed and today there are positive examples, such as TV Aparecida in São Paulo state, which has invested in its own professional accessibility team instead of hiring third parties. Not by coincidence, this broadcaster has achieved the target with quality.

Going back in time, it is of no surprise that a *primetime* soap opera entitled *América* (March to November 2005) was partly responsible for focussing the Brazilian people’s attention on the issue of visual disability through one of its main protagonists, the blind man Jatobá. Jatobá made such an impact on blind and non-blind viewers that an open letter was written to the broadcaster requiring the insertion of AD in the production, which never happened. In October of the same year, the Brazilian Technical Norm for Accessibility on Television was published...
(ABNT NBR\textsuperscript{5} 15,290:2005), which timidly referred to closed captions, \emph{audio with description} and the box of Libras – the Brazilian sign language. In 2008, when the Convention for the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN, 2007) was ratified in Brazil, the complementary norm ABNT NBR 15,599 for accessibility in communication was also published. Nevertheless, it was only in 2016 that the specific norm on audio description – ABNT NBR 16,452 – became public. This 13-page document covers a very general list of must-have elements for live and/or pre-recorded AD of films, videos, television programmes, plays, dance performances, exhibitions and video classes. Although it may be helpful for a total beginner, the document hardly explores the audio description process, as stated in the “scope” section: “the application of these guidelines includes, but is not limited to, situations concerning the guidelines for the preparation of the screenplay for audio description” (page v).

Within this period, the year 2008 was a landmark for accessibility in Brazil. The so far relatively silent community of blind people had developed greater awareness about issues of access and inclusion in the mass media. The few AD scholars and professionals at the time also started to raise their voice against the suspensions and delays in the law manipulated by a joint appeal of public broadcasters led by \textit{Rede Globo de Televisão}. Together for the first time, a small group of professionals, academics and the representative of the Brazilian Association of the Blind flew to the federal capital in July for a meeting at MiniCom. From this meeting, it was clear that TV broadcasters were not willing to invest in analogical television once the digital era was just two years ahead. Another argument was the low number of AD professionals who could comply with the two-hour-daily programming at issue, later turned into the present two-hour-weekly programming. In this case, users, professionals and scholars could unanimously agree that training courses should be immediately offered if we wanted to make AD a reality.

\textbf{Cinema}

Following the legislation and the technical norms on accessibility already described, there were other few but extremely important measures that created a great impact on cinematographic output. In 2013, ANCINE – the Brazilian Film Agency, responsible for the regulation of audiovisual production – launched the \textit{Plano de Diretrizes e Metas para o Audiovisual} (Plan of Instructions and Targets for the Audiovisual Medium), a regulatory agenda that aimed “to democratise the access to audiovisual as a whole, so that each Brazilian citizen, without distinction, can have a more inclusive life and a fuller experience with audiovisuals produced by their country and other nations”.\textsuperscript{6} This meant that every feature film supported by the Audiovisual Sector Fund (FSA) should include accessibility in their budgets. Besides public impact, this measure put an end to cultural investors whose motivation has been solely tax reductions, as determined by the Federal Law of Cultural Incentive or Law \textit{Rouanet} 8,313/1991.

In addition to the regulatory agenda, ANCINE launched Normative Instruction 116/2014 that stated that production projects supported by federal financial resources should include SDH,\textsuperscript{7} audio description and sign language in their post-production budgets. This NI has represented a landmark for cinema accessibility, which culminated with Law no. 13,146/2015, known as LBI, the Brazilian Law of Inclusion, which became official in January 2016. According to LBI, people with disabilities have the right to culture, whose access should be guaranteed through accessible formats. Moreover, the law condemns any attempt at refusing access to intellectual production. As regards screenings in cinemas, the law determines that these should offer access services in all sessions.
ANCINE measures were greatly celebrated among AD professionals and scholars and the demand for work multiplied. However, in the rush to provide access services, cinemas were faced with the challenge of not being equipped for the new venture. The regulations did not account for the standardisation of the delivery of access services. Despite the undeniable contribution of applications such as MovieReading and Whatscine for spreading film accessibility at this first moment and still today, especially now during the Covid-19 crisis, distributors, producers and audio describers found themselves dependent on the companies that retained licenses of such applications to make their accessible audiovisual products available in big and small screens.

After two years of much debate, ANCINE finally launched Normative Instruction 128/2016, which established that “by 2018 every commercial cinema in Brazil should be equipped with assistive technology that guarantees the services of descriptive subtitling, audio description and sign language”. In the same year, the Ministry of Culture and the Secretariat of Audiovisual published a guide for accessible audiovisual production (Naves et al., 2016) commissioned by ANCINE. Unlike the audio description norm NBR 16,452/2016 described in the previous section, this brief guide focused on questions about the processes of AD scriptwriting, subtitling for the deaf and signing. Soon, two Brazilian companies, Riole and Dolby, invested in the creation of equipment that made it possible to choose from access services in just one click, namely ProAccess and CineAssista, respectively. By the end of 2019, many commercial cinemas had already been equipped with one of these technologies.

**Streaming**

Streaming TV is relatively recent in Brazil, but the market has been expanding rapidly with increasing offers of channels and services, leaving paid TV far behind. Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Globoplay are the leading proponents so far and Disney+ has just arrived. Netflix, the first to come to Brazil in 2011, has been the most popular and the one that is setting up AD standards for streaming services. A quick search for Portuguese audio description today (no need to specify Brazilian Pt) leads to 42 items among national and international films and series, including its most recent success, Bridgerton.

Despite the increasing volume of audio description in streaming TV, quality has been an issue for Brazilian users and professionals as AD guides come from abroad, AD scripts are usually translated, in the case of international productions and AD rates are low. Moreover, streaming AD output is mostly produced by dubbing studios, either under the supervision of foreign clients, or under their own supervision, in the case of national productions. In both instances, the role of a blind consultant in the AD production chain is seldom acknowledged.

**Theatre**

A legal project proclaimed September 19th as The National Day of Accessible Theatre. However, there is no specific regulation so far that makes audio description compulsory for plays, dance performances, music concerts and the opera. We are left with Normative Instruction 4/2017, related to Law Rouanet only, which determines that accessibility should be present in all projects submitted under this law, including promotional material concerning such projects.

Notwithstanding the absence of specific regulation, an increasing number of audio described plays and dance performances have been promoted all over the country by private initiatives with or without federal funding since 2007, when the first audio described play was performed in the city of São Paulo at Teatro Vivo, followed by the first audio described dance
performance at Espaço Xisto, in the city of Salvador in 2008. Accessible plays were also performed at the São Paulo Cultural Centre in 2009, the same year that the first audio described opera took place in the majestic Teatro Amazonas, in the north of the country. These examples have inspired many other big and small theatres all over the country and from 2012 on, the iconic Teatro Carlos Gomes in the city of Rio de Janeiro has been the venue for inclusive sessions for at least five years, followed by Teatro NET Rio. In 2017 classical music was also included and audio described concerts have been held at Sala São Paulo. From 2018 on, the also majestic Theatro Municipal de São Paulo has regularly included access services in its performances.

Aiming at increasing the visibility of audio description as well as raising the awareness of cultural inclusion by the audience, two successful actions have been increasingly adopted in all performances: a) offering earphones to the general public, with or without visual impairment and b) crediting access service professionals at the end of each performance – this being mostly done by the performers themselves. These actions have also contributed to overcoming attitudinal barriers.

Museum

According to Decree 8,124/2013 that regulates Law 11,904/2009 of the Statute of Museums (Estatuto dos Museus), the annual planning of all museums should envisage an accessibility programme to be implemented and sustained (Salasar, 2019). In 2012, the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM) launched the journal Cadernos Museológicos, with volume two devoted to accessibility (Cohen et al., 2012).

Brazilian museums and cultural centres have started to move slowly towards accessibility, despite LBI 2015. Audio description is still hardly used in audioguides and partly used in temporary or permanent exhibitions, whose items to be described tend to go through selection by the curator and/or audio describer. Another problem, according to Salasar et al. (2019) is that audio description and other access services are usually entrusted to the education sector of museums, which in turn rarely dispose of the financial autonomy to implement the services.

In the report by Sarraf (2015), actions towards accessibility in cultural centres all over the country increased by 20% until 2013. Regarding audio description as a permanent service, the Zoology Museum at USP, the Microbiology Museum at Instituto Butantan, Pinacoteca and Estação Pinacoteca, the Cultural Centres Banco do Brasil (CCBB) and São Paulo (CCSP), the Museums of Modern Art (MAM), the Museum of Football and the National History Museum, all in the Southeast region, the Art and Cultural Centre Dragão do Mar in the Northeast, the Museum Joaquim José Felizardo in the South and the units of SESC (Social Service of Commerce) are all worth mentioning.

Lately, the application Musea® has provided audio description for exhibitions at the Cultural Centre Banco do Brasil in Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and at the regional units of SESC. Other cultural centers have also made punctual use of this application, such as Oi Futuro in Rio de Janeiro and the Jockey Club, Casa MD and Library Alceu Amoroso Lima in the city of São Paulo.

3. AD training

In 2008, when the country was discussing accessibility on television programming and after the meeting at MiniCom in Brasília, academics started to move into action regarding training. Although audio description as a discipline had already been introduced in the country, entire
courses on the subject were needed to train professionals. The first attempts were characterised as Extension Courses (Cursos de Extensão) that ranged from 20 to 40 hours. The Faculty of Letters at the Federal University of Bahia was the first to gather a large public, including visually impaired students. Other extension courses also took place at the State University of Ceará (UECE) and at the Federal Universities of Minas Gerais and Pernambuco. Though under the category of workshops, the AD training given by the pioneers Bernd Benecke (Germany) and Joel Snyder (US) in their brief visit to Ouro Preto during the IV International Conference of ABRAPT (the Brazilian Association of Researchers in Translation) in 2009 is worth mentioning. This training was an invaluable kick-off for many students from the first generation of audio describers.

Because of the fact that audio description was getting increasing attention from the visually impaired audiences, from film producers and from the TV dubbing market, Postgraduate Courses, or the so-called Cursos de Especialização in Brazil, became an asset in a promising accessible future.

These were 360-hour courses (partly online) aimed at providing theoretical and practical expertise for those willing to become professionals in audio description and accessibility.

The first course was Especialização em Acessibilidade Cultural, promoted by the Faculty of Occupational Therapy at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) in 2013. Despite not focusing exclusively on audio description, it consisted of a 45-hour discipline that combined theory and practice along with Braille (30h) and sign language (30h). This course was idealised in the iconic year of 2008, when the former Secretariat of Identity and Cultural Diversity (SID) promoted the National Workshop of Public Policies for People with Disabilities entitled Nada sobre Nós sem Nós (Nothing about Us without Us) in Rio de Janeiro. After five years, the course became a reality through a partnership with the Ministry of Culture (MinC). Together with the 2015 and 2017 editions, the course resulted in 129 certified professionals in cultural accessibility.

The second course, Curso de Especialização em Audiodescrição, was promoted by the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF) and took place in the year 2014–2015. It counted on funding by the Federal Government through the Special Secretariat for Disabled People and focused exclusively on training AD specialists. The disciplines ranged from accessibility legislation to audio description modes (for the cinema, theatre and museums) and the study of the steps in each process (script development, consultancy by blind professionals and pre-recorded/live narration). Out of the 50 students from Brazil’s five regions who started the course, 32 became specialists and among them, two visually impaired participants.

The third course, Curso de Especialização em TAV Acessível, was promoted by the State University of Ceará (UECE) in the year 2017–2018. It was funded by the Ministry of Education through CAPES, the Coordination for Further Training of Higher Education Personnel. The course offered two study areas in accessibility – AD and SDH, taught by researchers at UECE. Out of the 70 students from all over the country that attended the course, half of them became audio description specialists, including four visually impaired participants.

In the year 2018–2019, a course for further training (Curso de Aperfeiçoamento) in audio description for pedagogical purposes was promoted by the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF) and the Ministry of Education (MEC). The online programme provided 150 hours of training to 300 teachers (including visually impaired) from various educational institutions that assist blind students. This was the last course of the type supported by federal funding.

Besides these, there were shorter courses promoted by institutions related to the blind, like Fundação Dorina Nowill in São Paulo and Instituto Benjamin Constant in Rio de Janeiro and
other online courses promoted by single professors or scholars connected to different universities, such as the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE).

The positive side effects of all courses were firstly, to demonstrate the importance of training for the professionalisation of audio description and secondly, to introduce visually impaired users as active agents in the audio description production chain.

4. AD research

At present, there are five main research groups on AVT and AD in Brazil.

Research groups

TRAMAD (Tradução, Mídia e Audiodescrição) was founded in 2004 at the Letters Institute of UFBA, being the oldest and first group in Brazil to investigate audio description for the cinema and dance performances, as well as for the audience with learning disabilities, also in Europe. The group was awarded a Hors Concours prize in 2015 for its contribution to the development of AD in the country.

Research has usually consisted of reception studies. Most studies have been published and all presented at national and international academic events. The first of a series (Franco, 2007), introduces AD in the state of Bahia and illustrates the experience of producing a script for a local short film. One of the main questions posed by this study was related to the interpretative narration of a football game scene. The second study had the participation of 25 blind and visually impaired people from the city of Salvador who were contacted through the Blind Association of Bahia (ABC). It compared two versions – the amateur and the academic – of the first audio described DVD film in the country, aiming to understand target viewers’ preferences (Franco et al., 2011).

The third study was developed in partnership with the dance faculty of UFBA, responsible for the performance of Os 3 Audíveis. Different types of AD were tested in a 50-minute script aiming at finding out preferences regarding a “literal to movement” trend versus an “interpretative” trend versus a “mixed” trend. The results, presented at a seminar in Montpellier (Franco, 2008), revealed that preferences were linked to the audience’s socio-economic status, familiarity with the cultural environment and age. In the following year, TRAMAD presented the country’s first MA dissertation on audio description with the study of AD scripts for children (Silva, 2009), the results of which pointed to a more interpretative model, not only as text but also as far as narration is concerned.

From 2009 on, research on AD has been motivated by a group of enthusiastic adolescents with learning disabilities who were brought to the theatre by APAE, the Association of Parents and Friends of Exceptional People,10 to attend an audio described dance performance in the city of Santo Amaro da Purificação, in Bahia state. Three pioneering studies with this audience followed. The first aimed at testing the impact of an AD script of a short film intended for the blind audience. Although quite useful in many aspects, the script could not solve implicit or ambiguous meanings, nor stimulate associations between them, suggesting the need for a script targeted to the audience with learning disabilities only (Franco et al., 2013, 2015). Carneiro (2015) took the study further, testing and confirming previous results in a much larger corpus with a larger target audience of APAE students from three cities in different states.

As a way of putting the findings into practice in an AD script thought exclusively for people with learning disabilities, TRAMAD worked for the exhibition Jorge Amado e Universal at MAM-Bahia (2012), that celebrated the centenary of one of the most translated Brazilian
writers abroad. The target audience’s response was very positive and interpreted as a key factor in a successful “going to the museum experience” for visitors with learning disabilities (Franco, 2013, 2021). The enthusiasm with this experience led TRAMAD members into a more complex study about the active participation of the target audience in the construction of AD scripts.

This time, the exhibition \textit{Esquizópolis}, that took place at the Museum of Modern Art in the city of Salvador in 2013, was chosen for the complexity of its topic and the works on display, analysed according to Präkel’s taxonomy of the elements of static images (2012). The appreciation of visual arts proved even more in need of AD scripts that could build the bridge between complex works and the visitors with learning disabilities without, however, interfering in their personal experience of such works (Franco, 2018).

In parallel with TRAMAD studies, there were others by individual members of the group in the form of monographs, MA theses and PhD dissertations, some of them published. Mascarenhas (2012) analysed the narrative structure of a TV mini-series screenplay based on narratological-discursive parameters, which proved useful for the production of a more consistent AD script. Farias (2013), in turn, approached the assumption of non-subjectivity by investigating the poetics of the AD script. Franco and Monteiro (2013) took the taboo road to the analysis of the first audio described sex scenes exhibited on Brazilian big screens to find out that a lot was left to the audience’s imagination due to the describer’s self-censorship. Whereas Vilaronga Rodrigues (2010) reflected on the role of blind people as AD target users, Silva (2019) discussed their role as AD consultants, as well as the visual-centric perspective from which AD scripts are produced. Finally, Silveira (2019) developed a reception study where two models of image description were compared, one proposed by the former Ministry of Education and applied to Brazilian textbooks and another based on the Grammar of Visual Design by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006).

In addition to research, TRAMAD has produced audio descriptions of films and plays for local producers. In 2020, TRAMAD dissolved into various research groups coordinated by former members who are now connected to different universities in the state of Bahia.

LEAD (\textit{Legendagem e Audiodescrição}) was founded in 2005 at UECE. Although research on SDH had been carried out since 2002, it was only in 2005 that audio description started to be investigated and AD was incorporated into the new name of the group. As the city of Fortaleza did not provide any access services for audiovisual output, the group began to subtitle and audio describe audiovisual productions. At the same time, academic research projects funded by the Brazilian government were developed.

Like most AD research worldwide, LEAD began with films. Based on narratological categories (Jiménez, 2010), AD scripts were analysed and submitted to visually impaired audiences (Braga et al., 2018). All results pointed to a satisfactory reception of all kinds of films, whose accessible copies were produced for the project \textit{Accessible DVD}, funded by a federal bank. Film AD research also approached the issue of neutrality by means of the Appraisal System (Martin & White, 2005), within Hallidayan Systemic-Functional Linguistics (Praxedes Filho et al., 2019). The results showed that the five scripts analysed were evaluative. All contained appraisals by attitude (emotional, ethical and esthetical), engagement (monoglossic and heteroglossic) and graduation (force and focus), even though they were produced under the neutrality orientation (Praxedes Filho et al., 2019: 45).

Film oral narration has been approached by different theoretical and methodological interfaces, based on studies of audio description, phonetics, phonology and speech-language therapy. Film narrations were evaluated from an articulatory and perceptual-auditory point of view. A reception study was carried out (Carvalho et al., 2017; Aderaldo et al., 2017) and the results indicate that the visually impaired prefer more expressive narrations with different
vocal nuances, rather than monotonous and non-interpretive ones. The data points to more expressiveness, in which meaning is created by the narrator’s emphasis.

AD for the theatre has also been approached by using the same theoretical constructs described previously for films, with some adaptations related to the genre. Relying on the Appraisal System, Araújo et al. (2018: 139) described the kind of evaluation contained in a children’s theatrical musical drama. The study revealed that attitude appeared more frequently, indicating focus on characters’ feelings. As to oral narration, it was noticed that the notion of neutrality persists, but the results also indicate the audio describer’s concern in providing the psychological profile and the transformations of the characters. The data also revealed that systematic parameters for the narration of films can also be used for live theatre narrations, taking into consideration the audio describer’s appropriation of the script and possible adaptations in case of improvisation. (Leão, 2018).

Finally, studies on AD scripts for the visual arts were also conducted. O’Toole’s (2011) Multimodal Social Semiotics model was used to produce as well as to analyse AD paintings (Nunes, 2017). The model is based on Halliday’s three basic functions of communication: representational (ideational), modal (interpersonal) and compositional (textual). Nunes’s script for Pieter Brueghel’s Hunter in the Snow, a winter painting with plenty of episodes, characters and details, was exposed to five blind participants. The reception was positive, even though the script was longer than the ones they are used to.

The Appraisal System was also used to address evaluation in AD scripts for paintings (Praxedes Filho & Magalhães, 2013; Praxedes Filho et al., 2019). The 2013 study investigated scripts from Brazil and the United States written under the prescription of neutrality, following the describe-what-you-see norm. The results suggested that the presupposition of neutrality could be observed more in Brazilian scripts, although the norm was created in the United States. North American audio describers seemed to realise the impossibility of being objective in AD.

At present, research by group LEAD focusses on the importance of touch for the accessibility of paintings and photographs. Besides AD, materialised pieces and 3D models are being built to improve the visually impaired experience with the visual arts.

FREE ACCESS (Acesso Livre) was founded in 2010 at the University of Brasília (UNB). The group is linked to the Center for Assistive Technology, Accessibility and Inclusion (NTAAI) created within the framework of the Federal Government’s Living Without Limits Plan (Viver sem Limites). It counts on the participation of teachers, technicians and undergraduate and graduate students from different areas, who have carried out research on AD for films, the visual arts and for soap operas or telenovelas (Alves & Araujo, 2016; Alves et al., 2016; Aderaldo et al., 2017).

MATAV (Mídia Acessível e TAV) was founded in 2013 at the State University of São Paulo (UNESP). The group brings together researchers and students from the areas of Communication, Language Teaching and Translation who have a common interest in the investigation of audiovisual language. Their publications so far are reflections on the audio descriptions they have produced. (Villela, 2017a, 2017b).

Currently, there are many other groups that produce studies in audiovisual translation and accessibility. However, those mentioned earlier represent pioneering systematic research on audio description in the country.

5. AD professionals and the market

Outside the academic realm and apart from developments in more restricted environments, like the audio described film sessions promoted by volunteers at Laramara Association in
São Paulo, the Cultural Center Louis Braille in Campinas and the Supporting Centre for the Visually Impaired (CAP) in Salvador,\(^\text{11}\) there was practically no accessibility available in the visual and audiovisual arts until 2003. It is of common knowledge that this year represents the first time that AD was introduced to the general public at the International Film Festival Assim Vivemos. As a thematic festival about disability inspired by the German *Wie wir leben* and produced by Lavoro Produções in Brasília, São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, all screenings were audio described and subtitled for the deaf. In 2019, the festival reached its 9th edition with sign language as well. Although not primarily intended to put access services into debate, the festival was responsible for giving these services great visibility and for inspiring other festivals that followed, like the International Short-film Festival in São Paulo (2006 and 2007) and the Festival of Gramado (2007) in the South.

From 2005 on, a large number of initiatives by the private sector, together with initiatives motivated by research, started to invest in cultural access for the blind. A series of “firsts” emerged everywhere in the country:\(^\text{12}\) in 2005 we watched the first audio described DVD, *Irmãos de Fé*, followed by *Ensaio sobre a Cegueira* (Blindness) three years later. In 2007, the play *Andaime* was audio described in São Paulo and in 2008 the dance performance *Os 3 Audíveis* with AD took place in Salvador. Also in 2008, the feature film *O Sígnio da Cidade* reached the cinemas in Belo Horizonte and São Paulo and the Brazilian audience watched for the first time on TV an audio described commercial for the brand *Natura*. In 2009, the city of Manaus presented the first audio described opera, *Sansão e Dalila*, at the XIII Opera Festival of Amazonas (Franco & Silva, 2010: 31–32).

Following these, other initiatives were taken to make audio description known, especially by its target-audience. By 2009, there were just a couple of companies that provided access services, and TV channels were rushing into dubbing studios to comply with the TV accessibility chronogram imposed by law and initially meant to be due in 2008. Dubbing studios, in turn, were rushing towards those few professionals at the time, trying to keep up with the new accessibility market. However, studios soon realised how profitable this market could be and started to produce their own audio descriptions, sometimes after a short introductory course designed for their needs. At the kick-off of the accessibility chronogram in 2011, the first audio descriptions on Globo TV – the feature films *The Fantastic Four* (*O Quarteto Fantástico*) and *The Silver Surfer* (*O Surfista Prateado*) – clearly demonstrated not only the pitfalls of a non-professional script and dubbing-sound-like narration, but also the eagerness of dubbing studios to have their share in the new market.\(^\text{13}\)

Some conscientious professionals from the dubbing industry, however, have understood the importance of formal training for performing such a complex multisemiotic translation process, especially if they intended to deal with specialised competition already available. Along with dubbers and voice talents, professionals from different areas embarked on the Specialisation courses described in the Training section. Many companies and professionals that now offer access services either originated or consolidated themselves after these courses, mainly taught by pioneering AD professionals who were also involved in the other kinds of training mentioned earlier. The important point is that there has been room for all in this new, competitive market. As an illustration, Table 37.2 (paragraph 9. Appendix) provides a list of companies set up by well-known AD professionals and/or accessibility promoters who are currently active. Such a list, however, is not representative of the totality of existing companies, nor of the many equally well-known professionals that work on a freelance basis for them or for other accessibility projects that take place in the country. It is also worth noting that their year of creation does not infer previous audio description work.
Another fact that has prevented bad quality in the market is the invaluable action taken by blind and visually impaired professional consultants, who gathered in 2017 to create the Coletivo de Consultores em AD (AD Consultants’ Collective), a group of 33 people who work with many of the existing companies, individual professionals and research groups. Their professionalisation as consultants through training has also helped to establish their share in every AD project budget, which may range from 30% to 40% of the value paid to the AD scripter. As expected, this seldom applies to television, where translation rates are much lower.

Last but not least, accessible film festivals and screenings have largely contributed to promoting dialogue about audio description, as well as to improving its quality. The festival of accessible films VerOuvindo in the city of Recife, Pernambuco state, is a case in point. The festival was launched in 2014 and reached its fifth edition in 2019. In 2018, it was awarded the Mercosul prize of Good Civil Practice in Audiovisual Accessibility. In five editions, the festival has screened 90 films with audio description, SDH and sign language. Among the different activities offered, the festival promotes a competitive session for best audio described short film, which has attracted an increasing number of competitors each year. The technical jury is composed by AD professionals, including a blind consultant. During the festival, many formative sessions with national and international speakers also take place. The 2017 edition was also host to the 3rd National Meeting and 1st International Meeting of Audio Description. VerOuvindo has, most of all, made an important move gathering AD academics, practitioners and consultants, filmmakers and producers and a massive target audience from all over the country.

In parallel with these festivals, the city of Recife has also hosted important screenings. In 2016 and 2017, the blind audience could watch for the first time accessible erotic films at Cine às Escuras. Mostra Erótica de Cinema Acessível. In 2019, Mostra Alumiar screenings, promoted by Fundação Joaquim Nabuco, counted on the active participation of AD scripters, narrators and consultants from all over Brazil, besides international guest speakers.

At the opposite end of the country, in the southern city of Porto Alegre, the Festival de Cinema Acessível was launched in 2015, offering sessions with AD, LSE and LIBRAS open to the general public. From 2017, the younger audience could also enjoy accessible film sessions promoted especially for children and adolescents under the title Festival de Cinema Acessível – KIDS. Finally, it can be said that the Brazilian market offers a rich and diverse landscape of professionals who are determined to make high-quality audio description happen.

6. Future directions

It is difficult to think of future directions for accessibility and especially for audio description in Brazil, considering the present scenario of the country, whose political agenda seems determined to eradicate culture, education and health. One of the first measures taken by the current president was to extinguish the Ministry of Culture and turn it into a department dependent on the Ministry of Tourism. Therefore, funding for cultural projects has disappeared, particularly those concerning accessibility, and the Secretariat in charge was closed. The Ministry of Education now welcomes its fourth representative after three other disastrous appointments who have managed to suspend all financial support for specialised research and specialisation courses.

The second setback relating to accessibility were two Provisional Measures (917 of December 2019 and 1,025 of December 2020), which postponed by one year (January 2021) and then by two years (2023), respectively, the obligation on the part of cinemas to be equipped.
with assistive technologies for the access of people with disabilities. Overall, there are 171 cinemas throughout the country that have such technologies and the great concern lies in not losing conquered rights. The future of ANCINE was put on hold and remains a mystery. Amid cultural chaos, the recent approval of Law Project Aldir Blanc (2020), named after a famous composer who died of Covid-19 and aimed at vulnerable culture professionals and institutions, has brought some hope for the sector.

As regards audio description, resilient professionals and audiences have organised an overload of live sessions, as well as conferences and courses, all with audio description via Beplay and Streamyard platforms. Many accessible films have been at everybody’s reach on YouTube channels, where artists have also put on live accessible performances. WhatsApp groups have been extremely active in discussing the future of post-pandemic and post-crisis audio description. In sum, all agents of culture and accessibility are more united than ever in resisting and, hopefully, in envisioning better days.

Notes
1 This is the case of TV Aparecida, a São Paulo state broadcaster, as reported by Flavia Machado, its coordinator of access services.
2 There is no official record of the amount of accessible events that have taken place in Brazil so far. These are usually publicized on social media as well as on webpages of accessibility promoters.
3 The occupation CBO2614–30 is classified under the hyperonyms “translator/interpreter” and can be found at: www.ocupacoes.com.br/cbo-mte/261430-audiodescritor.
4 For clarity purposes, legislation mentioned in this chapter was summarized on Table 37.1, paragraph 9. Appendix.
5 ABNT stands for Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (the Brazilian Association of Technical Norms) and NBR for Norma Brasileira (Brazilian Norm).
6 Available at www.ancine.gov.br/en/regulation/regulatory-agenda#search-block-form, including additional info on ANCINE in this section.
7 ANCINE has adopted the term “descriptive subtitling” for SDH.
8 As with other media, there is no official record about the number of accessible live events in the country.
9 The webpage of this Brazilian app is musea.art.br.
10 APAE is the first, thus oldest institution in the country that assists people with learning disabilities.
11 These were “informal” AD sessions, in the sense that images were described on the spot and that there was no professional script or narration involved. The volunteers in question are among today’s well-known AD professionals in Brazil.
12 For a more complete account on this initial phase of AD in Brazil, see Motta & Filho (orgs), 2010.
14 Contact at @consultoresemad and facebook.com/consultoresemad/.
15 In 2008, the 1st AD National Meeting was organized as a reaction to the delay of the implementation of accessibility on Brazilian TV. Although full of good intentions, the event did not attract much attention. In 2012, the 2nd AD National Meeting at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora (UFJF) was decisive for future actions towards AD professionalization. In 2017, the 3rd AD National Meeting and 1st AD International Meeting that preceded Festival VerOuvindo attested the huge dimension that AD has conquered in the country.
16 A report about Mostra Alumiar was organized by Farache (2019).

7. Further reading
8. References


Franco, E.P.C. (2021). *Uma tarde no museu com Jorge Amado: relato de uma visita guiada com audiodescrição para o público com deficiência intelectual*. In Brahemcha, F. & Perrotti-Garcia, A.J. (Eds.), *Ao vivo e a Cores: relatos de casos de audiodescrição de eventos ao vivo*. (e-book). Retrieved from www.amazon.com.br/Ao-Vivo-Cores-relatos-audiodescri%C3%A7%C3%A3o-de-eventos-ao-vivo-ebook/dp/B094R95MBM/ref=sr_1_1?__mk_pt_BR=%C3%85M%C3%95%C3%91&crid=ND0GVH68GYP&dchild=1&keywords=ao+vivo+e+a+cores&qid=1622312772&sprefix=ao+vivo%2Caps%2C316&sr=8-1


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9. Appendix

Table 37.1 Summary of legislation and technical norms mentioned in this chapter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEGISLATION/NORMS</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>SUBJECT</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Law 10,098 regulated by Decree 5,296/2004</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Federal Accessibility Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portaria 188</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Chronogram for the implementation of accessibility by public broadcasters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm ABNT NBR 15,290</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Technical Norm for Accessibility on Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complementary norm ABNT NBR 15,599</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Accessibility in communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANCINE Regulatory Plan</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Plan of Instructions and Targets for the Audiovisual Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decree 8,124</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Regulates Law 11,904/2009 about the implementation of an accessibility programme by museums (Statute of Museums)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Instruction 116</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Obligation of production projects supported by federal financial resources to include SDH, audio description and sign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law 13,146 (official in January 2016)</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Brazilian Law for the Inclusion of People with Disabilities (LBI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm ABNT NBR 16,452</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Technical Norm of audio description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Normative Instruction 128</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Determines the offer of assistive technology by commercial cinemas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normative Instruction 4</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Accessibility as compulsory in all Rouanet projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provisional Measure 917</td>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Postponement in one year (January 2021) of the obligation by cinemas to be equipped with assistive technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Law Aldir Blanc</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Financial aid for vulnerable professionals and institutions of culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisional Measure 1,025</td>
<td>2021</td>
<td>Postponement to 2023 the obligation by cinemas to be equipped with assistive technologies</td>
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Table 37.2 List of active audio description/accessibility companies in Brazil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>CITY, STATE</th>
<th>DIGITAL MEDIA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CPL Soluções em Acessibilidade</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, RJ</td>
<td>cpl.com.br</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cinema Falado Produções</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, RJ</td>
<td>facebook.com/ cinemafaladoproducoes/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iguale Comunicação de Acessibilidade</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>São Paulo, SP</td>
<td>iguale.com.br</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagarelas Produções</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Porto Alegre, RS</td>
<td>facebook.com/ tagarelasproducoes/</td>
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(Continued)
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<th>COMPANY</th>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>CITY, STATE</th>
<th>DIGITAL MEDIA</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Som da Luz Tecnologias de Inclusão</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Porto Alegre, RS</td>
<td>somdaluz.com.br</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mil Palavras</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Porto Alegre, RS</td>
<td>milpalavras.net.br</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acessibilidade Cultural Audiodescrição</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>São Paulo, SP</td>
<td>vercompalavras.com.br</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmes que voam</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Florianópolis, SC</td>
<td>filmesquevoam.com.br</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Meninas dos Olhos</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>São Paulo, SP</td>
<td>asmeninasdosolhos.com.br</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VouSer Acessibilidade</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Recife, PE</td>
<td>instagram.com/youseraccessibilidade/</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acessu Acessibilidade Universal</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Salvador, BA</td>
<td>facebook.com/acessuaccessibilidadeuniversal</td>
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<tr>
<td>COM Acessibilidade Comunicacional</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Recife, PE</td>
<td>comacessibilidade.com.br</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accorde Filmes</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Porto Alegre, RS</td>
<td>accorde.com.br</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mescla Comunicação</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>São Paulo, SP</td>
<td>facebook.com/rosamatsushita/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVNI Acessibilidade Universal</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Porto Alegre, RS</td>
<td>ovniacessibilidade.wordpress.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tic Tag Comunicação &amp; Educação Acessíveis</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Porto Alegre, RS</td>
<td>brisateixeira.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quests Consultoria</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Campinas, SP</td>
<td>facebook.com/questconsultoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>GERA Acessibilidade Criativa</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>São Paulo, SP</td>
<td>facebook.com/geraaccessibilidadeCriadiva</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imagem Acústica Audiodescrição</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Belém, PA</td>
<td>facebook.com/pg/acustica.ad/</td>
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<tr>
<td>ETC Filmes</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>São Paulo, SP</td>
<td>etcfilmes.com.br</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inclusive Acessibilidade Produção Cultural</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, RJ</td>
<td>inclusiveaccessibilidade.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acessibilidade nas Artes</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>Salvador, BA</td>
<td>linkedin.com/in/sandra-rosa-04b9b1106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tradusound Soluções em Acessibilidade</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Americana, SP</td>
<td>tradusound.com.br</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADarte Acessibilidade Cultural</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>Salvador, BA</td>
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