Unveiling Audio Description Styles' Diversity in Persian

Descubriendo la diversidad de estilos de audiodescripción en persa

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Abstract: Audio description (AD) is indispensable for ensuring that visual media becomes fully accessible to blind and visually impaired (BVI) individuals, thereby allowing them to actively participate in and enjoy films and television shows alongside sighted audiences. Although AD serves as a cornerstone of media accessibility and inclusivity, the rich diversity of AD styles in practice has attracted surprisingly limited scholarly attention, with even less directed toward non-Western contexts such as Iran. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting an in-depth investigation into Persian-language AD, with a primary focus on identifying and categorizing its distinct styles' variations. The research methodology commences with a comprehensive review and synthesis of the existing international literature on AD styles, which informs the construction of a detailed analytical framework. This framework ultimately encompasses seven well-defined styles, each characterized by three fundamental elements. To operationalize this framework, data collection continues until data saturation, at which point the presence or absence of the AD styles identified in the literature was consistently observed across the samples. Finally, 21 drama films were reached, and underwent a meticulous analysis of their scripts. The results from this script analysis demonstrate marked stylistic preferences within Persian AD.

The objective style emerged as the most frequently used, accounting for 33.3% of the total instances. The descriptive style followed, comprising 28.5% and prioritizing visual elements to enhance the audience's understanding. The mixed style, which strategically combines other subjective techniques, accounted for 23.8%, while the narrative style, a narratological approach to content selection, accounted for 14.2%. By establishing this typology, the study significantly advances scholarly understanding of AD practices in Iran and provides a foundation for future improvements in accessibility standards and training.

Keywords: Media accessibility, Audio description, Audio description styles, Blind and visually impaired, Iran

Resumen: La audiodescripción (AD) es indispensable para garantizar que los medios visuales sean plenamente accesibles para las personas ciegas y con discapacidad visual (BVI), lo que les permite participar activamente en películas y programas de televisión y disfrutarlos junto con el público vidente. Aunque la AD constituye un pilar fundamental de la accesibilidad e inclusividad mediática, la rica diversidad de estilos de AD en la práctica ha recibido sorprendentemente poca atención académica, y aún menos en contextos no occidentales como Irán. Este estudio busca llenar este vacío mediante una investigación exhaustiva de la AD en lengua persa, con un enfoque principal en identificar y categorizar las variaciones de sus estilos distintivos. La metodología de investigación comienza con una revisión y síntesis exhaustiva de la literatura internacional existente sobre los estilos de AD, lo cual guía la construcción de un marco analítico detallado. Este marco finalmente abarca siete estilos bien definidos, cada uno caracterizado por tres elementos fundamentales. Para poner en práctica este marco, la recopilación de datos continúa hasta alcanzar la saturación de datos, momento en el cual la presencia o ausencia de los estilos de AD identificados en la literatura se observó de manera consistente en las muestras. Finalmente, se seleccionaron 21 películas dramáticas (audiodescritas por Sevina y Gooshkon), las cuales fueron sometidas a un análisis minucioso de sus guiones. Los resultados de este análisis de guiones muestran claras preferencias estilísticas dentro de la AD en persa. El estilo objetivo surgió como el más utilizado, con un 33,3 % del total de las instancias. Le siguió el estilo descriptivo, que representó el 28,5 % y prioriza los elementos visuales para mejorar la comprensión del público. El estilo mixto, que combina estratégicamente otras técnicas subjetivas, representó el 23,8 %, mientras que el estilo narrativo, un enfoque narratológico en la selección de contenido,

alcanzó el 14,2 %. Al establecer esta tipología, el estudio contribuye de manera significativa a la comprensión académica de las prácticas de AD en Irán y proporciona una base para futuras mejoras en los estándares de accesibilidad y en la formación especializada.

Palabras clave: Accesibilidad a los medios, Audiodescripción, Estilos de audiodescripción, Personas ciegas y con discapacidad visual, Irán

INTRODUCTION

In the modern media environment, where abundant audiovisual content is available across diverse platforms and media, the importance of Audiovisual Translation (AVT) in our everyday existence has become more evident (Abu-Rayyash & Shiyab, 2023; Shokoohmand & Khoshsaligheh, 2024). In today's world, where a substantial portion of information is delivered through audiovisual (AV) media, ensuring easy access to those individuals with special needs has emerged as a critical imperative. As per Gambier (2023), accessibility enables individuals to achieve specific goals in a manner that is effective, efficient, and satisfactory, fostering communication that surpasses boundaries related to social, cognitive, age, gender, mental, sensory, and physical impairments. Media accessibility (MA) has evolved from being perceived as a subfield of AVT to a fully interdisciplinary domain. Notably, the attention and expertise of professionals from various fields have converged on this area. Two primary means of facilitating accessibility are AD for the blind and visually impaired (BVI) and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH). The definition of AD typically underscores its role as "a precise and succinct aural translation of the visual elements in live or recorded performances, exhibitions, or sporting events intended to benefit visually impaired individuals" (Hyks, 2005, 6). While AD research and practice have seen remarkable growth over the past decade (Bardini, 2017), mostly in the European context, AD research in Iran is nascent, and its presence in the local academic landscape remains limited, with only a few publications (Cao et al., 2025; Homayouni & Khoshsaligheh, 2024; Khoshsaligheh & Shafiei, 2021; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2022).

Various factors shaped AD quality, with style occupying a relevant role. Unlike Iran, multiple studies have explored AD styles in international contexts. AD style includes both language and script type. Traditional norms dictate that a good AD should be as neutral as possible and free from specialized terminology, such as specific camera modes (Rai *et al*., 2010). However, ongoing research on AD styles has introduced novel and alternative approaches, which were

subsequently tested with BVI audiences, receiving positive feedback (Bardini, 2017; Szarkowska, 2013; Walczak & Fryer, 2017). Unexpectedly, despite substantial research and the introduction of diverse stylistic approaches, no prior classification of these styles within Iran or broader international contexts, has been established.

This exploratory study aims to illuminate the existing AD styles, focusing on the Iranian context. The significance of stylistic considerations in AD is crucial. Neglecting these elements during production can cause audience dissatisfaction and leave the producers unsure how to generate higher-quality ADs. A corpus of Persian ADs produced by two non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Iran, including Sevina (Cinema for the Blinds) and Gooshkon (Neighborhood of the Blinds), has been selected for investigation. Drawing on a theoretical framework developed through a review of the existing literature, this study aims to classify the observed AD styles systematically, offering a credible reference for future AD initiatives and practice developments. In doing so, the article addresses three key research questions:

1. What is the primary classification of Persian AD styles?

2. Do the AD styles in literature match those produced in Iran?

3. How do the two AD producer groups differ in their AD products?

Ultimately, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of Persian AD practices and offer a structured reference for future research and practice in the field.

1.   LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary objective of this section is to examine the existing body of literature related to AD in AVT studies. It commences with an introduction to the study's context, then delves into the central subject matter of the article and explores prior research in the same domain.

1.1.   AD

AD is considered an intersemiotic type of AVT, and it translates vital visual elements into verbal description and inserts them in the silent gaps of visual products (Braun, 2008). Intersemiotic, as Roman Jakobson (1959) unprecedentedly defined, is "an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems" (Jakobson, 1959, p.114). Nevertheless, as can be

understood, AD is paradoxical to Jakobson's intersemiotic, as it is the verbal interpretation of non-verbal signs. So, Jakobson's classification needs to be amended to include other domains as well. In addition, AD does not only describe images but also mentions issues such as the origin of unintelligible sounds or points out who is speaking. Thus, AD can be introduced as a multisemiotic in lieu of an intersemiotic (Mazur, 2020).

The primary aim of AD is to create an experience for BVI individuals comparable to that of sighted individuals who view films through soundtracks and moving images (Rodríguez Posadas, 2010). To achieve this goal, we should keep in mind that the important principle of AD is to insert the description exactly in the silent gaps, and more importantly, it should not overlap with the dialogues, sound effects, or background music essential to the plot (Braun, 2008).

Academic interest in this innovative form of AVT quickly grew in response to developments in AD provision. AD has drawn researchers from various fields, including linguists (Ibáñez & Vermeulen, 2013), translation scholars (Kruger & Orero, 2010), and psychologists (Hutchinson & Eardley, 2022). Since these experts contributed their unique research methodologies to the study of AD, the field of study has genuinely become multidisciplinary.

Although researchers from different disciplines entered the field of AD, there has always been a debate about what kind of information, how much detail, and how it should be conveyed in the AD script. These debates sparked reception studies investigating the preferences of AD audiences (Chmiel & Mazur, 2012, 2016; Orero, 2008), the extent of providing details (Fresno *et al*., 2014), narrative priorities (Di Giovanni, 2014), language (Piety, 2004), describer's voice (Fernández-Torné & Matamala, 2015), and also style (Cao et al., 2025; Jekat & Carrer, 2018; Szarkowska, 2013; Walczak & Fryer, 2017).

1.2. *AD in Iran*

AD is a relatively new area of exploration in Iran and has only received limited research attention. Khoshsaligheh and Shafiei (2021) identified AD as a new area for research in AVT in Iran and analyzed the present situation in the country. Radio channels, the independent group of Sevina, and Gooshkon are the most frequent producers of AD in Iran, with national television yet to make significant strides in this field. The findings underscore the crucial requirement

for further research and development in the AD domain in Iran, particularly in national television programming (Khoshsaligheh et al., 2022).

1.3.   AD styles

Applying style in AD, this topic can concern how visual images and the source of sounds related to the plot are translated into verbal descriptions or the content alternatives and shaping the description. The first sparks of the style topic seem to have been from the discussion between subjectivity and objectivity. After that, other types of ADs emerged, which are briefly discussed below.

1.3.1.   Objective

The objective AD involves adhering to high standards of guidelines. Various researchers and guidelines consider objectivity an essential element in AD (AENOR, 2005; American Council of the Blind, 2009; Benecke & Dosch, 2004; Morisset & Gonant, 2008; Orero, 2005; Remael & Vercauteren, 2007; Vercauteren, 2006), which has been developed globally to standardize the parameters associated with the development of AD scripts. In objective descriptions, interpretive segments about characters are discouraged, and the emphasis is on straightforwardly describing on-screen content for BVI understanding (Bardini, 2017; Jekat & Carrer, 2018; Malzer-Semlinger, 2012; Udo et al., 2010). Following the WYSIWYS (What You See Is What You Say) paradigm (Snyder, 2008), Bardini (2020, p. 263) defines this style as:

> A denotative AD style which describes what is shown at an iconic level, thus avoiding any kind of interpretation or mention of film techniques. The main aim of this AD style is to give a matter-of-fact depiction of what appears onscreen, so that BPS (blind and partially sighted) audiences can reconstruct the meaning of the images for themselves (p. 263).

1.3.2.   Subjective

The study of alternative AD practices and procedures is expanding as researchers collaborate with theater groups to devise innovative AD techniques. In fact, subjective AD styles include linguistic techniques that completely depart from impartiality and objectivity, such as subjective evaluation of the describer, inferences, metaphors, and the connotative language (Caro, 2016). Scholarly articles like Udo *et al*. (2010) disseminate information on unconventional AD and audience feedback. Caro and López (2014) conducted experimental research

comparing the emotional reactions of BVI and sighted audiences to avant-garde and mainstream films. The study suggests that existing objective AD practices may limit emotional responses to avant-garde films, creating challenges in conveying a strong emotional impact in short films. The need for objectivity and neutrality in current AD practices complicates the task of eliciting similar emotional responses to the original visual content, suggesting that an objective AD style is not suitable for these films.

The overall concept of AD relies on subjective perspectives, and guidelines aimed at reducing subjectivity can vary in interpretation and application across countries (Fryer, 2016). Vercauteren and Orero (2013) suggest that while existing AD guidelines are valuable and necessary, they should not always be followed strictly.

By incorporating various options into subjective AD style, multiple researchers have introduced new AD typologies. Drawing on these studies, the present article adopts a classification of these variations as subcategories of subjective AD style: narrative, descriptive, interpretative, cinematic, creative, and first-person. They are all briefly explained below.

1) Narrative

Kruger (2010) introduced a new form of AD called audio narration (AN). In AN, fidelity to narrative implications is prioritized over adherence to visual codes. This means that sometimes, prominent visual elements are ignored to emphasize narrative effects. In other words, for BVI audiences, understanding a film's narrative is not just about "WHAT is shown (characters, actions, settings), or even HOW it is shown (from what angle, from what distance, from whose perspective) but WHY what is shown is shown the way it is shown or, SO WHAT? (the narrative effect)" (Kruger, 2010, p. 234). However, it does not necessarily describe every detail or in the exact moment precisely, but rather captures the emotions evoked and the meaning conveyed through film language (Bardini, 2020).

BVI users significantly accepted AN, emphasizing the potential of a narratological style in content selection for both written and visual narratives (Vercauteren, 2012). Vercauteren's work emphasizes the application of narratology in AD content selection.

2) Descriptive

Descriptive AD style, as outlined by Jekat and Carrer (2018), emphasizes the meticulous description of the characters, the setting, and the actions without the using of evaluative adjectives or any interpretations, just focusing on the detailed visual elements to enhance the audience's understanding (Kruger, 2010). Moreover, a descriptive AD script entails unmarked word order and choices, preventing any misunderstanding of the narration (Jekat *et al*., 2015).

3) Interpretative

Interpretative AD style, as outlined in the literature, is characterized by its focus on enhancing the audience's understanding and engagement with visual content. It offers insights into the characters' underlying motivations, bringing up a deeper understanding of the symbolic content (Jekat *et al*., 2015). Also, evaluative adjectives attributed to characters and objects, facial expressions, and the subjective description of characters' emotions, as identified by Jekat and Carrer (2018), evoke emotional responses and transfer information as completely as possible. Syntax can also play a crucial role in interpretative AD style, as marked syntactic positions further enrich the AD script (Jekat *et al*., 2015).

4) Cinematic

To simply define cinematic AD style, we should mention that it implies cinematic language referring to editing, *mise-en-scène* and cinematography (Perego, 2023). Besides, the cinematic AD involves the incorporation of filmic language (such as "mid-shot", "wide-shot", "cut," and "dissolve") or more everyday language to emphasize the perspective of the camera and the spatial arrangement of characters and objects in the frame (Fryer & Freeman, 2013). Furthermore, if the describer believes it can be beneficial to elucidate the meaning of a filmic term, this can be undertaken instead of or in conjunction with employing cinematic language (Bardini, 2020).

5) Creative

Creativity in filmmaking can be defined by the creative use of the camera's potential or sounds and creative editing (Bordwell, 1997). Notably, it may seem that creative AD style is more applicable to artistic films. With the same opinion, Szarkowska (2013) introduced a creative style called "auteur description," which integrates the director's creative vision into the AD script, deviating from strict objectivity. It uses vivid language, places description, and visual metaphor description to immerse the BVI audiences in the film's world,

incorporating ideas from the screenplay or other sources (*e.g.*, interviews and reviews). In this regard, the cooperation of the film production team, especially the director, in the editing of the AD script plays a significant role in making the final product as successful as possible (Rai, 2002).

Creative description quickly made its way among researchers, and this time, Walczak and Fryer (2017) explored the impact of two AD styles−creative description (CRD) and standard description (STD)−on audience presence. It revealed that CRD, featuring vivid sentences and elevated vocabulary, significantly heightened the audience's emotional response. This led to higher ratings across presence subscales and more positive evaluations than the STD. This contrasts with Fryer and Freeman's (2013) finding that audience preference for AD is unrelated to familiarity. Building on this style, Walczak (2017a) introduced a captivating AD named "creative AD," blending film terminology and neutral descriptions. Well-received by participants, this style enhanced the authenticity and captivation of film-viewing experiences, proving effective for both visually colorful and dark, realistic films. Once again, Walczak (2017b) delved into the impact of Polish AD on audience immersion, conducting two studies on AD style and vocal delivery. The research affirmed that creative AD increased immersion, emphasizing the crucial role of a script in enhancing the film-viewing experience.

6) First-person

The conventional AD uses a third-person, covert narrative style, ensuring impartiality and minimal interference with the story. In contrast, a first-person writing style in AD allows audience scrutiny and analysis of the narrator's account without the dominance seen in third-person narratives. However, a drawback is the potential bias introduced by the limited perspective, possibly resulting in a distorted viewpoint (Lothe, 2000). Fels *et al*. (2006) suggested that using the first-person style in AD makes the viewing experience feel more immediate. Unlike the third-person narrator, which feels distant, first-person narration brings the audience directly into the unfolding events, making it more engaging and less passive.

Additionally, using "I" and "me" in the first-person AD allows for the character's feelings and thoughts to be included, making the story more personal. They have also tested this style on BVI audiences. Ultimately, BVI participants preferred the first-person style over the conventional third-person style but perceived it as less reliable.

1.4.   Theoretical framework

To the authors' best knowledge, no prior classification of AD styles has been proposed so far. However, various subjective AD styles have been discussed in previous literature. Based on these existing studies, this article incorporates a literature-based classification of different AD styles to serve as the theoretical framework (Figure 1) for the subsequent analysis.
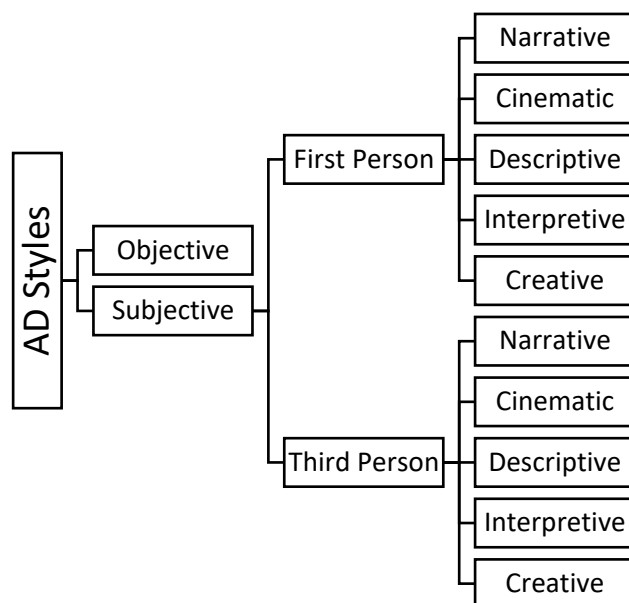

Figure 1. The categorization of AD styles
Source. Elaborated by the authors

As depicted in Figure 1, styles can be categorized into two primary groups: subjective and objective. In the subjective category, the most commonly used style is the third-person perspective. A significant development in this category occurred with the introduction of the first-person perspective as a new AD style, proposed by Fels and colleagues (2006). This led researchers to compare the first-person style with the third-person approach within the broader scope of subjective styles. Some researchers have also identified several alternative AD styles that deviate from traditional conventions−typically

associated with the objective style−which, based on the author's knowledge, are more appropriately classified as subjective. These include narrative, cinematic, descriptive, interpretive, and creative styles. It is important to note that both the first-person and third-person perspectives can encompass these subcategories, as illustrated in Figure 1. This classification reflects the current state of AD styles up to the completion of this study.

The stylistic elements for each style were needed to analyze AD scripts thoroughly. Therefore, a meticulous review of the distinct features of each style was conducted, and the examples cited in relevant studies were examined. This systematic approach identified three key stylistic elements for each style, forming the basis for script analysis and classification of styles. These stylistic elements include:

Styles			Major elements
Objective			- Factual and neutral language (AENOR, 2005) - Not interpret personal opinions or emotions about characters (Bardini, 2017) - Focus on iconic level description, devoid of mention of film technique (Bardini, 2020)
Subjective	First-person		- The existence of the narrator within the plot as a character (Lothe, 2000) - Using "I" or "we" to engage the audience personally (Fels *et al*., 2006) - Providing a unique and immersive point of view (Fels *et al*., 2006)
		Narrative	- Narratological approach in content selection (Vercauteren, 2012) - Not necessarily describe in the exact moment (Bardini, 2020) - Narrative prioritization over visual detail (Kruger, 2010)
		Cinematic	- Employing film-related terminology (*e.g.*, mid-shot, wide-shot, cut) (Fryer & Freeman, 2013) - The spatial arrangements of characters and objects (Fryer & Freeman, 2013) - Elucidating the meaning of a filmic term (Bardini, 2020)

		Descriptive	- Focusing on visual elements to enhance the audience's understanding (Kruger, 2010) - Unmarked word order and choices (Jekat *et al*., 2015) - Providing detailed visual descriptions of scenes, characters, and actions (Jekat & Carrer, 2018)
		Interpretative	- Marked syntactic positions in AD (Jekat *et al*., 2015) - Decoding visual cues to reveal character intentions and symbolic meanings (Jekat & Carrer, 2018) - Evaluative adjectives, subjective descriptions of emotions and facial expressions (Jekat & Carrer, 2018)
		Creative	- Describing places and visual metaphors (Szarkowska, 2013) - Incorporating ideas from the screenplay or other sources (Szarkowska, 2013) - Vivid language and unusual vocabulary (Walczak, 2017a)

Table 1. Styles and their elements
Source. Elaborated by the authors

2. METHOD

The present study is based on a qualitative method to identify the common styles employed in audio describing Persian films. The rationale behind this approach was its exploratory nature, typically employed in uncharted domains and endeavors to delineate novel concepts or introduce categories by analyzing data (Dörnyei, 2007). To this end, the audio-described films in the drama genre produced by Sevina and Gooshkon were used. The criteria based on which film genre was selected is according to the genre with the highest number of AD productions among the other genres of audio-described films available. Also, the reason behind choosing these websites was because they have gained more significant popularity among the Iranian BVI audiences.

The data collection continued until data saturation, at which point the presence or absence of the AD styles identified in the literature was consistently observed across the samples. Finally, 21 films were reached, 12 by the Gooshkon group and 9 by the Sevina group. Gooshkon and Sevina are two

popular NGOs in Iran which aim to support and empower the blind community, and provide AD services. The disparity in the film count is beyond the researchers' control, resulting from the higher availability of Gooshkon products in the drama genre.

Then, the researchers extracted 16 scripts and received five from the producers. The three features identified for each style in the previous section (Table 1) provided a framework for analyzing and categorizing ADs. Each Persian AD script was systematically analyzed to determine the frequency of occurrence for each identified style within the script. In addition, the total word count of each script was calculated to provide context for the analysis. The frequency data were then collected into a table, enabling comparison of style distribution across different scripts. Based on the frequency of occurrence for each style within a script, the most frequent style was identified and allocated to that AD. Additionally, any new stylistic patterns or co-occurrence of more than one style that emerged during the analysis were identified and categorized accordingly.

Table 2 summarizes descriptive information of the 21 audio-described films under study:

Features / Film	Production year	Genre	Director	AD producer	Describer
Leila's brothers	2022	Drama	Saeed Roustayi	Gooshkon	Elaheh Lotfi
Grassland	2022	Drama / Crime	Kazem Daneshi	Gooshkon	Zeinab Bakhshi
Sun children	2020	Drama	Majid Majidi	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
Drown	2020	Mystery / Drama	Mohammad Kart	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
Killer spider	2020	Drama	Ebrahim Irajzad	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
Titi	2020	Drama	Ida Panahandeh	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri

The warden	2019	Mystery / Drama	Nima Javidi	Sevina	Mohsen Bahrami
Just 6.5	2019	Crime / Drama	Saeed Roustayi	Sevina	Ehsan Karami
Dance with me	2019	Fantasy / Drama	Sorush Sehhat	Sevina	Leila Otadi
Castle of dreams	2019	Drama	Reza Mirkarimi	Sevina	Laleh Eskandari
The 23	2019	Drama / War	Mehdi Jafari	Sevina	Reza Nasirzadeh
Gold	2019	Drama	Parviz Shahbazi	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
The singer	2019	Comedy / Drama	Mostafa Kiaei	Sevina	Gelareh Abbasi
African violet	2019	Drama	Mona Zandi	Sevina	Shojae Noori
Bomb: A love story	2018	Drama / Romance	Peyman Maadi	Sevina	Nima Raeisi
Azar	2017	Drama	Mohammad Hamzei	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
Subdued	2017	Drama	Hamid Nematollah	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
Breath	2016	Drama	Narges Abyar	Gooshkon	Dana Ghaffari
Night shift	2015	Drama	Niki Karimi	Gooshkon	Farnaz Amiri
What's the time in your world?	2014	Drama / Romance	Safi Yazdanian	Gooshkon	Mina Amini

A *separation*	2011	Drama	Asghar Farhadi	Sevina	Rima Raminfar

Table 2. The list of audio-described films examined in this study
Source. Elaborated by the authors

To strengthen the validity of the qualitative evaluation, the authors used inter-subjectivity. Two academics with expertise in AD and familiarity with the Persian language were consulted. These academics independently reviewed a subset of the selected data and provided their interpretations and classifications. Any discrepancies in classification were discussed until a consensus was reached.

3.   RESULTS

The primary objective of this research was to investigate the distinct AD styles employed within the Iranian context by two independent entities, Sevina and Gooshkon. It is also intended to comprehensively classify the principal AD styles utilized in Persian cinema. An essential aspect of this investigation was to assess whether this classification aligns with the established categorization derived from the literature review.

The distribution of AD styles was within the 21 scripts of Persian audio-described films. Each script was systematically analyzed to figure out the frequency of occurrence for seven identified AD styles, namely Objective (OBJ), Narrative (NAR), Cinematic (CIN), Descriptive (DES), Interpretative (INT), Creative (CRE), and First-person (FP). The result is presented in Table 3, which shows the total word count and the frequency for each style within the script. Additionally, the most frequent style for each script is identified based on the highest frequency count. It should also be noted that due to the close frequency counts of two or three styles, it was decided that the final style of that AD would be called Mixed style (MIX).

Film	Total words	Objective	Narrative	Cinematic	Descriptive	Interpretative	Creative	First-person	Identified

Leila's brothers	5600	495	4025	400	175	505	0	0	NAR
Grassland	1281	1105	0	50	76	50	0	0	OBJ
Sun children	5054	574	744	1470	1463	593	210	0	MIX (CIN+ DES)
Drown	3580	122	224	97	2563	544	30	0	DES
Killer spider	1888	1426	63	78	157	164	0	0	OBJ
Titi	1836	128	25	30	1613	40	0	0	DED
The warden	4432	118	3300	354	212	448	0	0	NAR
Just 6.5	3754	2974	426	85	85	184	0	0	OBJ
Dance with me	1629	120	590	588	203	128	0	0	MIX (NAR + CIN)

Castle of dream	2522	225	107	184	1639	367	0	0	DES
The 23	1268	886	70	35	182	95	0	0	OBJ
Gold	810	725	14	46	20	5	0	0	OBJ
The singer	3000	443	423	55	2011	68	0	0	DES
African violet	3301	335	1224	138	53	1230	321	0	MIX (NAR + INT)
Bomb: A love story	3195	112	2556	88	200	200	39	0	NAR
Azar	1532	50	189	30	1225	38	0	0	DES
Subdued	1700	1524	34	15	122	5	0	0	OBJ

Breath	3836	198	441	1010	142	1025	1020	0	MIX (CIN + INT + CRE)
Night shift	1257	106	30	22	1064	35	0	0	DES
What's the time in your world?	2332	1860	139	69	206	58	0	0	OBJ
A separation	6296	950	1516	478	320	1522	1510	0	MIX (NAR + INT + CRE)

Table 3. Total word count and frequency of each AD style across 21 film scripts
Source. Elaborated by the authors

As indicated in Table 3, while some scripts mostly demonstrate a single style, others exhibit a mix of styles. Moreover, no first-person style was found in Persian ADs. Table 4 shows a summary of the distribution of founded Persian AD style by percentage within the corpus of this study. The percentages manifest the incidence of each style within the dataset, offering a better understanding of the of Persian AD practices.

Persian AD styles	Number	Percentage
Objective	7	33.3%
Descriptive	6	28.5%
Mixed	5	23.8%
Narrative	3	14.2%
Total	21	100%

Table 4. Percentage distribution of main Persian AD styles
Source. Elaborated by the authors

Additionally, the two AD producers, namely, Gooshkon and Sevina, differ in their adopted AD styles. Within the entire corpus of this research, there are 12 films from Gooshkon products and 9 films from Sevina products. Table 5 illustrates the types of styles found in the products of each of these two groups:

Style / Producer	Objective	Descriptive	Mixed	Narrative
Sevina	2	2	3	2
Gooshkon	5	4	2	1

Table 5. Distribution of audio description styles across groups
Source. Elaborated by the authors

The Gooshkon group had more productions and was recognized for its adept selection of films for AD production. They have consistently focused on contemporary films addressing pertinent social issues, thus rendering them accessible to BVI audiences. The Sevina group, led by an actress, selects describers from a pool of celebrities, including actors, stuntmen, and various other artists. One might expect them to exhibit greater flexibility in their choice of styles, given their direct communication with the original film director. This is especially relevant to the creative AD style, as emphasized by Szarkowska (2013), who highlighted the importance of having access to screenplays. Rai (2002) also identified such access as a key factor in producing effective AD.

For a comprehensive understanding of the identified AD styles in our study, a film that is the most obvious example of that style has been selected for each style. Each example is accompanied by a table, exemplifying key elements of the corresponding style. It will help the reader to understand how each style is applied in practice.

3.1.   Objective

Grassland (2022) is a social drama film audio-described by the Gooshkon group and made accessible through their website and Telegram channel in 2023. As per the researcher's analysis, the AD style employed in this movie is characterized as objective:

Film	*Grassland (2022)*	
Distinguished style(s)	**Objective**	**Examples**
Stylistic elements found	- Factual and neutral language	بازپرس به کارت نگاه می‌کنه. -Example 1 (00:21:12) (**Back translation (BT) :** The investigator looks at the card)
	- Not interpret personal opinions or emotions about characters	مرد موبایلش رو تحویل می‌ده -Example 2 و همراه با زنش وارد می‌شن. (00:12:25) (**BT:** The man hands over his mobile phone and enters the building with his wife.)
	- Focus on iconic level description, devoid of mention of film technique	الهام و شوهرش سجاد از -Example 3 پنجره سارا رو می‌بینن. (00:52:14) (**BT:** Elham and her husband Sajjad see Sara through the window.)

Table 6. Style information of *Grassland* (2022)
Source. Elaborated by the authors

Considering the first element, the investigator receives a tempting but illegal offer from the mayor, who gives him his contact card. However, upon returning to his room and confronting the woman who is the plaintiff in the mayor's case, the investigator gazes at the mayor's card, consumed by doubt and hesitation. But, the describer refrains from offering an interpretation of the investigator's response, using factual language and merely reporting that he is looking at the card.

About Example 2, in this scene, the man and woman entering the courthouse are visibly not in a good condition, their appearance indicating they may be struggling with drug addiction. However, the describer refused to interpret their appearance and simply described their arrival, leaving to the BVI audience to notice the characters' circumstances from their voices.

In Example 3, Sara and her husband are looking down the courtyard from the building's top floor and see Sara entering the court. However, the describer avoids offering the viewer's point of view and keeps the description at the iconic level.

3.2. *Descriptive*

The AD of *Titi* (2020) was created by the Gooshkon group in 2023 and released for free on their website and Telegram channel. According to the analysis of this script, the AD style used here is classified as descriptive:

Film	*Titi (2020)*	Examples
Distinguished style(s)	**Descriptive**	
Stylistic elements found	- Focusing on visual elements to enhance the audience's understanding	Example 1 تی‌تی، نوزاد به بغل، لابه‌لای بسته‌های کاه کنار یک زن نشسته. (1:33:27) (**BT:** Titi is sitting among the bundles of straw, with a baby in her arms.)
	- Unmarked word order and choices	Not applicable
	- Providing detailed visual descriptions of scenes, characters, and actions	Example 2 تی‌تی که پیراهن بلند قرمز پوشیده، آرایش کرده و لاک قرمز زده از خونه میاد بیرون. (00:45:20) (**BT:** Titi in a long red shirt, with makeup and red nail polish leaves the house.)

Table 7. Style information of *Titi* (2020)
Source. Elaborated by the authors

In Example 1, the describer is actively aiding the audience in deducing the described scene by incorporating visual details. By stating "TiTi is sitting among the bundles of straw", the description reveals to the audience that TiTi is hiding in a barn.

Regarding the second element, it should be said that all the structures used in this script follow the common structures of the Persian language and are unmarked; no marked structures were identified.

In Example 2, the descriptive AD not only provides a detailed visual image of the character Titi but also implies a sense that the character is heading somewhere special, perhaps a wedding. The mention of "پیراهن بلند قرمز" ('a long

red dress') and the application of makeup suggest an element of preparation and desire to look at one's best for an occasion.

3.3.   Mixed

The Gooshkon group audio-described *Breath* (2016) premiered in 2023 on their Telegram channel and website. This film offers an emotional atmosphere and concludes with a poignant ending. The narrator skillfully employs three distinct styles well-suited to the film's story:

Film	Breath (2016)			
Distinguished style(s)	**Mixed: Cinematic + Interpretive + Creative**			**Examples**
Stylistic elements found	Cinematic		- Employing film-related terminology	Example 1 -در نمایی باز، در دل کویر، اتوبوسی در حال حرکته. (1:39:10) (**BT:** In an open shot, in the heart of the desert, a bus is moving.)
			- The spatial arrangements of characters and objects	Example 2 - بالای تپه کنار جو، بهار کتابو پرت می‌کنه توی آب. آب کتابو می‌بره. (00:56:12) (**BT:** On top of the hill next to the stream, Bahar throws the book into the water. The water carries away the book.)
			- Elucidating the meaning of a filmic term	Example 3 - از دور می‌بینیم که اتوبوس وسط کویر در حرکته. (1:44:56) (**BT:** We see from afar that the bus is moving through the dessert.)
	Interpretative		- Marked syntactic positions in AD	Example 4 - ننه آقا یه جور بدجوری به تلوزیون نگاه می‌کنه. (00:08:35) (**BT:** Grandma is looking at the TV in a bad way.)

		- Decoding visual cues to reveal character intentions and symbolic meanings	Example 5 - نگو بهار داشته با پیله ها بازی می‌کرده و کلشونو پخش و پلا کرده بود وسط اتاق. (00:52:26) (**BT:** It was as if Bahar had been playing with the cocoons and spread them all in the room.)
		- Evaluative adjectives, subjective descriptions of emotions and facial expressions	Example 6 - غفور یه گوشه ماتمزده نشسته. (00:42:07) (**BT:** Ghafour seats in a corner, grieving.)
	Creative	- Describing places and visual metaphors	Example 7 - می‌رسه به مدرسه. پرچم شیر و خورشید ایران جلوش قد علم کرده (00:040:15) (**BT:** She arrived at school. Iran's Lion and Sun flag is raised in front of her.)
		- Incorporating the ideas from the screenplay or other sources	Not applicable
		- Vivid language and unusual vocabulary	Example 8 - با لباسی سفید دور خودش می‌چرخه و موهاش در باد عشوه میان و ناز می‌کنن. (00:52:26) (**BT:** She twirls around in a white dress. Her hair dances in the wind and flirts.)

Table 8. Style information of *Breath* (2016)
Source. Elaborated by the authors

Cinematic: example 1 employs film terminology by using "نمایی باز" ('wide-shot'), which is a cinematic term to describe a wide or open-angle shot that captures a broad view of the scene (here the desert land). This term is commonly used in filmmaking to specify the type of shot and provide the audience with a cinematic perspective.

The "spatial arrangements of characters and objects" refer to their positioning within the physical environment. In Example 2, the phrase "On top of

the hill next to the stream" provides spatial context by establishing the specific setting where the scene takes place.

In the third example, we have a scene similar to the first example, but this time, instead of using the cinematic term itself, the narrator has used the explanation of its meaning (from a long distance away).

Interpretative: the use of marked syntax in Example 4 is quite evident. The phrase "یجور بد جوری" is not a conventional term in the Persian language, and when encountered, the audience readily realizes an unconventional style of AD (here interpretive style).

The visual cue in Example 5 is the cocoons spread in the room, and the decoding act of the describer is obvious in "It was as if Bahar had been playing with the cocoons".

"ماتمزده" ('grieving') in Example 6 not only is a subjective description of Ghafoor's emotions but also describes facial expressions.

Creative: describing the atmosphere of the school with the flag of the Lion and the Sun of Iran in Example 7 tells the audience that the film is set during the pre-revolution era.

Example 8 uses colorful language to depict the character's actions and appearance. The audience can easily imagine the scene with these vivid descriptions. Intensified vocabulary involves using words and phrases that are emotionally charged or emphasize specific qualities. In this example, phrases like "ناز می‌کنن و عشوه میان" ('dance and flirts') are chosen to intensify the description.

3.4.   Narrative

The film's AD of *Bomb: A love story* (2018) was crafted by Sevina group and made available on the *Filimo* website.

Film	*Bomb: A love story (2018)*	Examples
Distinguished style(s)	**Narrative**	

Stylistic elements found	- Narratological approach in content selection	Example 1 - صبح. انگار که شهر بعد از هیاهوی شب قبل حالا آرام شده. (00:25:46) (**BT**: Morning. It seems that the city has calmed down after the hustle and bustle of the las night.)
	- Not necessarily describe in the exact moment	Example 2 -همه همسایهها به غیر از ایرج و میترا در زیرزمین پناه گرفتهاند. (00:38:22) (**BT:** All the neighbors except Iraj and Mitra have taken shelter in the basement.)
	- Narrative prioritization over visual detail	Example 3 - سعید متوجه آقای ناظم بیرون توالت میشه، میترسه. (01:05:17) (**BT:** Saeed notices schoolmaster outside the toilet, he's afraid.)

Table 9. Style information of *Bomb: A love story* (2018)
Source. Elaborated by the authors

In Example 1, we see that the describer tries to convey the film's atmosphere by narrating the story instead of just describing the physical environment of the scene. This case was predominantly highlighted throughout the film.

The scene related to Example 2, being narrated by the describer, is the one showing Iraj and Mitra in their apartment. However, the describer mentions the neighbor's presence in the basement. In fact, the next scene is about the neighbors taking shelter in the basement.

In the last example, the schoolmaster is absent from the scene, and it's just Saeed trying to hide his notebook, while the describer mentions that the schoolmaster is present outside the toilet in order to make the description sounds more like a narration.

4. DISCUSSION

Lacking evidence on Persian AD styles, this study aimed to investigate and classify them. The results of the analysis of the scripts from 21 audio-described films show that the predominant style is objective (approximately 33.3, see Table 4). This emphasizes the preference for a straightforward description of everything on the screen, prioritizing BVIs' clear understanding without

interference (Bardini, 2017; Jekat & Carrer, 2018; Malzer-Semlinger, 2012; Udo et al., 2010). This statistic indicates that in Iran, AD producers, while possibly unaware of existing guidelines and lacking a scientific basis, tend to conform to AD guidelines (AENOR, 2005; American Council of the Blind, 2009; Benecke & Dosch, 2004; Morisset & Gonant, 2008). The descriptive style was also recognized as the second most frequent Persian style, with 28.5%. Besides, the third prevalent style was the mixed one. This mixed style, blending subjective ones, showed a nearly equal word count of subjective elements, with a maximum difference of 10 words. Nonetheless, interpretive AD style was found in three out of five mixed styles. This indicates that some describers in Iran agree with scholars like Remael and Vercauteren (2007) and Snyder (2008) in interpreting visual cues to reveal character intentions and symbolic meanings. Narrative style had the lowest frequency, indicating that the practice of AD in Iran does not confirm Kruger's (2010) preference for AN.

Persian AD primarily relies on charitable efforts and lacks scientific foundations. Interestingly, styles with a mixture of subjective styles were identified, ranking second in frequency after objective styles. However, it is important to note that this outcome cannot be solely attributed to the describers' proficiency, attention to detail, or deliberate style choices. As Khoshsaligheh and Shafiei (2021) noted in their research, Iran currently only has independent groups producing ADs, and national television has yet to initiate the production of accessible programs for the BVIs.

Regarding the classification of Persian AD styles in the drama genre, the authors used the data obtained to categorize them according to the classification presented in the theoretical framework. Thus, the classification of Persian AD styles is presented in Figure 2 below:
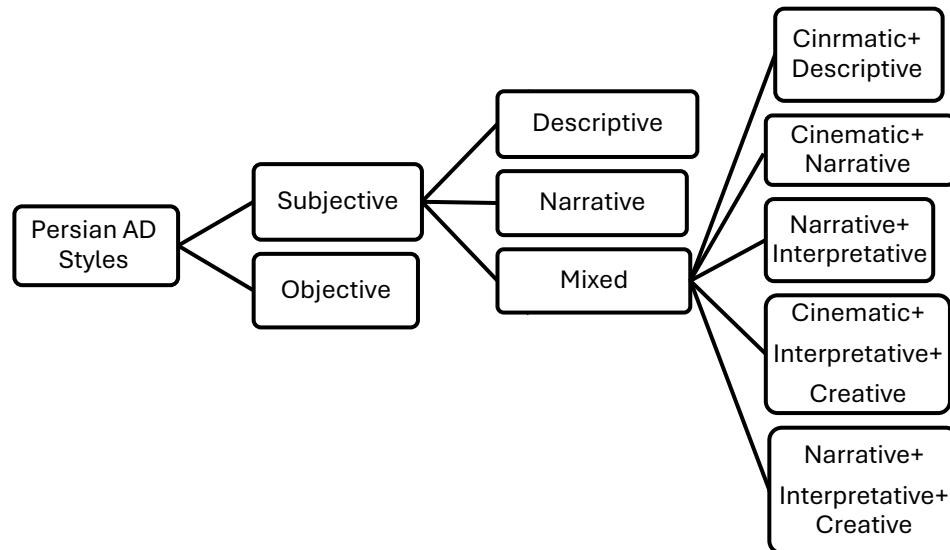
Figure 2. Persian AD styles in examined films
Source. Elaborated by the authors

Comparing Persian AD styles to existing ones in literature, revealed low compatibility in the provided classification. Notably, the first-person style was absent in the research sample. Additionally, cinematic, creative, and interpretative styles were combined with other styles, rather than employed in isolation. Notwithstanding international AD guidelines support objectivity, some researchers are actively trying to introduce new styles and replace conventional ones through reception research. In contrast, in Iran, the limited interaction between researchers in this field and practitioners has hindered such progress. In other regions, researchers employ tools like eye-tracking with reception studies (Di Giovanni, 2014; Kruger, 2012; Mazur & Chmiel, 2016) to help describers, facilitate decision-making, and enhance content accessibility for the BVIs. Another notable distinction in this study is that AD for theaters and live events in Iran is generally lacking. In contrast, other regions provide even touch tours before performances (Djoussouf et al., 2023; Taylor & Perego, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The examination and analysis of the AD scripts according to the elements obtained in part two yielded a number of interesting findings. Primarily, the results showed a high frequency of using objective AD styles. Moreover, these also demonstrated a tendency of AD producers towards providing on-screen information without interfering with the BVI audience's understanding. Also, the Persian styles did not have much harmony with the styles in literature; for example, the first-person style was completely absent in Persian styles. Persian describers also tended to use a combination of several styles, and the combined style was the third most frequent. The Gooshkon group has been more faithful to AD guidelines in terms of objectivity than the Sevina group and has produced more objective ADs.

The findings of the study were theoretically significant because it provided not only the recurring styles but also a classification for them in order to shed light on the research directions for future scholars in this field. Apart from its theoretical implications for research, the study also has real-world applications for audio describers, AD script writers, and AD producers because it emphasizes the importance of style in delivering high-quality ADs, trying to provide practical guidance to improve the quality of AD in practice.

This study focused on Persian audio-described films, highlighting future research on distinct styles in dubbed films. This research exclusively delved into the drama genre, prompting investigations into other genres. Emphasizing the overlooked work of independent AD production groups, it calls for research into potential novel styles. This article concluded by stressing the crucial role of audience preferences in shaping future AD styles, advocating for reception research in both style and AD as a whole.

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