

# Advergaming: An Advertising Technique to Integrate Deaf People into the Gaming World

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## Abstract

Advergaming, one of the innovative advertising techniques, has the potential to creatively convey brand messages to the audience. In Peru, there is a gap in integrating deaf individuals into the advertising discourse of brands and campaigns, especially when utilizing advergaming to establish a strong connection with them. This study aims to fill this gap by analyzing how the Pilsen brand, through advergaming, has contributed to creating inclusive spaces. The study also seeks to determine which elements of the advertising technique are relevant for integrating the deaf community into the gaming world. To gain a comprehensive understanding, a qualitative methodology was adopted to analyze the E-nterpreters ad, and semi-structured in-

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terviews were conducted with 12 special education students in the tenth semester at a private university in Lima. The findings revealed that Pilsen's advergaming technique has indeed contributed to creating inclusive spaces.

## **Keywords**

Advergaming; disability; qualitative research; digital inclusion; integration.

# *Advergaming*: técnica publicitaria para integrar a las personas sordas en el mundo del videojuego

## **Resumen**

El uso del *advergaming* se ha convertido en una de las novedosas técnicas de la publicidad gracias a las cuales las marcas transmiten de manera innovadora sus mensajes al público. En Perú existe una brecha en la integración de las personas sordas dentro de los discursos publicitarios de las marcas y campañas, sobre todo si se utiliza el *advergaming* para establecer una buena conexión con ellos. Este estudio cuenta con dos objetivos: analizar cómo la marca Pilsen contribuye o no a crear espacios inclusivos con el *advergaming* y determinar qué elementos de la técnica publicitaria son relevantes para integrar a la comunidad sorda dentro del mundo del videojuego. Se adoptó una metodología cualitativa para analizar el anuncio *E-nterpreters* mediante la realización de entrevistas semiestructuradas a un grupo de estudiantes de la carrera de Educación Especial del décimo ciclo de una universidad privada de Lima. Se encontró que Pilsen sí contribuyó a crear espacios inclusivos con la técnica del *advergaming*.

## **Palabras clave**

*Advergaming*; discapacidad; investigación cualitativa; inclusión digital; integración.

# *Advergaming*: técnica publicitária para integrar pessoas surdas ao mundo dos videogames

## **Resumo**

O uso do *advergaming* se tornou uma das técnicas inovadoras de publicidade, graças à qual as marcas transmitem suas mensagens ao público de forma inovadora. No Peru, há uma lacuna na integração de pessoas surdas no discurso publicitário de marcas e campanhas, especialmente se o *advergaming* for usado para estabelecer uma boa conexão com elas. Este estudo tem dois objetivos: analisar como a marca Pilsen contribui ou não para criar espaços inclusivos com *advergaming* e determinar quais elementos da técnica publicitária são relevantes para integrar a comunidade surda no mundo dos videogames. Foi adotada uma metodologia qualitativa para analisar o anúncio E-nterpreters por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com um grupo de estudantes do décimo período do curso de Educação Especial em uma universidade particular de Lima. Constatou-se que a Pilsen contribuiu de fato para a criação de espaços inclusivos com a técnica de *advergaming*.

## **Palavras-chave**

*Advergaming*; deficiência; pesquisa qualitativa; inclusão digital; integração.

New technologies have transformed the way in which advertising is presented in digital media (Aktan and Koçak, 2020). Thus, brands are always searching for creative, personal and attractive strategies to captivate consumers (Farías, 2018). The use of a video game as a strategy to attract users to a brand or product was employed at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic as an ingenious and effective technique (Aktan and Koçak, 2020; Newzoo, 2021). Consequently, in the field of *branded entertainment* advertising strategies, the importance of using video games as tools to establish connections with consumers is recognized (Farías, 2018; Ghosh et al., 2021).

Accordingly, advertising video games (*advergaming*) are created when a brand communicates messages through an interactive plot, which allows the audience to immerse themselves in the game and view the advertising material (Farías, 2018). This tactic seeks to create greater visibility, a lasting impact and greater remembrance, with significant potential for going viral (Farías, 2018; Flores et al., 2018). Moreover, in this approach, messages that are adapted to players' preferences are created, accompanied by visual elements, owing to the personalization of this type of technology, and influence their perceptions (Aktan and Koçak, 2020; Catalan and Martínez, 2019). However, having a single type of advertising discourse focused on a specific audience can lead to biases, since there are cases in which people who have different characteristics, such as disability, in this case hearing, cannot adequately develop their skills in video games since there are many obstacles they encounter in their day-to-day lives (Kaur and Saukko, 2022; Lin et al., 2018).

Hearing loss affects many individuals worldwide, approximately 466 million people, which represents approximately 5% of the global population (WHO, 2019). In Peru, the last National Population Census (INEI-2017) identified 232,176 individuals with hearing difficulties, a figure that represents 7.6% of the population with disabilities, of which 6% do not use speech as a means of communication. This reality highlights the importance of incorporating sign language in various areas and services since the lack of integration of this communication modality limits the acquisition of information by people with hearing difficulties (Lin et al., 2018).

Disability constitutes a growing social problem that creates cultural and social barriers (Papatsimouli et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2018). Many people are perceived as being “vulnerable”, which leads them to suffer from social isolation and rejection and a constant struggle with themselves to want to be accepted, which paradoxically leads them to exclude themselves (Kaur and Saukko, 2022). Peru is no exception, as there are more than three million people with disabilities, a figure that represents 10.3% of the population (Carhuavilca, 2020). Similarly, one in ten people with disabilities has a permanent difficulty or limitation. In this study, people with hearing disabilities composed 7.6% of the population (Midis, 2018).

People who are deaf or hard of hearing often face challenges related to communication and language (Admire and Ramírez, 2021), and within society, they find various impediments to communication, as they lack access to information in different digital formats (web pages, social networks, etc.) (Midis, 2018). Over the years, advertising has gone from having an informative, nonparticipatory and unidirectional role to promoting experiences in which consumers cease to be passive and gain greater participation (*prosumers*) (Fariás, 2018). However, deaf people do not share the same experiences as hearing people do, since they do not receive the same information (Admire and Ramírez, 2021; Lasa and Risso, 2023). If they are part of their community and an efficient communication process is in place, they feel accepted (Admire and Ramírez, 2021). For this reason, the different tools employed in advertising can be not only a factor of communicative inclusion but also a way of integrating them so that they have a more independent way of life (Admire and Ramírez, 2021) and can have more spaces in which to use sign language and strengthen their identity and sense of belonging (Papatsimouli et al., 2023; Riascos et al., 2020). In this sense, users with hearing problems have the right to have products that adapt to their needs (Lasa and Risso, 2023). In this way, they can not only feel included but also have an optimized experience, and positive feelings can be generated through the guarantee of an adequate connection (Riascos et al., 2020).

Deaf people must be effectively integrated into advertising to foster their sense of acceptance; however, there are concerns about focusing on this perspective for too long without exploring other solutions that con-

tribute to broader inclusion (Admire and Ramírez, 2021; Riascos et al., 2020). Numerous brands and companies engage in *diversity* washing or social washing *practices* since they do not effectively integrate support for these populations. Sometimes, their participation is limited to self-promotion by presenting themselves as employers committed to equal opportunities, without this statement being translated into genuine action (Bernardino, 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020).

Thus, brands face a challenge of enhancing and expanding their coverage without falling into the aforementioned practices because if they do not guarantee full participation, they cannot be classified as inclusive brands (Riascos et al., 2020; Vredenburg et al., 2020). For this reason, opting for inclusive and comprehensive advertising is important because it involves two-way communication. Thus, people with disabilities are not classified as special beings or marginalized for their condition but instead presented as people who empower and nurture the social environment (Admire and Ramírez, 2021; Farías, 2018) while their skills and abilities, which are often underestimated in traditional advertising, are enhanced (Lin et al., 2018).

Considering this problem, this study analyzes advertising strategies that integrate various segments of the population worldwide, seeking more inclusive communication (Riascos et al., 2020; Farías, 2018). These strategies are challenged by the lack of recognition of sign language as an additional language in Peru and by its absence in video game spaces, which hinders the effectiveness of communication in these areas (Quevedo and Oseda, 2021). In this context, the work of certain brands is highlighted, as is the specific case of Pilsen, with its “friendship without differences” concept. This renowned Peruvian beer brand stands out not only for its prestige but also for its commitment to establishing emotional connections that adapt to the needs of its consumers, without exception (Lizarzaburu and Vidurizaga, 2021).

## Types of *advergaming* that brands use as an advertising strategy

The *advergaming* technique is defined by the use of gaming platforms in personalized lines to promote a product or generate greater remembrance

(Aktan and Koçak, 2020), with the goal of reaching new audiences and promoting their commitment or other messages in a nonintrusive way (Fernandes et al., 2018). This technique has become more relevant over time, owing to the saturation of advertising messages that were used in traditional media and that visually annoyed users (Aktan and Koçak, 2020), such that brands looked for new formats in which to communicate their messages to the public (Catalán and Martínez, 2019). Within this technique, companies choose between two types of promotional strategies related to *advergaming* (Table 1).

**Table 1. Advergaming classification**

Types of advergaming	Definition
In-game advertising	This is defined as the insertion of brands in video games, without the exclusive purpose of promoting a specific brand. Likewise, the placement of the product in the interactive play spaces is considered. (Fernandes et al., 2018; Méndiz, 2012)
Warn me	This is defined as the creation of a game in order to promote a specific brand. It is characterized by being created for the communication needs of a brand or company. (Fernandes et al., 2018; Méndiz, 2012)

Source: Own elaboration.

The classification in Table 1 corresponds to different communication needs; notably, many brands confuse *advergaming* with *in-game advertising* (Fernandes et al., 2018), which does not generate recognition in users in the same way that *advergames* do, because of their different focuses (Catalán and Martínez, 2019). However, these two types can be distinguished according to subtypes (Méndiz, 2012). In the case of the *advergame*, this strategy offers two options (Table 2).

**Table 2. Advergame options**

Types of advergame	Definition
Warn me	This consists of the creation of a specific video game for a specific brand, whose objective is to produce a feeling of community where the product or service offers a better, more playful experience and closer to the consumer. (Méndiz, 2012)
Advertising in the virtual world (Virtual World Advertising)	This is a type of advertising inserted in virtual worlds, also known as massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs). They are considered fictitious lives in which avatars are often used and meetings with loyal consumers of the brand can be established, among other activities. (Fernandes et al., 2018; Méndiz, 2012)

Source: Own elaboration.



The two types of *advergaming* have two main purposes (Aktan and Koçak, 2020): first, to create an environment in which consumers interact with the brand within the game, which creates positive feelings and associations, and second, to serve as a data collection source for users since players are expected to record the scores obtained in the game, which helps them obtain potential customers (Flores et al., 2018). With this opportunity, brands have realized that they can create advertising speeches while providing entertainment to *gamers* (Fariás, 2018), depending on the quality of the game, the concept and its narrative (Fernandes et al. *al.*, 2018). Thus, the importance of communication within the design of the game must be understood since this can provide a better experience, customer loyalty, learning and positive goals for the brand (Fernandes et al., 2018; Flores et al., 2018).

The level of interaction (*engagement*) obtained with this technique is proportional to the vision of the brand's personality (Wang et al., 2015). Currently, brands are exploring the most appropriate spaces to put at their disposal the different types of *advergames*, as in the case of social networks (Fernandes et al., 2018), known as *social advergames*, in which various edges are stimulated, such as disputes between a network of friends or acquaintances, rankings of achievements, and the generation of comments about the platform, so that brands continue to be promoted (Wang et al., 2015).

The use of social networks is considered an advertising strategy since the new ways of socializing and transmitting content on platforms such as TikTok, Discord and Twitch (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018) favor new ways of advertising with the elements of *advergaming* and are more accessible to the youth sector (Ramallal and Belda, 2021). Thus, brand should opt for the *advergaming* technique within advertising because its use has increased not only for its benefits but also for the ease of accessing messages through the use of different digital devices (Lee and Cho, 2017; Ramallal and Belda, 2021). Additionally, this technique helps advertisers transmit messages and concepts bidirectionally and obtain immediate responses (Fariás, 2018).

## Methodology

This study aims to analyze whether the Pilsen brand contributes to creating inclusive spaces for deaf people through the *advergaming* technique in the *E-nterpreters* advertisement, highlighting the elements that are considered relevant by the interviewed public. The announcement was launched between March 2022 and June 2023. Moreover, this study aims to determine 1) whether Pilsen contributes to creating inclusive spaces with the *advergaming technique*, according to the students of the tenth cycle of the special education career of a female university, to integrate deaf people and 2) what elements of *advergaming* are included in the Pilsen *E-nterpreters* and consider these students relevant for integrating deaf people.

This study is guided by the phenomenological paradigm, which is based on understanding individuals' experiences through their perceptions and meanings in relation to a specific phenomenon (Patton, 2020; Pokropski, 2019), which, in this study, is deafness in the context of the *gamer* community. Thus, this approach is qualitative since it is used to analyze subjects' perceptions of their own experiences to explain a phenomenon or generate new concepts and theories (Mohajan, 2018).

For data collection, a sample of 12 students aged 20-25 years belonging to the tenth cycle of the special education career of the Universidad Femenina del Sagrado Corazón (Unifé) was selected. The size of the sample was small because of the limited enrollment of students in Unifé due to the low demand for professionals: 3,074 teachers (public sector) are available to serve 45,703 students with disabilities within the Peruvian educational system (Minedu, 2021; Unifé, 2020). Among these twelve participants, seven had already entered the job market as interns and teachers. Therefore, this sample had direct knowledge of deaf people's perceptions of video games, as well as the way in which the application of the *advergaming* technique can favor their integration in interactions with other players. The choice is based on the need to adopt an educational perspective in research studies focused on understanding how *advergaming* influences the inclusion of deaf people in the *gaming* community and how this phenomenon impacts the advertising field (Admire and Ramírez, 2021). The sampling was homoge-

neous because all of the participants shared a profile with similar characteristics, which means that it was an intentional sample due to the type of knowledge that the people interviewed had about the phenomenon being studied (Gill, 2020; Staller, 2021).

The sample is also justified in that Unifé is the only female university in Peru that offers a special education career for the treatment of children with hearing disabilities (2020). Because mostly students are about to finish their studies and some are just a step away from the world of work, they can provide a holistic view as experts on the subject since they have developed their skills, considering the purpose of the university to train responsible educators, who assume the pedagogy of people with special abilities in an equitable way and ensure their social and educational well-being (Unifé, 2020).

For this study, the advertisement of the Pilsen brand's *E-nterpreters* campaign, which focused on the creation of a platform that uses artificial intelligence to facilitate the communication of hearing-impaired players through bots, was analyzed (Pilsen, 2022). The semistructured interview technique, with a predetermined set of open questions, was used for data collection; this allowed new ideas to emerge during the interview and facilitated a more dynamic and flexible conversation (Lázaro, 2021). A guide was constructed of 35 questions grouped into two topics: a) *advergaming* and *E-nterpreters* and b) advertising and people with hearing disabilities. After reaching question 5 and learning about their perceptions of the Pilsen brand and their knowledge of the campaign, we proceeded to show them the ad, with the purpose of starting the analysis of the other questions contained in the interview questionnaire.

To validate the instrument, three initial interviews were conducted to determine if the participants understood the questions and if they were related to the aforementioned subtopics (Slettebø, 2021); thus, those that were not understood were modified. The interviews were conducted through the virtual platform Microsoft Teams and lasted between 19 and 48 minutes. The anonymity of the interviewees was ensured through the use of an al-

phanumeric code to identify them according to the order of each interview. Each interviewee received an information sheet with the objectives of the study, benefits, risks, costs and compensation, confidentiality and rights of the participants. All of the participants gave their verbal consent to participate and for the interviews to be recorded.

The responses were processed via thematic analysis, which identifies topics, subtopics, categories and subcategories and reflects the objective set out in the study to define the elements of *advergaming* and find other elements that have not been previously expected (Table 3) (Braun and Clarke, 2021; Lester et al., 2020). The analysis comprised three stages: 1) the transcription of each interview to retrieve valuable information from each participant; 2) the transfer of each interview transcribed to a template prepared by the Faculty of Communications of the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC); and 3) the analysis and comparison of the data divided into previously selected subtopics. During the analysis, codes and categories were identified in two ways: deductive coding, in which predefined codes and categories were used according to the state of the art, and inductive coding, in which codes and categories that emerged from the data collected during the interviews were defined (Braun and Clarke, 2021). To organize all the information analyzed, the results and the discussion were subsequently structured according to the two research questions.

## Results and discussion

### **Pilsen's contribution to creating inclusive spaces with *advergaming***

The participants believed that the Pilsen brand contributes to creating inclusive spaces with the *advergaming* technique because it allows deaf people to have greater interaction with this type of entertainment and helps them communicate and be part of a digital community. Using *advergames* as an alternative solution, in conjunction with sign language, demonstrates the brand's commitment to integrating deaf people into video games, which is why the interviewees consider that it is a creative and innovative idea that differentiates them from other brands in the category of beers. This tech-

nique is a good option for creating positive associations with the game, in this case, with bots (Aktan and Koçak, 2020), because it helps consumers adapt within it and obtain greater acceptance within a *gamer* community and generates satisfaction in their recreational moments (Farías, 2018). As one interviewee noted, “I think that more brands should use this technique” and “also most should train a little with deaf people [...] so that these people can access what we normally access easily” (P01, student, 21 years old).

Likewise, the interviewees noted that opting for this type of technique is important to give deaf people greater visibility within the advertising world so that, in the future, other brands will also create inclusive spaces such as this that will benefit them. The participants validated the perception that people with hearing impairment may have these messages, as they often suffer from limitations when they want to play what they are passionate about, and this is not always considered.

In line with previous studies (Admire and Ramírez, 2021; Lasa and Risso, 2023), the lack of visibility of this group of people is linked to a more important factor: lack of access to communication and little knowledge about their culture. Facts such as these are reflected in the advertisement, where how the players feel when they want to communicate with others during the game is visualized, as they end up feeling isolated or rejected (Admire and Ramírez, 2021). With the *advergame*, Pilsen creates more significant and emotional value (Farías, 2018). An interviewee stated, “Many people think that people with disabilities cannot do anything, that they may be ‘either a few poor people or a few angels’ [...] These campaigns challenge these prejudices because in the end a person with a disability is a person who has *hobbies*, what he feels, what he wants, like everyone else” (P06, practitioner and student, 23 years old).

Although some participants responded positively, others wondered if this action was enough to consider Pilsen as an inclusive brand. Some interviewees commented that brands sometimes join these initiatives for commercial reasons because they use social problems as a marketing and advertising strategy to sell more products (Bernardino, 2021; Vredenburg

et al., 2020) instead of awakening strong emotions that empathize with the excluded segments (Riascos et al., 2020). One interviewee noted, “I do not know if the brand truly does it because it wants people to say ‘Oh! How inclusive they are!’ or if it truly is because they want to include the other person; then that thinking always arouses in me. Will you truly want to include it or will they do it because behind you, they are told that you have to do it to increase their income?” (P06).

This thought is also reinforced by the fact that the brand did not promote the *Enterpreters campaign any more*, since the majority of the interviewees mentioned that they had not seen the ad through traditional media (TV and radio) or digital media, considering that it could have more publicity to share it with friends from work and/or students with hearing disabilities, who could identify with the message. These questions concern the authenticity and commitment with which the brand is creating inclusive spaces since they could fall into *diversity washing* by showing the idea as a promotional strategy instead of generating affinity with deaf people, with what they incur in false integration (Lin et al., 2018; Vredenburg et al., 2020). According to Vredenburg et al. (2020), there are four factors that influence and build a system of authenticity: purpose, values, messaging and practice. When the last is not aligned with the first three, it can be perceived as false inclusion.

This is emphasized because one of the participants mentioned that integration and inclusion are different terms that become confused. Therefore, it is important to know whether Pilsen truly contributes to creating an inclusive space for deaf people or only manages to integrate them. Inclusion requires empathy and, among other elements, demonstrating the capacity that we have as people to participate in the experience, defined as the possibility of approaching what the other person “sees”, seeing their world as if it were ours (Admire and Ramírez, 2021; Castro et al., 2022).

This shows that the brand did contribute, as we mentioned at the beginning, but the impact could be affected, according to what was stated by the aforementioned authors (Bernardino, 2021; Vredenburg et al., 2020), because in practice, the *advergaming* technique was used as a method of in-

tegration owing to the creation of the bots to include them within the *gamer* world. However, the brand did not fully commit, as they did not implement other actions that showed a real commitment or the further promotion of the campaign. One interviewee noted the following:

Integrating is very different from including. Two images come to mind [...]. Integrating, we see two separate circles living within the same circle, integrating in the same space, but each one on its own. To include, those circles come together and are shared in that same space. I think that what they have to look for is inclusion, not integration. (P10, practitioner and student, 22 years old)

In relation to the *advergaming technique*, a student (P02, 21 years old) commented that there are complications for a deaf person when a character speaks in the game, since they may become distracted and lose the “battle”. Moreover, there is no universal sign language, which is a potential barrier. Therefore, there are still aspects that were not considered when using *advergaming* as an advertising technique, since there are very general definitions (Table 2), which prevents brands from opening their options for something more inclusive (Fernandes et al., 2018; Flores et al., 2018; Méndiz, 2012).

### **The relevant elements of *advergaming* in E-nterpreters of Pilsen and the creation of inclusive spaces**

According to the participants, the most relevant elements of *advergaming* are as follows: a) the creation of the characters (bots) and the representation; b) visual identity, which includes the logo, color palette, and graphic elements, among others; and c) verbal identity, where the tone and style of communication are shown. Similarly, other elements should be considered when opting for a more inclusive *advergaming*, taking into account hearing impairment for this research study: “Well, I think it is quite appropriate to the type of game that the person is going to use. So it’s going to be a bit more friendly, right? Unlike having one person translate what the other says, using these types of drawings makes them more part of the game and not as a marked inclusion, so to speak”(P10).

The participants perceived the elements of *advergaming* in internal and external conditions. Within the internal conditions, they considered

the creation of characters, their visual identity and the strategic part proposed by the brand for the *e-nterpreters*. They considered that the creation of characters, known as bots, is creative and easy to understand because they have a design similar to that of other video game characters. However, one of them (P06), a 23-year-old practitioner, mentioned a detail to consider in regard to the creation of characters that communicate sign language. Being accessible on different digital devices suggests that the brand creates more inclusive characters because it can obtain better results and two-way acceptance by people with disabilities (Lee and Cho, 2017; Ramallal and Belda, 2021).

The participants mentioned that such factors among the elements of *advergaming* are crucial in this case since the idea of creating inclusive spaces as a brand can be affected and lead to deaf people not feeling truly persuaded and integrated. Thus, it is recommended that brands offer a variety of characters and customize the avatar; in this way, the taste of the *advergame* improves, and greater remembrance is generated (Flores et al., 2018; Roettl et al., 2016). A participant noted the following:

At the time of sign language, they ask us not to have painted nails, short nails, no bracelets, or short sleeves so that it can be visualized well because when signing it goes from the fingers to the entire arm; then, on that side, there could be some interference when exemplifying sign language. And the clothing of the character, which obviously fits everyone in the video games, but there could be this difficulty when performing them. (P03, practitioner, 20 years)

External conditions include the concept of the brand, the visual identity of the campaign (logo, color palette, graphic elements, etc.) and the verbal identity used. The participants saw in the *E-nterpreters* ad (Figure 1) what the brand usually communicates in most of its campaigns, the purpose of opting for a “friendship without differences”, reflected in the visual and verbal elements of the campaign. However, regarding the slogan of the campaign, “An innovation to listen to each other among friends,” some had problems understanding it because the word “listen” is interpreted in a negative way when communication is directed toward people with hearing



disabilities. If there are different messages in the visual elements of a campaign, communication can be affected; therefore, the brand must guarantee the coherence of the narrative so that the message is clear to the player (Flores et al., 2018; Roettl et al., 2016). As noted, “It seems beautiful to me, I imagine that they have tried to design the name based on the voice waves, the sound waves I imagine, that is why the letters are large and small [...]. As for the phrase, I think that the verb ‘listen to each other’ would not go at all, I think that ‘communicate’ would fit better or, I don’t know, I think there could be better proposals” (P09, student, 22 years old).

**Figure 1. *E-nterpreters* campaign logo by Pilsen Callao**



Source: Pilsen Callao Instagram account, 2022(<https://www.instagram.com/p/CbdxYQ4D2fq/>).

Regarding the visual, most of the participants understood the idea of the logo, which symbolizes sound and voice waves, when relating it to the audios sent by the players through video game platforms. The interviewees liked the colors used within the advertisement and other graphic identities, as they understood what brand they were referring to by using green tones similar to those of Pilsen. These elements are considered important,

despite being external to the game, since they are an integral part of the narrative and make it possible to associate it with real and understandable information. The same happens with the brand, which is not mentioned as such within the *advergame* (Fernandes et al., 2018; Roettl et al., 2016). In addition to proposing the elements of *advergaming* that the interviewees consider important, there are new aspects found in this research, which are listed in Table 3. These factors should be considered for the integration of deaf people within the *gamer* world in a closer and inclusive way.

**Table 3. Classification and definition of the elements of inclusive *advergaming***

Classification	Elements of inclusive <i>advergaming</i>	Definition
External	Exploratory research	Use of interviews, focus groups , ethnographies in a given market to know exactly the factors that generate more entertainment, graphic elements to consider, colors used and language necessary according to the needs of the case.
	Distribution channels	Brands can share the <i>advergame</i> for free through different media (traditional or digital). Considering the integration of the game through social networks is important to reconnect with the consumer, in this case, with disabilities, to amplify the results of effectiveness through the comments made between players.
Internal	Accessibility	Use of technological tools and different resources that allow users with disabilities to use and/or access the game effectively, without any type of difficulty (visual, auditory or verbal).
	Avatar customization	Creation of different characters with the freedom to personify themselves at ease so that they feel represented during the game. It is important, since it gives a differential and inclusive value to the brand and greater remembrance and authenticity are obtained.
	Verbal identity	Use of selected words in conjunction with a specialist to interact with the disabled player. It helps to generate greater empathy and integration of the person with a disability to the <i>gaming world</i> .
	Game message autonomy	The message that the brand communicates must be understandable to the player with a disability. Having clear information, you will be able to transmit, process or better build the idea and content of the game or character.

Source: Own elaboration.

In this way, the following new elements are proposed to promote the use of *advergaming* by optimizing the design of the game for the inclusion of

deaf people: exploratory research, distribution channels, accessibility, personalization of avatars, verbal identity and autonomy of the message of the game in future advertisements of the brand, as well as other initiatives interested in contributing to the creation of inclusive environments for people with hearing difficulties. Each element differs depending on the type of disability and needs of each segment. Having the elements of *advergaming* integrated into what the consumer wants is essential within the design of the game if one wants to obtain a positive influence on the brand (Fernandes et al., 2018; Roettl et al., 2016). In this sense, apart from the elements found with the participants, it is important to consider these new elements to show a greater real commitment to players with hearing disabilities (Farías, 2018; Ramallal and Belda, 2021).

## Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze whether the Pilsen brand contributes to creating inclusive spaces for deaf people through the *advergaming* technique in the *E-nterpreters* advertisement, for which the elements considered relevant were highlighted. In relation to the first research question and in line with the main objective, it is concluded that the brand did go a step further with its concept of friendship without differences and the creation of a new inclusive space for deaf people who had limitations in communicating with other players. The functions of *advergaming* played in favor of the brand to integrate them into this digital world and made many participants feel proud because, as special education students, they know that the recreational needs of deaf people are not always considered, as is also the case in society.

Owing to a lack of promotion, the brand can fall into *diversity washing* because, when this type of message is built, integration is often confused with inclusion, which limits other actions that would help the brand to be more inclusive through the *advergame* technique. Integration and inclusion are two different concepts. For the brand to generate stronger ties with deaf people, a new definition of inclusive *advergaming* is proposed (Table 4), where all kinds of solutions are offered for people with disabilities to create a better experience and achieve a feeling of belonging to the *gamer* community.

In relation to the second research question, different elements were found within the *E-nterpreters* advertisement (creation of characters, visual identity and verbal identity), which reaffirmed what was mentioned by Fernandes et al. (2018) about how these are essential in the development of the *advergame* to achieve a comprehensive and understandable solution. Similarly, other elements of *advergaming* emerged, such as exploratory research, distribution channels, accessibility, personalization of avatars, verbal identity and autonomy of the game message, which, together, will help in future campaigns of the brand to conceptualize a more inclusive message. These contributions could represent a substantial contribution to the advertising field in the future, since few studies have considered *advergaming* as an advertising technique, with the exception of several findings previously reported (Aktan and Koçak, 2020; Bernardino, 2021; Fariás, 2018; Fernandes et al., 2018; Méndiz, 2012; Vredenburg et al., 2020), which support the importance of opting for this technique to achieve more significant and emotional value in people.

This study has four limitations: 1) the accessibility of the participants, given that when they were in a pandemic context, they were virtual interviews where there were connection problems, which hindered communication; 2) availability, since the participants presented cancellations and rescheduling for study, work or personal reasons; 3) convenience sampling, such that the results could not be generalized to a group of people of both sexes; and 4) the nonparticipation of the deaf community, owing to budgetary limitations that prevented the hiring of a certified sign language interpreter. For future research, validation of the aforementioned new *advergaming* proposal (Table 4), as well as certain conditions for its implementation owing to the new *advergaming* elements developed (Table 3), is recommended. Likewise, other researchers are invited to explore and analyze the new proposal together with its elements, adapting it to the emerging subtypes of *advergaming*, such as brand simulation, insertion, and sponsorship. Studies with an inclusive approach, that is, interviewing the target audience, i.e., the deaf community, are also recommended. Finally, it is expected that it will be useful for those brands interested in participating in the creation of inclusive spaces, which are urgently needed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, especially those with digital entertainment.

**Table 4. New classification of *warn me***

Advergame type	Definition
Inclusive Advergame	Creation of a video game or elements of it (characters, tools, etc.) in which all the necessary solutions are offered for people with disabilities, hand in hand with experts in the industry with the aim of creating a more inclusive and affective experience .

Source: Own elaboration.

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