

https://dspace.org/

Indigenous Language Advertising on Radio Perceptions of MTN Subscribers about Setswana Radio Commercials in Mahikeng South Africa

O Ogundeyi; Tshepang Molale; P Nkamta

https://hdl.handle.net/10539/43284
IBSS

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/

e-Bangi Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

eISSN: 1823-884x

Volume 21, Issue 4, DOI: https://doi.org/10.17576/ebangi.2024.2104.04

Article

Indigenous Language Advertising on Radio: Perceptions of MTN Subscribers about Setswana Radio Commercials in Mahikeng, South Africa

Olanrewaju Ogundeyi[1], Tshepang Molale[2] & Paul Nkamta[1]

[1]Indigenous Language Media in Africa Research Entity (ILMA), Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, 2745, South Africa
[2]Department of Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2017, South Africa

Corresponding Author: larry17april@gmail.com

Received: 23 July 2024
Accepted: 30 September 2024

Abstract: Indigenous languages serve as vital communication systems, influencing actions in various contexts. In South Africa, with 12 official languages, marketers must strategically select the language that resonates with their target audience. Research has highlighted the impact of English's dominance on indigenous languages, particularly in radio advertising, and how brand managers in multilingual settings utilise code-switching for effective communication. However, there is a gap in understanding indigenous language speakers' views on their languages' usage in radio commercials. This study focused on MTN subscribers' perceptions of the use of Setswana in radio advertisements and the challenges they face while listening to them. Employing perception theory, the research utilised a mixed-method approach, distributing 216 questionnaires to MTN subscribers in Mahikeng and conducting focus group discussions with 24 participants. The study aimed to assess Setswana's perceptions in radio ads and identify associated challenges. Findings showed that familiarity with a language fosters brand trust and credibility, ultimately enhancing economic performance in multilingual countries like South Africa. The study revealed key challenges, such as a lack of skilled voice actors fluent in Setswana and the rapid pace of indigenous language radio commercials, which impede comprehension. According to the study's findings, we advocate for increased use of indigenous languages in radio commercials to better connect with diverse audiences and improve brand engagement.

Keywords: Setswana; indigenous language; radio advertisement; advertisers**;** brands

Introduction

The use of indigenous languages in radio broadcasting and advertisements has seen a surge (Nkoala, 2023). Still, the dominant use of the English in media has deprived communities of the opportunity to showcase their cultural diversity. This has separated people from the richness of their culture and heritage through language loss, as language is integral to culture (Sunduza, 2011). The survival of indigenous peoples' cultures, worldviews, and visions depends on their ability to communicate in their native language (indigenous language). Meanwhile, indigenous languages have been in danger since colonialism due to policies that promote assimilation, land confiscation, discriminatory laws, and other practices. According to UNESCO (2017), an indigenous language perishes every two weeks, and even parental language transmission to the next generation is decreasing.

It is pertinent to note that indigenous languages have developed into vast and intricate knowledge systems essential for communication. Advertisers must use Indigenous languages to influence people and their behaviour, as the choice of language to convey specific messages is cogent. An indigenous language message is a cohesive system of words that gives people the ability to think, share meaning, define reality, and convey their emotions, thoughts, experiences, and opinions about their environment (Steinberg, 2007) because it gets the advertising message conveyed to the consumer more clearly than if someone speaks to him in a different language. In addition, studies have shown that the use of native language in radio advertisements makes it an inclusive communication strategy (Ogundeyi, 2023; Adeniji & Akinbode, 2023; Oyesomi & Salawu, 2019) since it covers a non-English-literate audience. This concept also contributes to radio's potency as the best broadcasting platform for mass interaction (Mufwene, 2002; Manyozo, 2009).

In advertising, sales organizations and advert producers rely on the appropriate use of language to reach their targeted audience (Okanlawon & Oluga, 2008). Akinbode (2012) and Dyer (2008) posit that advertising is influenced by language because advertising language is a loaded language that primarily aims to catch our attention and influence us favourably towards the product or service offered. To effectively communicate a brand to the consumer, the advertising message's language must match their level (Nwadike, 2004; Grifin, 1994), leading to the introduction of indigenous languages in advertising in South Africa and globally. South Africa's linguistic diversity reflects its rich cultural heritage and historical influences. The country's Constitution promotes the preservation of various languages for national and cultural identity (Devenish, 1999). In 2023, the government added sign language to the existing eleven official languages (Lonwabo, 2023), giving South Africa twelve official languages, among which Setswana, the official language of the North-West Province, is one. Research on Setswana reveals its marginalization due to English's expansion and hegemony (see, for example, Phaahla, 2015).

An in-depth analysis of the literature in the last twenty years reveals the dominance of English over other languages, resulting in a decline in the use of Indigenous languages in African media (Salawu & Amenaghawon, 2023; Enwere & Uchamma, 2005; Bernstein, 2001). In response to this hegemonic status quo, scholars such as Bishop (2006) have observed some efforts by brand managers in advertisements who have tried to employ code-switching as a survival strategy in multilingual African nations like Ghana, Nigeria, and South Africa. However, indigenous language speakers' perceptions regarding their language use in radio commercials remain unexplored. This study, therefore, investigates the perceptions of Setswana-speaking MTN subscribers in Mahikeng regarding the use of their indigenous language in radio commercials and explores the challenges associated with these advertisements.

Literature Review

1. Radio Commercials in South Africa

South African radio commercials have a rich history dating to December 18, 1923, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The first experimental radio broadcast took place on December 18, 1923, and the first commercial radio service began on May 1, 1950, by SABC Springbok radio Burger (2002), Teer-Tomaselli et al. (1989), broadcasting from Johannesburg in English and Afrikaans (bilingual). The service was so popular that advertisers had to book well in advance to get advert space for their brands (Du Plessis, 2000). The Broadcast Research Council of South Africa's 2018 report reveals that radio in South Africa provides content in 11 official languages and 7 non-official languages. The report also states that 91% of South Africans listen to the radio every week, for three hours and forty-three minutes daily (BRC, 2018). The most common languages used among the 349 radio stations in South Africa to transmit content are English, Zulu, and Afrikaans (Khumalo, 2023). This indicates that indigenous language use on radio plays an important role in South Africa, as it remains South Africa's most significant mainstream media due to its wider audience, accessibility, and flexibility in language.

Companies and organizations can promote products or services on the radio by paying for radio commercials, which is the radio industry's primary income source. Radio offers several advantages over other forms of advertising, such as a readily available audience, a price point that everyone can afford, ease

of accessibility, and a larger audience. Rajagopal's (2011) study on the effect of radio commercials on urban commuters' purchasing behaviour revealed the widespread use of radio. The study's empirical analysis focused on urban commuters who tune in to radio advertising while travelling to learn about sales promotions. The sample respondents were regular commuters from Mexico City's suburban, northern, and southern neighborhoods. The study's data came from individual interviews conducted from 2007 to 2009 during various festival seasons. The study found that many urban commuters listen to the radio and respond to various commercial messages broadcast over time. The subsequent section focuses on indigenous languages in radio commercials

2. Indigenous Language in Radio Commercials

Advertisers intentionally use indigenous language in radio commercials to creatively communicate their brand features and benefits to a targeted market or audience (Duncan & Ouwersloot, 2008). A precise and concise advertising message differentiates an effective and efficient advertising campaign from a complete waste of time and money. O'Guinn *et al*. (2009:341) propose that "message strategy encompasses both the objectives and methods for achieving advertising goals". Arens et al. (2009: 342) argue that "message strategy encompasses rational and emotional appeals because consumers usually situate their buying decisions on rational and emotional motives". The rational appeal helps to persuade potential consumers that a particular purchase is more sensible by appealing to their senses. In contrast, the emotional appeal concept interacts with the customer's emotional state to make them feel valued (Pratap, 2021). These two concepts help bring a brand closer to potential customers generating awareness and brand popularity for the product or service offered by the advertiser (Khan, 2007). Advertising messages incorporate indigenous language elements to evoke the emotions of a specific culture or community, thereby promoting brand patronage. Kim et al. (2020) conducted a study on the role of emotional and rational appeals and the hidden heterogeneity of consumers in advertising messages for sustainable marketing. They found that the emotional content of an advertisement is a better predictor of buying behaviour, as shown by the audience's rate of message recall. Additionally, the study demonstrates that consumers are more likely to recall commercial statements that evoke powerful emotions.

Similarly, Oyesomi and Salawu (2019) also state that the Indigenous language elements in advertising messages easily appeal to the emotions of the language speakers and thus connect them to the brand. Moreover, Adeniji and Akinbode (2023) conducted a study on the use of Indigenous languages in the Airtel campaign in Nigeria, using a survey as a data-gathering technique. The study revealed that using indigenous language (Yoruba) in Airtel's advertising campaign was quite effective, and the study recommended giving more consideration to indigenous languages in reaching the target audience. According to those above, the use of indigenous language in advertising plays a significant role in connecting language speakers to the brand, eliciting self-referential thoughts, and appealing to non-English-literate consumers (Ogundeyi, 2023; Oyesomi & Salawu, 2019; Udemmadu, 2011; Noriega & Blair, 2008). This study is guided by the perception theory to make sense of how indigenous language advertisements connect language speakers to brands that engage indigenous language in their radio advertisements.

3. Perception Theory

Perception is the process of understanding sensory information around us, which can be felt through our senses of hearing, sight, smell, touch, and taste. In philosophy, psychology, and cognitive science, perception is the natural ability to understand or notice things quickly (Qiong, 2017). Interpreting messages is complex and may be difficult to achieve due to various elements such as psychological composition, past experiences, cultural norms, and social connections (Anaeto et al., 2012). Culture significantly shapes how individuals view the world and its happenings (Samovar et al., 1981). Consumers are exposed to a vast amount of external stimuli but can only perceive a portion of them. Perception theory depends on an individual's cultural background and prior experiences. No communicator can assume that a message will deliver the intended meaning for all receivers or have the same meaning for the audience audiences (Anaeto et al., 2012). The fundamental argument of perception theory is that the receiver must be exposed to and pay

attention to a message before it can be perceived, and one must perceive it before the message can be remembered.

Perception theory in mass communication involves selective perception, exposure, attention, and retention. These concepts are tied to cultural influence. Selective perception suggests that individuals interpret messages based on past knowledge, current dispositions, needs, moods, and memories. Selective exposure suggests that individuals seek information aligning with their attitudes and beliefs. Selective retention refers to the influence of psychological factors on information recall. James Bagby's 1957 research illustrates this influence. The study result showed that participants prefer to select and perceive stimuli reflecting their culture.

According to critics, perception theory is subjective and limited to head activity (Berkeley, 1965), while common sense suggests cognitive pathways exist for viewing the same thing from various perspectives. However, the justification for using perception theory for this study is that learning and experience are the most important determinants of perception. Advertisers often employ gimmicks to capture and maintain audience attention, such as using indigenous language in radio commercials. The next section focuses on the procedures and techniques used in data collection as the processing and analysis of data.

Methodology

A mixed-methods research approach was deemed suitable for this study. It is informed by a pragmatic research paradigm which embraces a pluralistic approach to conducting and answering research questions to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon under study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Quantitative survey questionnaires as qualitative focus group discussions were used in the data gathering process. For the survey, we used Cochran's infinite/finite sample size determinant formula, a probability sampling technique to determine the population sample size of (n) 227 from the population size of 156,262 people in the Mahikeng community, North-West Province, South Africa, within the age bracket of 20–64 years (Municipalities of South Africa, 2016). For studies with infinite populations like this, the Cochran sample size determinant is appropriate to compute an ideal sample size for a desired level of precision (Cochran, 1977). While for focus group discussions, 24 discussants (3 groups and 8 members per group) were purposively selected using a non-probability sampling technique. Therefore, 251 participants (MTN subscribers residing within Mahikeng, South Africa) participated in the study.

The inclusion criteria for the current study emphasised that participants must be MTN product users with native speaker knowledge of the Setswana language, residing in Mahikeng, South Africa and must be between 20 and 64 years old. The study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyse quantitative data from 216 returned survey questionnaires out of 227 administered. A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the qualitative data from 24 focus group participants. The data was reduced into smaller, understandable information, identifying themes based on the study objectives and validating them with the study's research questions. Specifically, the research questions were analysed using the relational elements in the quantitative questionnaire and the qualitative focus-group discussion guide. This data analysis sequence helped connect and compare the quantitative and qualitative data to arrive at congruent findings (Creswell, 2014).

Eligible respondents could understand the study's objectives, enquire about the research, and assert their rights to resolve ethical issues. Each selected participant has the option to actively participate in the research or reject it without facing any consequences. Respondents were not required to provide their names or other identifying information to maintain anonymity. Moreover, the data collected throughout the study were classified as confidential and were only used for this report. The ethical clearance No: NWU-01075-22-A7 was obtained from the North-West University Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC).

Findings

1. The Use of The Setswana Language In MTN Radio Commercials

Table 1 shows the perception of subscribers to the use of the Setswana language in MTN radio commercials. The results show that 76.8% of respondents agreed that MTN advertisements produced in Setswana are a new development. Also, the majority of respondents (79.6%) agreed that MTN advertisements produced in Setswana are meaningful, 6% of respondents were indifferent, while 14.4% disagreed with the statement. In gauging the authenticity of MTN advertisement messages in Setswana, 77.3% of respondents agreed on the authenticity of MTN advertisement messages in Setswana. Moreover, 83.4% of respondents also agreed that MTN radio commercials remind them of cultural values in their community, while 13.4% disagreed. The table further shows that 80.5% of respondents agreed that MTN radio commercials in Setswana kept them entertained, 15.3% disagreed, while 4.2% of respondents were indifferent to the statement. Therefore, the findings in Table 1 specify that respondents have responded positively to using Setswana in MTN radio advertisements, with the majority of the respondents appreciating its inclusion.

Table 1. Subscribers' perception of the use of the Setswana language in MTN radio advertisements

SN	Subscribers' perception of the use of Setswana language in MTN radio commercials	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
1	Advertisement produced in Setswana is a new development.	102 47.2%	64 29.6%	23 10.7%	9 4.2%	18 8.3%	216 100%
2	MTN advertisements produced in Setswana are meaningful.	98 45.3%	74 34.3%	13 6.0%	20 9.3%	11 5.1%	216 100%
3	MTN advertisement messages in Setswana are authentic.	91 42.1%	76 35.2%	11 5.1%	22 10.2%	16 7.4%	216 100%
4	MTN radio commercials remind me of cultural value in my country.	117 54.2%	63 29.2%	7 3.2%	20 9.2%	9 4.2%	216 100%
5	MTN radio commercials in Setswana keep me entertained.	105 48.6%	69 31.9%	9 4.2%	21 9.7%	12 5.6%	216 100%

Source: Field study (2023)

On subscribers' perception of the use of Setswana language in MTN radio commercials, the below themes emerged from the focus group discussions (qualitative data) gathered from the MTN subscribers in Mahikeng, North-West Province, South Africa.

i. Radio as participants' favourite indigenous language media;
ii. Indigenous language as effective radio advertising; and
iii. Quality of radio commercials aired in indigenous language (language familiarity).

Radio as Participants' Favourite Indigenous Language Media

Participants find indigenous language radio commercials appealing because they present the product's features intelligibly and easily. In actuality, linguistically comfortable people are also less likely to doubt the veracity of MTN Setswana language radio advertising. Participants would rather concentrate mainly on radio and advertising in conventional media. To protect the confidentiality of the individuals, the researcher represented their ideas using pseudonyms. When the FGD participants were asked what they thought about hearing commercials in Setswana, one of the participant's excerpts from Group C is stated below.

> *"Yes, in my opinion, since it also encourages the usage of native tongues. Black people's language is currently disappearing. I understand what they're saying since this MTN Setswana language commercial speaks to me in my tongue. Because it promotes my culture, I become emotional most of the time when I listen to these kinds of commercials, and it even reaches the elderly when Setswana is used. Thus, it can effectively promote the goods"*
>
> (Informant C3, Male, 20-64 years old, Employed)

As demonstrated by the following excerpt, another participant from Group A also said that they are happy to see the Setswana language used in radio advertisement:

> *"I enjoy listening to radio stations that speak Setswana outside of advertisements. Even though I'm glad that my language is being used for advertisements, I occasionally learn the language from radio advertisements. I am more likely to listen to a radio advertisement in my mother tongue, which is also my preferred language of communication because I can follow along well, and it helps me remember the material".*
>
> (Informant A2, Female, 21-26 years old, Student)

The relevance of radio to indigenous languages was emphasised by one of the participants in group A:

> *"I am aware that some brands that employ radio stations typically make poor use of words. Though, I find it entertaining when they utilise our language, and I take pride in the fact that my telecommunications brand understands it, which is another reason it interests me so much. Moreover, you can listen to radio advertising whenever and wherever you like; this encourages me to listen to the radio more at home and even when I'm not"*
>
> (Informant A3, Female, 21-26 years old, Student)

The focus group participants expressed their appreciation for radio, especially radio stations broadcast in Setswana. Participants confirmed that their preferred form of indigenous language media is radio. Apart from the answers provided by focus-group participants to the study research question one, another theme, "indigenous language is effective for radio advertising", emerged, and this is discussed in the next subsection.

Indigenous Language is Effective for Radio Advertising

According to participants, the use of Setswana in radio advertising makes the advert more meaningful and appealing to elderly people. This supports Degawan's (2019) assertion that the older generation values their mother tongue because they speak it more frequently. This response aligns with the concerns expressed by a few older participants regarding the poor usage of the Setswana language and how it affects the younger generation of indigenous children who, due to their mother tongue deficit, are largely unable to converse with their grandparents. Furthermore, respondents reported that hearing radio advertising in their own language gives them pride and a sense of belonging. Some of the participants from the focus groups commented as follows:

> *"Radio adverts give me a sense of belonging and show that I am valued by the manufacturer or the producer of the brand that used Setswana in their advert"*
>
> (Informant B1, Female, 20-64 years old, Employed)

> *"Setswana radio commercials are more beneficial to older people and illiterates, especially people in rural areas where people listen to the radio more than any [other] form of media. In this case, adverts produced in English will not have much impact on this set of the audience, since they do not understand it, but indigenous media, like indigenous radio, will be more helpful to them"*
>
> (Informant C4, Male, 20-64 years old, Employed)

Radio commercials can be interesting and emotional when aired in the language the audience understands. Focus group. The focus group discussed that the use of indigenous language in radio commercials helps promote the cultural heritage of the language speakers. Below is the submission of another participant in the focus-group discussions of Group C.

> *"One good thing about indigenous language commercials is that when you understand the language, it is more interesting than when you do not. It appeals to your emotions because it is seen to be promoting your*

culture. So, when adverts come to me in my language, they make me happy. It helps me [avoid] mistakes because I can understand very well what advertisers means and what the product is all about"

(Informant C1, Male, 20-64 years old, Employed)

Quality of Radio Commercials Aired in Indigenous Language

Further investigation is needed to determine whether listeners are aware of the quality of radio advertisements broadcast in the Setswana language on the designated radio stations. In order to assess the quality of the indigenous language used in radio advertising, this theme set out to find out if participants regularly listened to MTN Setswana language radio adverts. This question also gauges subscribers' perceptions of incorrect language use in product advertisements. After conducting three focus groups, the researcher found that most participants valued the Setswana language's richness and depth more even than those used in radio commercials. Only a small percentage of focus group participants voiced their concerns regarding language use, particularly when certain phrases are misused. From the data gathered, it can be gleaned that subscribers get motivated by listening to indigenous language radio commercials because of the following factors:

i. The language quality and the creativities involved in radio advertisements; and
ii. Efforts taken by producers and advertisers to ensure that indigenous language commercials are perfectly crafted to meet listeners' expectations.

The following extracts were generated from two focus groups to support the foregoing:

"A number of these radio ads are rich and deep in quality. Although these commercials are often quite concise, certain firms nonetheless make sure the message is effectively and cleverly presented in Setswana. Yes, this is a positive development. Some, nevertheless, would even make you furious due to word misuse, which is typically bad for the organization's reputation. However, the creators of these ads have shown some excellent inventiveness in creating this advertisement in their native tongue"

(Informant C5, Female, 20-64 years old, Employed)

One of the participants noted that product authenticity is the only relative element to product quality. This means that the quality of the indigenous language used in radio advertisements should not be confused with the marketed product's quality. Regardless of the style or calibre of language used in the advertisement, a product will be considered original and authentic if it is of high quality. The participant enthused as follows:

"If you listen to an advert from two different stations using different languages, you will discover that they are the same thing. They are just trying to translate what they are saying. So, the authenticity is tied to the originality and quality of the product and not about the language"

(Informant B4, Male, 20-64 years old, Employed)

According to the qualitative data cited above, subscribers are aware of the use of Setswana in MTN radio commercials, and participants appreciate it but value quality products above ordinary language use. This conclusion from the qualitative FGD data aligns with the quantitative survey data previously presented. The next section presents quantitative and qualitative data for research objective two.

2. Challenges Associated with Listening to MTN Setswana Radio Commercials

As to whether challenges were encountered when listening to MTN radio commercials in Setswana, Table 2 shows that most respondents (64.8%) disagreed with the statement, while only 31% agreed. The last variable categorised under this research question sought to gauge the rate of Setswana usage in MTN advertisements. Here, 12.5% and 14.4% indicated "very high" and "high", respectively, while the majority of respondents indicated "very low" and "low", with 34.7% and 38.5%, respectively. From the analyses in Table 2, it can be deduced that subscribers demonstrated a significant knowledge and awareness of the use of the Setswana

language in MTN radio commercials. However, the analysis also shows that the rate of Setswana language usage in MTN radio commercials was very low.

Table 2. Challenges associated with listening to MTN Setswana radio commercials

SN	To explore challenges associated with listening to MTN Setswana radio commercials	Strongly Agree	Agree	Indifferent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
1	Challenges encountered when listening to MTN commercials in Setswana on the radio.	32 14.8%	35 16.2%	9 4.2%	85 39.3%	55 25.5%	216 100%
		Very High	High	Very Low	Low		
2	What is the rate of Setswana usage in MTN advertisements?	27 12.5%	31 14.4%	75 34.7%	83 38.5%		216 100%

Source: Field study (2023)

In addition, the qualitative data also affirm one of the challenges associated with listening to MTN radio commercials in Setswana, as indicated in the themes below.

Indigenous Language Radio Commercials are Very Fast

One of the participants stated that radio commercials are very fast. Hence, it was a challenge for them to grasp the detailed information of the advertised brand. Radio commercials like jingles are recorded audio content comprising a musically-infused message crafted by the marketer. Music helps to make a memorable, unique and effective brand advertisement (Martín-Santana *et al.,* 2015). Commercial jingles can be very fast because the highest duration is 60 seconds, and then there are 45 seconds, 30 seconds and 15 seconds. So, in a bid to pass across much information in a short period, advertisers tend to overload this commercial material, and thus, it becomes difficult for the listening audience to understand. Some participants observed MTN's inadequate use of the Setswana language in their commercials. A participant in the FGD B expressed his view as follows:

> *"Yeah, some of the indigenous radio commercials that I've listened to give an idea of what's going on, and this gives people a sense of belonging. But these commercials are usually fast and transient; they don't explain every single detail about what they are advertising, but they give you an idea to know whether you want the product or not"*
>
> (Informant B4, Female, 20-64 years old, Employed)

The qualitative data on challenges associated with listening to MTN Setswana radio commercials also identify challenges associated with indigenous language use in radio commercials. the qualitative data aligns with the quantitative survey data, which also established some of these challenges, such as the low rate of use and high-speed delivery of these commercials.

Discussion

The survey results indicate a positive reception of the use of Setswana in MTN radio advertising, with the majority of participants acknowledging and appreciating its presence. This sentiment is further reinforced by focus group discussions, where participants expressed their enjoyment and ease of comprehension when MTN incorporates Setswana in its radio commercials. They highlighted radio as their preferred platform for indigenous language media, underscoring its effectiveness in delivering native-language advertisements. This aligns with UNESCO's (2022) view that radio remains a robust medium for communication across various languages, including indigenous ones.

Despite these favourable responses, the prevalence of Setswana in radio advertising remains limited. Several factors could contribute to this discrepancy. Implementing indigenous languages in radio

advertisements, such as Setswana, may pose logistical challenges. For example, there might be a shortage of skilled voice actors fluent in Setswana or a need for additional resources to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate content. Advertisers might also struggle to create compelling scripts that effectively convey their messages while respecting linguistic nuances. Advertisers often target specific market segments based on demographics and purchasing behaviour, in fact this position aligns with Nasir et al. (2021) in the findings of their study that advertisers tend to segment communication strategies based on specific market target. Sometimes, advertisers might prioritize languages with larger or more economically significant audiences (Baker, 1997). This market segmentation could lead to a preference for languages with broader reach or perceived economic value, potentially sidelining indigenous languages like Setswana despite their positive reception in certain communities.

The preferences of advertisers themselves can significantly impact language use in advertising. Advertisers may have biases towards languages they perceive as more "commercially viable" or mainstream, which could influence their decisions. This preference could stem from a belief that using a widely spoken language might offer better returns on investment or broader appeal, even if it means overlooking the value of indigenous languages. There may also be underlying cultural and economic factors at play. For instance, there might be a perception that indigenous languages are less likely to generate significant revenue or that their usage could limit the ad's reach to a niche audience (Czinkota *et al*., 2021). This economic consideration might discourage advertisers from using Setswana more frequently despite its appreciation among local audiences.

The findings also highlight that familiarity with a language enhances trust in a brand's credibility, aligning with Nwadike's (2004) assertion that economic performance improves when advertisements use the audience's mother tongue. This is supported by Myer (1983) and Salawu & Oyesomi (2019), who argue that advertisements must speak to the audience in their most familiar language to maximize appeal. The positive reception of Setswana in MTN's radio commercials mirrors Hornikx et al. (2010), who emphasized the importance of tailoring advertisements to cultural values and indigenous languages. The increasing use of Indigenous languages in media, as noted by Adeniji and Akinbode (2023), reflects a growing acknowledgement of their significance. Nevertheless, despite the clear appreciation for Setswana among subscribers, its limited use in advertising suggests that overcoming the aforementioned barriers is crucial for expanding its presence. Addressing these challenges could pave the way for more inclusive and culturally resonant advertising practices, ultimately benefiting advertisers and indigenous communities.

Conclusion

The study's findings highlight the significant impact of radio advertisements in both local and foreign languages on listeners' decision-making processes. This research underscores the importance of tailoring advertisements to the linguistic preferences of the audience, demonstrating that subscribers actively engage with and value indigenous language media. In particular, MTN's use of Setswana in radio commercials has proven effective in resonating with listeners' cultural and linguistic identity in Mahikeng, North-West Province, South Africa. This suggests that advertising in indigenous languages can foster a stronger connection between the brand and the community it serves, enhancing both engagement and brand loyalty. The data reveal that Setswana language radio commercials have a notably positive influence on the indigenous population of Mahikeng. This finding is consistent across the three themes identified in the qualitative data: language affinity, interactivity, and reliability. Participants expressed a strong preference for advertisements in their native language, highlighting that Setswana commercials are perceived as more trustworthy and relevant compared to those in English. This insight underscores the effectiveness of using Indigenous languages to meet the informational and emotional needs of local subscribers' thereby reinforcing the cultural significance of the language in advertising.

The study also indicates that there is currently a perceived scarcity of Setswana language content in MTN's radio advertising. Participants in both the focus groups and survey suggested increasing the use of indigenous languages in commercials. This recommendation is grounded in the observed preference for and positive reception of Setswana advertisements. Expanding the use of indigenous languages in advertising

could enhance the effectiveness of communication strategies and better cater to the linguistic and cultural preferences of the audience.

For future research, exploring the impact of indigenous language advertising across different media platforms beyond radio would be valuable. Investigating how indigenous language advertisements perform on digital and print media could provide a more comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness. Additionally, research could focus on the comparative impact of various indigenous languages in different regions to identify whether similar patterns of effectiveness are observed. Further studies could also delve into the specific elements of indigenous language advertisements that contribute to their perceived reliability and engagement. Understanding whether certain linguistic features, cultural references, or storytelling techniques enhance the effectiveness of these ads could provide actionable insights for advertisers. By examining these aspects, researchers can help optimize advertising strategies to better align with the preferences of diverse linguistic communities and improve overall communication efficacy.

Acknowledgement: Appreciation goes to the members of staff of Indigenous Language Media in Africa Research Entity (ILMA), Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, South Africa.

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

Adeniji, O. C., & Akinbode, S. (2023). Indigenous language use in advertising campaigns: A study of Airtel Nigeria‘s users. In P. Mpofu, I. A. Fadipe & T. Tshabangu (Eds.), *Indigenous African Language Media* (pp. 419-439). Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0305-4_24

Akinbode, O. (2012). A sociolinguistic analysis of advertising language in selected Nigerian mass media commercials. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, *2*(8), 26-32.

Aneto, S. G., Onabajo, O. S, & Osifeso, J. B. (2012). *Models and theories of communication* (4th ed.). African Renaissance Books Incorporated.

Arens, F., David, H. S, & Weigold, M. (2009). *Essentials of contemporary advertising* (2nd ed.). McGraw-Hill Companies.

Bagby, J. W. (1957). A cross-cultural study of perceptual predominance in binocular rivalry. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 54*(3), 331–334. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046310.

Baker, C. E. (1997). Giving the audience what it wants. *Ohio State Law Journal*, *58*(2), 311-418.

Berkeley, G. (1965). Principles of Human Knowledge. In Hirst, R. J (Ed.), *Perception and the External World.* Macmillan Company.

Bernsten, J., 2001. English in South Africa: expansion and nativization in concert. *Language Problems and Language Planning*, *25*(3), 219-235.

Bishop, M. M. (2006). *The role of language codeswitching in increasing advertising effectiveness among Mexican-American youth* [PhD Thesis, Arlington, University of Texas].

Burger, D. (2002). *South Africa Yearbook 2001/*02, Pretoria: (Ed) GCIS, p. 122., South Africa Info. South Africa ‘s radio stations. www.southafrica.info.

Broadcast Research Council South Africa., (2018). *BRC RAM™ – MAY _18 RELEASE*. Online verfügbar unter http://brcsa.org.za/brc-ram-may-2018-release-presentation/

Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling Techniques* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Czinkota, M. R., Kotabe, M., Vrontis, D., Shams, S. M. R. (2021). Designing Effective Promotion and Advertising Strategies. In: *Marketing Management: Past Present and Future* (pp.553-606). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66916-4_12.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage.

Degawan, M. (2019). Wide angle: Indigenous languages: Knowledge and hope. *The UNESCO Courier*, *19*(1), 6-8.

Devenish, G. E. (1999). Minority Rights and Cultural Pluralism-The Protection of Language and Cultural Identity in the 1996 Constitution. *THRHR*, *62*, 201.

Duncan, T., & Ouwersloot, H. (2008). *Integrated marketing communications*. McGraw-Hill.

Du Plessis, D. F. (2000). *Introduction to Public Relations and Advertising*. South Africa: Juta and Company

Dyer, G. (2008). *Advertising as communication*. Routledge.

Enwere, O., & Uchamma, J. (2005). The mass media in developing and enhancing attitudes towards Nigerian languages. In O. Indimele (Ed.), *Globalization and the study of languages in Africa* (pp. 89–99). Grand Orbit Communication & Emhai Press.

Grin, F. (1994). The economics of language: Match or mismatch? International *Political Science Review*, *15*(1), 25-42. https://doi.org/10.1177/01925121940 1500103.

Hornikx, J., Van Meurs, F., & De Boer, A. (2010). English or a local language in advertising? The appreciation of easy and difficult English slogans in the Netherlands. *The Journal of Business Communication, 47*(2), 169-188.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational researcher*, *33*(7), 14-26.

Khan, M. A. (2007). *Consumer behaviour and advertising management*. New Age International Limited.

Khumalo, V. (2023). List of radio stations in South Africa and their frequencies. *South African Lists*, 10 February, 2023. [Online] https://southafricalists.com/radio-stations-in-south-africa/.

Kim, C., Jeon, H. G., & Lee, K. C. (2020). Discovering the role of emotional and rational appeals and hidden heterogeneity of consumers in advertising copies for sustainable marketing. *Sustainability*, *12*(12), 2-20. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12125189. Date of access 19 December, 2023.

Lonwabo, K. (2023). *National Assembly accepts sign language as 12th official language in South Africa*. Southern Courier. https://southerncourier.co.za/267345/sign-language-to-beofficially-added-as-the-12th-official-language-in-south-africa/.

Manyozo, L. (2009). Mobilizing rural and community radio in Africa. *Ecquid novi, 30*(1), 1-23.

Martín-Santana, J. D., Reinares-Lara, E., & Muela-Molina, C. (2015). Music in radio advertising: Effects on radio spokesperson credibility and advertising effectiveness. *Psychology of Music*, *43*(6), 763-778.

Mufwene, S. (2002). Colonisation, globalisation, and the future of languages in the twenty-first century. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, *4*(2), 162-193.

Municipality of South AfricA. (2016). *"Mahikeng local municipality (NW383)"*. https://municipalities.co.za/overview/1203/mahikeng-local-municipality.

Myers, K. (1983). 'Understanding advertisers' In H. Davis & and P. Walton. (Eds.), *Language, Image, Media*, Basil Blackwell.

Nasir, V. A., Keserel, A. C., Surgit, O. E., & Nalbant, M. (2021). Segmenting consumers based on social media advertising perceptions: How does purchase intention differ across segments? *Telematics and informatics*, *64*, 101687.

Nkoala, S. (2023). Emergence of Indigenous Language Podcasts in South Africa: Amplifying the Agency of Indigenous Language Speakers in the Digital Public Sphere. In S. Nkoala & G. Motsaathebe (Eds.), *100 Years of Radio in South Africa, Volume 2: Community Radio, Digital Radio and the Future of Radio in South Africa* (pp. 143-159). Springer Nature Switzerland.

Noriega, J., & Blair, E. (2008). Advertising to bilinguals: Does the language of advertising influence the nature of thoughts? *Journal of Marketing*, *72*(5), 69-83.

Nwadike, E. (2004). The role of Igbo in enhancing national unity. In Oyewole (Ed.). *Nigerian Languages for National Development and Unity*. Longman Communication, 39-48.

Ogundeyi, O. J. (2023). *Influence of MTN Setswana language radio commercials on purchase decisions of subscribers in Mahikeng, South Africa* [MA Dissertation, North-West University, Mahikeng, South Africa].

O'Guinn, T. C., Allen, C. T., & Semenik, R. J. (2009). *Advertising and integrated brand promotion* (5th Ed.). Mason, South-Western Cengage Learning.

Okanlawon, B. O., & Oluga, S. O. (2008). An examination of language use in contemporary Nigerian advertisement copy messages. *Marang: Journal of Language and Literature*, *18*(1), 37-48.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Johnson, R. B. (2006). The validity issue in mixed research. *Research in the Schools*, *13*(1), 48-63.

Oyesomi, K. O., & Salawu, A. (2019). Assessing the Uniqueness of Indigenous Language in Advertising: Analysis of Figurative Language Used in Selected Telecommunication Yoruba Advertisement in Nigeria. *The Qualitative Report*, *24*(10), 2574-2591. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol24/iss10/12.

Phaahla, P. (2015). Economics of languages: The interplay between language planning and policy, and language practice in South Africa. *South African Journal of African Languages, 35(*2), 181– 188. https://doi.org/10.1080/02572117.2015.1113003.

Pratap, A. (2021). *Rational and emotional appeals in advertising.* https://www.notesmatic.com/rational-and-emotional-appeals-in-advertising.

Qiong, O. U. (2017). A brief introduction to perception. *Studies in Literature and Language*, *15*(4), I8-28.

Rajagopal, P. (2011). Impact of radio advertisements on buying behaviour of urban commuters. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, *39*(7), 480-503.

Salawu, A., & Amenaghawon, F. (2023). Code-Switching in Yoruba Newspapers as A Reflection of The Linguistic Half-Caste Mode in Nigerian Journalism. *e-BANGI: Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, *20*(1), 55-63.

Samovar, L. A., Porter, R. E., & Jain, N. C. (1981). *Understanding intercultural communication*. Wadsworth Pub. Co.

Steinberg, S. (2007). *An introduction to communication studies*. Juta.

Sunduza, T. B. (2011). The revitalisation of indigenous languages (Subject for Discussion). *Proceedings of the National Assembly.* https://www.pa.org.za/hansard/2011/august/18/proceedings-of-the-national-assembly-thursday18-2/the-revitalisation-of-indigenous-languages-subject.

Teer-Tomaselli, R., Keyan, G. T., & Currey, J. M. (1989). *Currents of Power; Broadcasting in South Africa. South Africa*. Anthropos, Bellville.

Udemmadu, T. (2011). Indigenous languages in advertisement: Problems and prospects. UJAH: *Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities, Special edition* 2011, 139-153.

UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation). (2017). *International mother language day: Towards sustainable futures through multilingual education.* http://www.unesco.org/new/en/international-mother-language-day/ 2024.

Wild, J. (1953). Berkeley's Theories of Perception: A Phenomenological Critique. *Revue Internationale de Philosophie, 7*(24), 134-151.