DECOLONISING THE MEDIA: THE USE OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

Lara Anne Grier

University of Cape Town

2014
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DECOLONISING THE MEDIA: THE USE OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICAN TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in Indigenous African Languages and Literatures.

Primary supervisor: Dr. Tessa Dowling
Co-supervisor: Dr. M. R. Smouse
COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature:_________________________ Date: 26 September 2014
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ABSTRACT

Advertisements in African languages are generally confined to radio, and in that medium are factual, dialogic and direct. When used in television advertising, however, South Africa’s indigenous languages play a less informative role, being employed rather to index a concretised African essence, African identity, urban style, or a particular reified post-apartheid togetherness and cultural mobility. In this dissertation I analyse six television advertisements, all using African languages or language varieties, broadcast over the years starting 2010 through to 2014. I reflect on how and why the African language is used and to what extent African languages are no longer seen by television advertisers as carriers of information but as exploitable symbols of trustworthiness, multiculturalism, belonging and innovation. Methodology includes interviews with agencies, sociolinguistic analyses of the varieties used, detail on brands and products represented by the language and a small pilot study with viewers to ascertain their responses to the six selected advertisements.

1 The term “African languages” can refer to African languages spoken outside of South Africa, while the term “vernacular languages” has negative connotations for some people. I have opted to use “indigenous African languages” to refer to the African languages that are indigenous to South Africa.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In one of the few studies on multilingualism in South African advertising, Ngwenya (2011: 2) notes the importance of “viewing the different South African languages as resources and using them to create a tapestry that celebrates difference in a highly creative way.” Ngwenya’s observation is critical when attempting an understanding of the notion of ‘difference’ which traditionally contradicts that of ‘unity’ but is nevertheless used in South Africa to celebrate our commonality and uniqueness: a togetherness expressed through a celebration of cultural, political, historical and, most importantly for this study, linguistic diversity. Thus how ‘difference’ is articulated in South African television advertising through the use of different languages is critical to this study and requires specific attention when treating the multifaceted interpretations of our ‘different’ languages and what they represent.

Difference and creativity: international advertising vs. South African advertising

In my literature survey I examine a number of studies that explore the various ways in which language difference is used in a ‘creative way’ by international companies in countries that are either bilingual or multilingual (Koslow et al., 1994; Martin, 2002; Lee, 2006). Very often these studies, while acknowledging the role played by the specific country’s indigenous language or languages, focus on how English is used to index certain ideologies, world views and beliefs that might appeal to non-English speaking consumers. What is critical to this study is that I focus not on why English is used, but why
and when it is not used and what we can learn from the inclusion of local languages in our commercial broadcast media.

Methodology

In my methodology chapter I explain how the data (advertisements) were collected and analysed, the approach I took and the systematic methods I employed in order to execute the analyses. As no previous studies have been conducted on the particular advertisements selected for this dissertation my research methodology may be considered fundamental since it attempts to posit some theories (Kothari, 2004) to explain and elucidate the issues involved when an advertiser chooses to employ indigenous African languages in South African television advertising.

In my analysis of the six (6) representative television advertisements that use South Africa’s African languages I ask the following questions:

- What language (of the 9 indigenous South African languages) is used?
- How is the language used? (i.e. is it in the context of code-switching or is it a standard variety?)
- How does the language relate to the embedded symbols and images?
- How does the variety (slang, urban code-switching, standard) represent, relate to or promote the brand?
- To what extent is the advertisement a commentary on South African socio-political realities that can only be communicated through an indigenous African language variety?
In addition to attempting to answer these questions, I use, and build on, an analytical tool developed Androutsopoulos (2014), which facilitates a systematic analysis of a multilingual television advertisement. This tool allows for easy navigation between the collected data and the source advertisement and its simultaneous analysis.

Although not the main focus of this study, audience responses to the selected advertisements were elicited via questionnaires and informal interviews with mother-tongue speakers. Their responses are presented at the end of the study. Wider sampling needs to be done in order to gain a deeper insight into the impact of a particular language or language variety on viewers. This sample, however, serves to inform the conclusion of this study and to suggest further directions for future research.

**The advertisements**

After my methodology chapter I systematically apply its tenets to analyse the 6 advertisements. In addition, I include background to the creative agencies that created each advertisement, the brand and product they promote as well any social or political phenomena that may have influenced or informed their production.

The advertisements treated in this study are:

1. MTN Ayoba! (Urban slang)
2. MTN Thula Thula (isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho)
3. Fish & Chip Company Nkandla (isiZulu)
4. Fish & Chip Company Xamina Xawena (Xitsonga)
5. King Pie Mnandi-licious (isiZulu)
6. Ariel Washing Powder (isiXhosa)
The reasons for the choice of these particular advertisements are that they are contemporary and, (apart from the one in Xitsonga), represent the major African language group spoken in South Africa (see Figure 1 below) – Nguni (including isiXhosa and isiZulu).

The fact that a Sesotho language does not feature exclusively in any one advertisement (i.e. it does not take up the majority of the dialogue) represented in this study should not be seen as discrimination on the part of the researcher but more as an indication of what African languages dominate our media.

The question of the under representation of advertisements predominantly featuring Sotho languages is one that needs to be researched further. To obtain the advertisements selected for this study I watched over 100 commercials during prime time on all television channels over a 4 year period. Whenever an advertisement including an African language appeared I made a note of it and attempted to locate it on YouTube (www.youtube.com). My sample of over 100 advertisements revealed that those featuring Sotho languages are not as prevalent (only 2%) as would be expected considering the demographics of South Africa (24.7% of South Africa’s population are first language speakers of a Sotho language including Sesotho, Sepedi and Setswana\(^2\)).

\(^2\) See Figure 1
Figure 1: Distribution of the population by first language spoken (indicated by percentage) (Census, 2011)

**African language advertising – still in its infancy**

While my analyses should allow us to understand the complex set of stimuli involved when choosing a specific code for broadcasting television advertisements in South Africa, it is imperative that we understand that this phenomenon (using African languages in television advertisements) is not at all common (Cawood and Du Toit, 2006; Dowling, 2013) and is susceptible to socio-political forces as well as economic considerations.

In my conclusion I attempt to do the following:

- highlight trends in using indigenous African languages;
- show how we can learn about variation and change in African languages from a linguistic point of view;
- illustrate positive social implications as a result of employing indigenous African languages in television advertising;
- indicate how these advertisements provide us with commentaries on South African socio-political realities that could not have been relayed in English.
I also propose that certain key tropes are emerging as driving the narratives of contemporary television advertising using indigenous African languages and that these themes can be harnessed to positive effect in enhancing national attitudes towards multilingualism.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines texts that:

- provide an overview of the political and social history of indigenous African languages on the continent;
- discuss the use of language planning and policy on the African continent, particularly in South Africa;
- consider the links between language and identity construction;
- reflect on the link between language and consumption;
- analyse the use of minority languages in media and marketing campaigns internationally;
- examine the role of language in the media in post-apartheid South Africa;
- present findings from studies of South African advertising campaigns.

The political and social history of indigenous African languages on the African continent

In order to understand an issue as complex as the use of African languages in contemporary television advertising campaigns, it is important to understand the historical events that have directly and indirectly shaped the language of our media generally. I therefore begin my literature review by looking at texts that critically discuss the history of indigenous African languages on the continent, specifically on a political and social level.

Wa Thiong’o (1994) describes language as having been at the core of challenging social powers in Africa in the 20th Century.
He explains that the colonizing powers not only carved out swathes of land for themselves, they also demarcated new European linguistic territories (Wa Thiong’o, 1994: 4). The cultural and social landscapes of African territories were reordered by the colonizers in order to fit western archetypes and power structures. Language was the vehicle through which these changes occurred and colonial languages were enforced: to a large degree to the detriment of the development of indigenous local languages.

The issue of colonial languages being necessary for domination has been analysed by a number of scholars (Spencer, 1974; Mateene et al., 1985; Phillipson, 1996; White, 1996) as is the view that the obligatory nature of these languages disallowed the *lingua franca* of Africa, which was in fact multilingualism (Desai, 1995: 20).

**Colonizing minds: Education and disempowerment**

Research into the effects of using colonial languages in education in Africa (Alexander, 1991; Chimhundu, 1992; Desai, 2001; Heugh, 2007; Hofmeyr, 1991; Peires, 1979; Wa Thiong’o, 1994) clearly demonstrates the manner in which these languages successfully colonized the minds of those that passed through colonial education systems. Historical studies show that mission stations were at the forefront of educating and converting individuals (and, in fact, whole communities) to their way of life. These were frequently the local people who lived in areas close to the mission stations.

Stations such as Lovedale produced a multitude of books and pamphlets in indigenous languages such as isiXhosa. The material promoted Western ideology and impressed the
superiority of Christianity on its readers. For instance the first printed work in isiXhosa, written by Rev. J. Bennie, contained the phrase ‘All cattle come from God’ (Peires, 1979: 155).

Missionaries sought to spread the evangelical principles of western nations, which they believed to be more sophisticated, a view cultivated by the colonizers who elevated themselves above their subjects and who promoted their way of life and philosophies. This was channelled to the newly acquired subjects on the African continent by means of language, ideally the colonizer’s own, in written and oral form (Adegbija, 1994; Alexander, 1991; Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998). The indigenous languages, that had the potential to create a sense of national pride and harmony, were, more often than not, side-lined by European languages (Adegbija, 1994: 3). Alexander (1991: 5) explains that current perceptions of language and identity in South Africa have been inherited and need to be called into question in order to redress past injustices from the colonial and apartheid periods.

Mission stations taught local people to read and write in the colonial language and imposed the ideals and dogma of the colonizer. Wa Thiong’o (1994) expounds how orature, a key feature in the education and socialization of many African children, was consequently depreciated. The new way of educating, implemented by colonial governments and their agents, diminished this method of knowledge transmission in school language and literature. Wa Thiong’o (1994: 4) states that in so doing, Africans were taken further away from themselves and their history. Other studies (Fanon, 1965; Walter, 1972) that deal with this undermining of indigenous African educational systems suggest that Europe is responsible for the underdevelopment of Africa and that the imposition of
the colonial language was just one cog in the wheel of subjugation.

While some academics (Phillipson, 1996; Alexander, 1991; Wa’Thiong’o, 1994; Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998) have argued that languages of western origin were promoted over indigenous African languages some academics (Chimhundu, 1992; Spencer, 1974; Hofmeyr, 1991) have noted that literature was produced in the indigenous languages, although it had to conform to the ideals and aims of the missionary societies (Peires, 1979: 155). One such missionary society was Lovedale, located in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. According to the Lovedale Press it originally “concentrated on publishing evangelical and educational material” (Rhodes University, n.d.). When early writers of African origin, such as S.E.K. Mqhyai and T.S. Soga wrote in their mother-tongue, mission presses either refused to publish their work, or stipulated changes that reflected views or narratives favourable to their intents and purposes (Peires, 1979). The idea was to mold any material published to fit the aims and standards of the societies and the nations in which they originated. Although literacy and education were promoted, it was clear that these were means by which African people were to be ruled and made to adhere to western values and ideals. They were definitely not the path to freedom, and neither did the colonial powers have in mind the promotion and preservation of the continent’s rich traditions, history and many languages. For example, the Literature Bureau of Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) would not publish an African novel which did not contain religious themes and it favoured manuscripts with social topics that were devoid of politics (Wa Thiong’o, 1994: 5).
Language was the most important vehicle through which that power fascinated and held the soul prisoner. The bullet was the means of physical subjugation. Language was the means of spiritual subjugation (Wa Thiong’o, 1994: 9).

Wa Thiong’o (1994) argues that western nations had not simply taken over African people’s lands; they had dominated their languages as well. This had been made possible by elevating the status of the colonial languages above that of African languages. He provides evidence of this, chronicling how African literature, which related the stories and history of African people, was produced for the most part in English instead of the languages in which the stories originated. In South Africa this happened with folktales that were often considered to be too bawdy, bizarre or lacking in western philosophies. The stories were stripped of their fantastical characters, polygamous unions and other elements disagreeable to the missionary palate and replaced with dumbed down to simpler versions featuring animals\(^3\) (Stein, 2001).

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\(^3\) See figure 2.
Wa Thiong’o (1994) suggests that African languages only made an appearance when they were borrowed to ‘enrich’ the text. For instance a character might bear a name or utter a cry in an African dialect. This served to lend an air of authenticity to the text and helped to situate it. This kind of tokenism - using isolated words or phrases to lend an African feel to a text - has continued to this day and, I will argue, is central to media attempts at appearing multicultural and ethnically sensitive.

Single words and phrases in indigenous languages cannot promote multilingualism in any concrete way, and colonial history shows that school systems throughout Africa rather endorsed the value and status of English over that of African languages. In many instances it was essential to achieve a good grade in English to secure a place in a reputable institution of higher education or even a job. Wa Thiong’o (1994: 9) recounts how as a child a classmate had excelled in all subjects but English; the boy was unable to progress to a reputable institution simply because he was not proficient in the one subject valued above all others: English. African languages, by way of contrast, were relegated to the realm of those who were impoverished, backward and rural. To attend a good school, or secure employment or a social position, colonizers emphasized the importance of speaking their language.

Acclaimed author Chimamanda Adichie (Adichie, 2011) tells of her childhood in Eastern Nigeria, testifying that she initially believed all characters in books had blonde hair, played in the snow and drank ginger beer. This was because all literature presented to her at an early age was of British or American origin. It took many years before she was able to understand that Africans had the power to feature in the stories they created, so strong was the western influence in the Nigerian education
system. Characters such as Ifemelu, in her acclaimed novel, *Americanah* (Adichie, 2013), question their identity and its construction. Wa’ Thiong’o (1994) and Adichie (2011; 2013) concur that cultural ideals and paradigms of the west were transmitted, and to a degree continue to be spread, via language and education in Africa.

It is critical to view current trends in contemporary television advertising against this backdrop of African colonial education since the core values and standards associated with particular languages have their origins in foreign powers undermining or changing the essential character of indigenous modes of expression to suit western paradigms of education and intellectualism.

The tone set by missionaries and the education systems of the colonial period established indigenous African languages as having less prestige and presented them with a heritage of discrimination, not only in the minds of the colonizing powers but in those of their speakers too. Wa Thiong’o (1994) famously termed this phenomenon ‘colonizing the mind’, writing that despite the demise of colonialism its ideology lived on in the minds of those it had subjugated. The descendants of the first people to be colonialized continue to transmit and perpetuate their inferiority complexes by undermining their own languages. Wa Thiongo’s assertion is critical to understanding why contemporary representations of African languages by the media are fraught with contradictions and complexities and are still in their infancy with regard to reclaiming meaningful positions for indigenous modes of expression.
Language planning and policy on the African continent (particularly in South Africa)

In this section I will discuss the process of language planning and policy, with specific examples from South Africa. In the context of language and media it is important to understand a country’s approach to language planning and policy, past and present. It may indicate which languages are spoken within certain contexts and may in some cases come with a specific obligation to broadcast or include a certain variety in the transmission. As I have already mentioned, the very notion of what language is spoken in what territory was one which was imposed on African states by their colonial powers who struggled with the concept of multilingualism, and rather imposed Western notions of monolingualism, and rather imposed Western notions of monolingualism as the norm (Chimhundu, 1992), thereby ignoring or demoting certain dialects and varieties in favour of others that were codified and standardized by missionaries and linguists.

Once particular languages have been selected as standard the next step is to devise a language policy. The language policy of a country is essential because it plays a central role in enabling citizens of a country to participate in the political, educational social and economic life of that country (Desai, 2001: 323). Language policies usually fall into one of two categories. Moto (2009: 1) elucidates that countries have two different types of language polices, explicit policies and implicit policies.

An explicit policy is a policy that explicitly states the right of one or many groups to the use of their language in various domains. An implicit policy is the opposite: usually little or no mention is made of language use and no provisions are made for language rights. After apartheid in South Africa, during which
time many groups had been discriminated against on the basis of race and language, the new South African constitution put a strong emphasis on an explicit language policy. South Africa declared 11 of its languages as official (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 4). Nine of South Africa’s 11 official languages are indigenous African languages.

The type of policy a country has indicates the degree of language planning in the country. Explicit policies involve language planning. The term language planning ‘refers to all conscious efforts that aim at changing the linguistic behaviour of a speech community’ (Mesthrie et al., 2009: 371). Moto (2009) explains that on a national level this is a long term government authorized policy that attempts to alter a language’s function with the goal of resolving communication problems. According to Mesthrie et al. (2009), language policy is sometimes used interchangeably with the term ‘language planning’. However language policy refers less specifically to the language planning process than it does to political, economic and social goals. In post-apartheid South Africa language planning directly looks at redressing inequalities and injustices relating to language during the apartheid era. However, while on a surface level language planning may be about simple communication, on a deeper level it also addresses issues relating to access to, and maintenance of, basic rights. The right to information and the ability to access it are closely related to language. This is clear in fields such as education and the justice and health care systems where mother-tongue speakers of one language may be excluded, or unable to access and fully comprehend the resources at hand.

Language policy, and in turn language planning (if the policy is explicit) relate to broadcasting and the media (Mesthrie et al.,
2009: 372). For instance they may specify which language varieties broadcasters must use or dictate which channels disseminate the majority of their programs in a certain language (Hadland et al., 2006: 87).

In South Africa the South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) has three channels dedicated to specific language groups in accordance with the nation’s explicit language policy. SABC 1 is for viewers who have an Nguni language as a mother tongue, SABC 2 for those who speak a language that falls into the Sotho group as well as Afrikaans, while SABC 3 is for English speakers (Martin, 2013: 269). Martin (2013) fails to mention that in fact SABC 2 also caters for Tshivenda and Xitsonga. In addition to these linguistically demarcated television stations, radio stations cater more specifically to varieties. For instance the isiZulu radio station, *Ukhozi* FM, has been operating for as long as 54 years. The station:

broadcasts mainly in isiZulu and targets isiZulu speaking and understanding audiences in South Africa... The station caters to people from young to elderly, specifically the youth reinforcing a sense of pride and culture to the young people of South Africa (SABC, 2014).

In order to understand what processes are behind the language decisions taken by the SABC it is necessary to understand the difference between status planning and corpus planning. Kloss (1967 in Mesthrie et al, 2009: 372) suggests that these two concepts are core elements of language policy while Cobarrubias (1983 in Mesthrie et al, 2009: 374) notes that ‘Although language planners separate corpus and status
Corpus planning ‘is concerned with the internal structure of the language’ (Mesthrie et al., 2009: 372). Corpus planning in indigenous African languages in South Africa has strong links to missionary involvement. Missionaries helped to devise writing systems for oral languages. Institutions such as the Lovedale Press built on the work of their colleagues; the press initiated reforms in the orthography of indigenous languages, published grammar books and coined new terms (Peires, 1979; White, 1992). This ensured that it was not, in fact, mother-tongue speakers who dictated how their language worked but, on the contrary, people in authority, either in the colonial government or the church, who were concerned with colonial ideals and the maintenance of western power structures. In contrast to this, and in a conscious effort to redress it, Desai (2001) describes how, in post-apartheid South Africa, a Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) has been created to monitor language policy and develop African languages. While some researchers have commended PanSALB as a structure that enables the empowerment of previously marginalized ethno-linguistic communities (Sachs, 1994; Desai, 2001) others (Perry, 2004; Beukes, 2009) have debated whether it has had any impact on the implementation of language rights and argue that the body has “failed to publicize itself adequately to marginalized populations” (Perry, 2004: 516-517).

I would also suggest that due to budgetary constraints and internal issues of capacity, PanSALB has failed to make a significant impact on the way African languages are perceived by media planners and advertising strategists. This relates to status planning which has less to do with the internal working of planning conceptually, it is necessary to understand that the two dimensions interact closely with each other’.
the language and more to do with how the language is perceived and utilized. Deumert (in Mesthrie et al., 2009: 372) states that status planning ‘refers to all efforts undertaken to change the use and function of a language (or language variety) within a given society’. During apartheid in South Africa, languages such as English and Afrikaans were favoured. Posel (2010) explains that during this period there was a great deal of legislation that created boundaries in all spheres of life. An emphasis was placed on adopting markers of western ‘civilization’ to display social obedience. In the post-apartheid state there has been a clear shift away from correlating civilization with non-African languages as is evidenced by the declaration of eleven official languages (Desai, 2001). South Africa’s explicit language policy includes a clause in the constitution, which states that at least two languages must be used in government (Desai, 2001: 326). Desai (2001: 328) also argues that ‘the constitution provides a clear framework for building a more multilingual public consciousness and practice’. This in turn relates to the media in that advertisements and programming often feed off, mimic or make an effort to relate in some way to viewers day to day experiences (Mesthrie et al, 2009: 370). In order to create and disseminate material viewers will watch, it is important to relate the material to the everyday linguistic landscape of the South African public. The fact is, however, that English and Afrikaans still enjoy a higher status than African languages with a top down approach that still dominates in language usage in South Africa (Kamwangamalu, 2000; Webb & Rodgers, 2009) particularly in commercial interactions, and it is for this reason that they are less visible in the way products are publicized via specifically targeted television campaigns. Another important factor to take into account is that the television advertising is not regulated in any way with regard to language:
The commitment to multilingualism in the South African Constitution is not reflected in any formal regulation of language use in the advertising industry. Rather than external regulation by government, control in the industry is achieved by a long tradition of self-regulation. (Cawood and Du Toit, 2006: 1).

In order to see how language planning can impact advertising decisions with regard to what linguistic code to employ for particular consumer products we need to understand the different stages that make up the process of language planning. Haugen (1966, 1987 in Mesthrie et al., 2009: 375) proposes that the process of language planning is made up of four different stages, which may develop in the following sequence (but do not necessarily have to): selection, codification, implementation and elaboration.

Deumert (in Mesthrie et al., 2009: 375) states that language planning usually begins with selection. A linguistic variety is selected to fulfil a certain function in society, ‘often this means that the most prestigious dialect… is chosen’. This is the beginning of standardizing a language. In South Africa (like in many other African countries as argued previously – see Chimhundu, 1992) the standard variety was often the dialect spoken closest to a missionary station, not necessary the variety spoken by the majority. The variety then gained prestige by obtaining a written form as well as the oral. In addition to the selection of a dialect, the selection of a language in society is often directly related to its status or perceived status. English is perceived to be the language of business, power and education in South Africa and so it is selected for use in these domains, which then translates into a similar favouring of this code in
television advertising. This is understandable, because, as Heugh argues:

> Quite simply, those who are literate and have the highest levels of education tend to be most proficient in Afrikaans and/or English. Those who have the least experience of, and success in formal education, and access to economic power or social services, continue to be speakers of African languages. (Heugh, 2007: 188).

An example of the dominance of English in the business sector and the failure of PanSALB to implement real change, is the following personal anecdote: upon calling the South African Revenue Service (SARS) the caller is informed that agents are only able to assist in English. This is in spite of the fact that many employees of SARS, while competent in English, are not necessarily mother-tongue speakers and that English is not the mother tongue of the majority of the population. This is an example of a selection of a variety linked to prestige. English is considered to have the appropriate terminology and social status and so it serves as the only option. The fact is that viable alternative scenarios could have been envisaged for SARS but it would appear that the political will, the linguistic know-how and the capacity to implement such scenarios was lacking.

Sometimes companies and organizations blame the lack of codification in African languages for their continuing default to English. Codification, which is the act of creating a linguistic norm for a selected linguistic code involves three parts; a writing system (graphisation), developing the rules of grammar (grammatication) and identifying the vocabulary (lexicalisation) (Mesthrie et al., 2009). It stands to reason that codification, like language policy is not static but should constantly be revised.
and reformed. The issue with African language codification is that appears to be arrested in the missionary era with little new work being done on reform and revision (Webb, 2004; Mtintsilana & Morris, 1988).

Publicists and marketers are reluctant to use African languages for two reasons apart from the ever present anxiety about mistranslation: they do not want to use outdated codes, but neither do they want to be criticised for employing varieties that have not yet been codified and thus face the wrath of language purists and language boards (Khalatbari, 2014). Others in the industry are less forward thinking, arguing that consumers speak predominantly English and ‘western’ products ought to be marketed in English (Turner, 2014).

In order to make African languages more attractive to marketers, elaboration is needed. Elaboration refers to how language does not remain static but is constantly in a state of flux and development. It ‘involves the terminological and stylistic development of codified language to meet the continuing demands of modern life and technology’ (Deumert, in Mesthrie et al., 2009: 379). It could be argued that the demands of ‘modern life and technology’ are responsible for the decline in African language advertising in African language print media, but as Dowling concludes:
Contemporary advertising is too fluid to predict with any certainty whether, in the long term, advertising will be characterised by robust usage, token usage or total abandonment of indigenous languages. For the foreseeable future, however, we have no reason to expect major changes to the current trend of using the vernacular for promotions and competitions, and English for most other forms of advertising (Dowling, 2013: 184).

This decline in the use of African languages in advertising might be arrested if elaboration is employed in domains such as health care, where some terms for new procedures or medication may not exist in a variety and must be borrowed or created. Often in isiXhosa the prefix i- and the orthography of a word is altered when a lexical item is borrowed from another language in order to fill a lexical gap. This is called transliteration: an example in isiXhosa being ioksijini for “oxygen”. However in other cases this may not be appropriate and a word must be created. A good isiXhosa example of this is the word for placebo: usingayezya – the morphemes of which can be broken down as: u-singa (Class 1a) which is “used as the first component of a compound noun and equivalent to semi-, quasi- or pseudo-; similar to or like something else but usually not of the same standard, inferior to it” (in The Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa, 1989, Vol.3: 202) and (i)yeza which is “medicine”.

Transliteration and new coinages often appear in the South African media when a broadcaster or advertiser is trying to attract or communicate with a specific target group, but more often than not advertisers opt for slang varieties rather than
coining new words that might not be immediately recognizable by the target audience. There are sometimes occasions when a lexical item from an African language is legitimately used in a particular context, but is re-interpreted as slang. A good example is the Redd’s cider advertisement in which the Nguni word: Phola (become cool) is used to translate the English slang term “chill out”\(^4\). This term was current in the slang variety used by their target demographic, the South African working class, according to brand manager Pride Maunathla (Lowe, n.d). By Redd’s associating their product with current cool language the brand was placing the product in that category too.

The English origin of a word may have a link to business and modernity, however the isiXhosa makes the word ‘local and lekker’ it situates it within the South African context and gives it local currency. A good example of this manipulation of language is the way in which the word amazing has been Xhosa-fied by South African entrepreneurs and rendered as ama-zing, playing on local knowledge of the Class 6 noun prefix ama- in Nguni languages. In fact the ama- prefix has wide appeal for South African businesses\(^5\):

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\(^4\) See figure 3.
\(^5\) See figures 4, 5 and 6.
Dowling (2011) notes that speakers themselves integrate new terms into standard language: in her study of 100 isiXhosa speakers in Cape Town townships 79% of respondents used *i-stres* when describing a picture that clearly depicted a stressed, anxious person. Dowling posits a reason for this lexical choice:

As *-khathazekile* is correctly translated into English as ‘worried, it does not include the concomitant frenzy that comes with urban living and therefore speakers opt for the short, unambiguous ‘stress’ (Dowling, 2011: 360).
Languages that are used in the media, in forms such as television or print advertisements give these integrated terms further weight as acceptable to local speech communities and can therefore have an effect on corpus planning, which relates to the internal structure of the language.

Moto (2009) likens dealing with linguistic multiplicity to the tower of Babel. The media in South Africa are very conscious of this, especially advertising companies who seek to reach and to relate to many consumers across linguistic boundaries. This is important to my study, as it is seminal to understanding motivations behind the selection of certain varieties for specific products and campaigns.

Desai (2001) argues for a multi-faceted approach, which incorporates both status planning, to alter the perception of language use, as well as corpus planning, which would make use of techniques such as elaboration to ensure relevant material. Language planning which promoted African languages (status planning) and one that provided more educational materials and provided a current vocabulary and grammatical structure would certainly enable citizens to participate in politics, economics and the social sphere more effectively (Desai, 2001). If the media and advertisers were included in, and influenced by these objectives it is possible that this would create a shift in the perception of the status of indigenous African languages in South Africa.

**Language and the ability to consume**

In this section of my literature review, I consider the works of social theorists, Posel (2010) and Appadurai (1988), who suggest that consumption does not happen simply to fulfil our
basic needs but also fulfills a social function, their argument is echoed by Deumert (in Mesthrie et al. 2009), who suggest that language is integral in the construction of identity.

Posel (2010) argues that conspicuous consumption is a way of articulating freedom in post-apartheid South Africa. I would go further and add that the use of English is closely linked to consumption and that it demonstrates a means through which South Africans articulate social order. Just as the display of luxury items is used to indicate social status, similarly English usage in South Africa is employed as an indicator of access to education and financial means.

During the apartheid era indigenous African languages were associated with poverty and lack of access and, as a result of this association, they did not enjoy the same status as English. Although language equality is now entrenched in the constitution, linguists such as Mesthrie (2008) contend that the link between poverty and having an African language as a first language continues to be the case in South Africa today.

Consumption and the history of exclusion

Posel (2010) and Appadurai (1988) demonstrate the connections between consumption and social life. This is important for my study as social life is intricately connected to language and linguistic choice. Appadurai (1988) argues that things have a ‘social life’ and that the way in which items are consumed and acquired is an indicator of social, economic and political structures within a society. The way in which items are consumed is directly mediated through language, and this is critical to an understanding of how people view their own
language and the languages of others in relation to the objects they desire to have.

Posel discusses the historical power and social structures that existed in South Africa, during the apartheid regime. Explaining that race was something closely linked to lifestyle, she argues that it became:

inseparable from the symbolic logics of material acquisition and deprivation, closely linked to opportunities for education and social advancement (Posel, 2010: 165).

Being black was equated with exclusion from the opportunity to acquire. The inability to consume quality translated into spheres such as education and trade. The Bantu education policy hindered upward mobility as did trade restrictions, which forced African businesses to relocate to the homelands and dictated which goods could and could not be sold. Restrictions were not simply limited to the homelands but also applied to cities: townships were deliberately kept spare to discourage migration from the homelands. Access to shops within cities was often limited to race (Posel, 2010: 165). There was also restricted access to bookshops on the basis of race during apartheid and consequently the possession of a book indicated status as it was a commodity that was not readily available.

Townships did not have bookstores and there was only access to pamphlets and magazines such as Drum magazine (Hofmeyr, 2006); which would have meant a greater perceived link between text and advertisements. In the 1960s and 1970s Drum magazine published articles about Hollywood stars and tycoons from the United States. Although it was aimed at a uniquely African audience the advertisements and text were entirely in
English. Drum, was a magazine geared towards black consumers, the magazine’s covers and content illustrated readers’ aspirations at the time (Laden, 2001).

Consumption was linked with status. The ability to consume in apartheid South Africa was a way of articulating freedom and social class as the system favoured certain classes and races over others, promoting them as superior politically and economically. Comaroff and Comaroff (1997: 235 in Posel, 2010: 163) suggest that conspicuous consumption during the apartheid regime was a way of ‘speaking back to whites’. The meanings attributed to product, variety and consumer are closely intertwined while language used had the power to imbue a product with the stereotype associated with the ethno-cultural group who speak the language (Piller, 2003: 170). Black South Africans, by purchasing high-end products, not only indicate their ability to consume but also their freedom, associating themselves with

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6 See figure 7.
what is perceived to be a powerful, prestigious language group (English speakers) locally and internationally.

Their relationship with conspicuous consumption illustrates Appadurai’s (1988) argument that objects, and the way in which they are consumed, may provide insight into a society’s social structure. Appadurai (1988) explains that objects themselves may have the power to dictate interactions, referring to this as ‘the social life of things’. In apartheid South Africa objects acted as indicators of class, they facilitated access to employment, education and human rights. The strong links established between ethnicity, language variety, material wealth and human rights during apartheid continue to impact South Africans.

Posel (2010: 166) discusses how clothing was associated with race during apartheid. As black people were not afforded the same opportunities as whites they did not have the means or ability to access luxury clothing, thus an association was created: being white and maintaining a certain life-style went hand in hand. Being black was associated with ‘lesser standards’ a less luxurious form of dress and fewer household amenities. This lack of access to luxury clothing was a way of restricting social interactions and identifying race.

Posel (2010: 165) recounts that during apartheid genetic study was far too costly and time consuming, thus part of racial classification during apartheid was an assessment of lifestyle. Goods had the ability to increase opportunity and influence perception and classification. Conspicuous consumption was, as Posel (2010: 159) explicates, a tangible expression of freedom.
Clothing can be worn to display status, group membership or class. Posel (2010: 159) argues that in post-apartheid South Africa, one of the reasons for conspicuous consumption of items such as clothing might be in order to articulate freedom. *Izikhothane*, youth who purchase expensive items and destroy them publicly at social gatherings are a prime example of this phenomenon (Jones, 2013). What is critical to this kind of consumption, and this kind of anarchic behavior, is that it is mediated through a language other than English.

Although the prestige of English remains present and visible in post-apartheid South Africa, the terms ‘coconut’ and ‘black diamond’ have entered the public discourse. The former used to describe a black person who aspires to be white: an important part of this identity is often a ‘model c school’ English accent. The latter refers to a segment of the South African population, with massive buying power and that is primarily money orientated and of black ethnicity (Nemvhandu, 2008). Consumption and the language of prestige (English) still appear to go hand in hand and, in fact, seem to be on the increase in South Africa with ‘black diamonds’ on the rise (Nemvhandu, 2008: 2).

**Language, consumption and social identity**

In this section of my literature review I will look at authors who specifically engage with the notion of language and its role in the construction of identity.

Buscholtz (2011) discusses how teenagers use language to construct their identities explaining that like clothing, language
has the ability to reflect social order. Linguistic resources such as social labels and slang form part of how youth construct order and comprehend their worlds. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995: 33) note that in South Africa ‘we were taught that our language related to a particular ethnic group’ and argue that the use of specific lexical items allows a speaker to associate or be associated with a specific ethnic group. Discourses are enregistered (Agha, 2003) and varieties are often attributed with personalities, ethnicities and groups.

The demographic profile of members of a speech chain network is an important variable shaping the sociological effects of this process. We have already seen that contemporary public sphere discourses of accent link individuals to each other on a mass scale. In the case of electronically mediated discourses the persons recruited to roles of sender and receiver are not single individuals but groups of individuals who often share a demographic profile (Agha, 2003: 249).

This linking of a language to an ethnic group further translates into linking language with the ability to consume – black people were excluded from the dominant language of commercial discourse, and as a result were also excluded from conspicuous consumption as articulated in the media.

This exclusion of indigenous African languages from public discourses of consumption could be seen as a form of linguistic apartheid – speaking an African language a priori excluded one from being able to engage in talk about purchasing high prestige goods. Thus as black people were associated with certain languages and homelands during apartheid, I argue that
indigenous African languages became associated with lack of opportunity and buying power. Indigenous languages were subordinated to homeland areas (Bantustans) in which there were restrictions on education, earning and the ability to purchase quality goods. English and Afrikaans however, were the languages of the privileged, those who had access, freedom and opportunity.

As Posel (2010: 159) argues that conspicuous consumption was a way of articulating freedom, I propose that the use of English demonstrates a means through which South Africans articulate social order. Just as the display of luxury items would indicate social status, English usage would indicate access to education and financial means. Indigenous languages, which were associated with the opposite, would not enjoy this level of status. As a result in post-apartheid South Africa we see the emergence and growth of ‘coconuts’ and ‘black diamonds’. As Nemvhandu (2008) explains it is important to display wealth to articulate status. This is achieved by the display of luxury goods, however it goes a step further when it is not only the symbolism of wealth spent on the items but also the symbolism of the items themselves. Nemvhandu (2008) explains that certain cars brands such as Land Rover and Mercedes have deeper symbolism than uniquely demonstrating that the owner of such a vehicle is likely to belong in a high-income bracket. They indicate or symbolize characteristics such as reliability in the case of Mercedes and longevity and exclusivity with regards to Land Rover. Language operates in a similar way, acting to ‘register’ or locate the speaker within a specific demographic profile, which has pre-conceived markers. In some cases these may be personality traits, in others ethnicity or geographical origin or all three.
Weber (in Mesthrie et al., 2009: 312) proposes that the basis of power lies in access to resources and that, language imposition and spread can tell us something about which population groups have the most power. Ideology is a system of ‘ideas, beliefs, speech and cultural practices that operate to the advantage of a particular social group’ (Weber in Mesthrie et al., 2009: 313). During the apartheid regime, the ideology favoured the white minority. Kaschula and Anthonissen (1995: 39) suggest that due to a lack of critical language awareness, ‘language is not analysed in its social context’ leading to linguistic prejudice, where only some languages are valorised and certain varieties are perceived to be of higher status than others. This may occur through processes such as standardization where one variety or dialect is promoted over another, and people identify the “standard” with a particular class and educational background. This often occurs when a perceived higher (and often smaller) status or power group promotes their language as the standard to which all other varieties must measure up. In South Africa this occurs on a regular basis with many indigenous African languages such as isiXhosa. There is a discrepancy between the variety the majority of mother-tongue speakers of isiXhosa actually speak and what is taught in the classroom.

In South Africa, many adults do not live and work in a highly literate environment and are not exposed to a great deal of meaningful print in their mother tongue. In fact, they may see more print in English (e.g., at work, on signs, on television, in shops) than in their mother tongue (Nurss, 1998: 113).

While academics and purists may exalt one variety over another and argue that a particular dialect is not isiXhosa or isiZulu for example, the language is not being assessed in context and is
being reviewed in isolation away from the day to day lives of its speakers who shape and craft it based on their social and cultural experiences. It is important to keep abreast of this phenomenon, especially in domains such as broadcasting and advertising where communication with audience is vital.

To maintain a rapport with a target group it is essential to make sure you are communicating with them effectively and using varieties of languages with which they can identify. Using current varieties not only ensures consumer comprehension but also demonstrates that the brand is *au courante*. Viewing language in context, and producing programming in varieties which viewers can recognize and with which they can feel a connection, is imperative. The SABC does this in their many soap operas such as *Generations* and *Isidingo*. According to Slabbert et al. (2007: 332) this demonstrates the ability of the broadcaster to promote multilingualism and diversity. These programs have also achieved commercial success for the broadcaster because audiences are able to relate to the characters or identify and situate them based on the language variety their characters use (Slabbert et al., 2007). While nuances such as accent or use of specific lexical items in an American soap opera may go right over a South African viewer’s head, the same is not true of a South African soap opera where, should a character launch into *tsotsitaal*, the viewer would associate the speaker with some of the features attributed to the dialect, for example, being young, hip and cool. Within the right context multilingual soap operas have the ability to give new status to marginalized languages (Slabbert et al., 2007: 332).

Deumert (2014: 1) states that enregistrement is ‘the route by which particular ways of using language become familiar,
conventionalized and embedded in sociolinguistic repertoires’. By exposing viewers to marginalized languages such as Tshivenda in an attractive and appealing format (via a compelling storyline) the language is made familiar. Linguistic devices such as code-switching and the aid of subtitles make the language more familiar and easier to access, enregistering the variety as interesting and with contemporary appeal, as opposed to retrograde and backward. Barnard suggests that the multilingual nature of South African soap operas:

mirrors official policy in South Africa in eschewing identitarian essentialisms by favouring multilingual hybridity and democratic commitment over linguistic purity and ethnic exclusivity (Barnard, 2006: 40).

Critical linguistics maintains that ‘discourse is a social product and social practice’ (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995: 62). Advertisements are an example of a discourse that mimics social practice. Discourse analyses of advertisements reveal the ‘consumption practices and aspirations promoted by advertisements as the process of forming group and individual identities’ (Mesthrie et al., 2009: 320). Advertisements make use of varieties and their socially recognizable speaker-types and contexts of use, subsequently deployed to construct social and cultural identities in discourse (Agha, 2003) to market their products. For instance, Johnstone (2011) recounts how a t-shirt with various expressions unique to Pittsburgh was used to enregister the dialect Pittsburghese and market it to tourists and locals as a symbol of Pittsburgh and the people who live there. In much the same way the expressions ‘shap’, ‘bru’ and ‘howzit?’ have come to enregister a South African variety that symbolizes a particular African urban youth style.
The mobile coffee company Hey Brew⁷ is a play on the greeting ‘Hey Bru’ which is an expression commonly associated with trendy young South African English speakers. This demonstrates the ability of advertising and marketing companies to keep up-to-date with the linguistic repertoires of the youth and to make use of them to their advantage. They harness and legitimize youth varieties by employing them to represent and place their products and, by so doing, gain ownership of this style that is absorbed into the linguistic landscape via advertising.

Not all theorists agree that multilingualism is a positive phenomenon in advertising. Oosthuizen (2004: 63) discusses how language can be used to divide and conquer, explaining that bottom-up advertising, creating advertisements for specific groups, can be costly and lead to divisions. Echoing current advertising trends in South Africa, he suggests a top-down approach, employing a lingua franca such as English. Oosthuizen (2004: 62) argues that it is essential to communicate a reason for consumers to purchase a product. Oosthuizen’s

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⁷ See figure 8.
approach is clearly one that is accepted by many advertisers, but one that should be examined critically since the top-down approach can be exclusive and discriminatory. Also, more and more campaigns in South Africa are realizing the untapped potential of indigenous African languages with the use of African varieties in campaigns on the rise including the cell phone company MTN’s Mahala, Ayoba and Qhubeka campaigns, Nedbank’s – KE YONA and the insurance company Hollard’s Siyaduduza advertisements. Companies such as Nando’s have even gone so far as promoting indigenous language usage with print advertisements: one (in isiZulu but easily understandable by speakers of other Nguni languages) reads Hlonipha ulimi lwakho which translates to: Respect your (mother) tongue.”

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8 See figures 9, 10, 11 and 12.
9 See figure 13.
Language association
Even though the South African constitution has afforded African languages equal status “English is regarded a prestige language in South Africa” (Kaschula & Anthonissen, 1995: 38). In advertising, creating an association between a language and a product would influence how a product was perceived. Just as teenagers in the Bucholtz (2011) study use language to indicate
social standing, language use in advertisements does the same: creating a link between product, personality and consumer. The language employed to market a product takes into account many things, primarily communication. However, another aim is to reinforce the brand identity and give the consumer a reason to relate or aspire to the product.

A study on how African language advertising is perceived by consumers (Leech, 2009) revealed that respondents associated African languages with ‘low end products’ such as cheaper washing powder, fast food and alcohol. Even though the mother tongue of respondents was an indigenous African language, it was discovered that groups were indifferent to whether or not African languages were used in advertisements.

Similar reactions were noted in an earlier study (Koslow et al., 1994) that explored the use of Spanish, a minority language in the United States, in advertisements there. Although respondents often expressed an emotional connection to the advertisement because their mother tongue made it more relatable, some still preferred English. The authors suggest that the singular use of Spanish in US television advertisements creates associations with the Hispanic community. This link, however, is sometimes undesirable since some consumers do not wish to be associated with the ethnic stereotype that is associated with the language use (Koslow et al., 1994: 575).

Studies in Japan, on the other hand, indicated that while Japanese consumers did not understand the use of English words in Japanese advertising, it was primarily meant to appeal to the public’s positive feelings toward internationalization, and not for practical communication (Lee, 2006: 61). In this way English switches places, appearing as a minority language but
still symbolizing that which is modern and international. In this way a linguistic stereotype is perpetuated and utilized to communicate and market, even if it is not understood:

   English is used symbolically because there is no expectation that Japanese viewers understand English they see or hear (Lee, 2006: 61).

Another study of English in French advertisements (Martin, 2002: 375) indicated that English was perceived to be a marker of modernity, advancement and technology. The associations between English and status do not seem to be unique to South Africa, although given South Africa’s history of socio-cultural oppression this makes the association even more marked.

Piller (2001:153) suggests that the shifting global landscape has created hybrid identities, with economics as opposed to politics leading the shift. This new international economic landscape has facilitated the creation of these hybrid identities prompting a shift “from monolingual practices to multilingual and English-dominant ones.”

Piller (2001) explains that in the construction of these identities there are manifold facets: international, future, success, sophistication and fun. These categories were identified in a study on the use of English in German advertisements. In a second study, Piller (2003) compares Korean-only commercials with those with a mix of Korean and English to corroborate the theoretical claim that English mixing realizes a certain goal that is not pursued in Korean-only commercials. This goal is the creation of a modern, international hybrid identity, which transcends political boundaries, and operates successfully on an international level, much like a multi-national corporation. This hybrid identity is fabricated using a linguistic construct: the use
of specific lexical items in the advertisements serve as markers to help the viewer make identifications or associations (Piller 2001; 2003). Multiple studies (Piller, 2001; Lee, 2006; Martin, 2002; Koslow et al., 2004) indicate that English operates internationally as a symbol of all that is global, dynamic and forward thinking.

The growth of English in many sectors of the media internationally (even in societies where English is not understood) demonstrates that the language has certain attributes and associations that consumers aspire to. While this is also true in South Africa, marketers and advertisers appear to be responding in fresh, new ways by creating associations linked to indigenous African languages. This is evident in many contemporary campaigns, brandings and advertisements. The next section scrutinizes literature that deals with the use of indigenous African languages in the South African media.

**The use of indigenous African languages in the South African media**

In this last section of my literature review I will consider work done by South African academics that looks specifically and exclusively at the use of indigenous African languages in South Africa’s media. This is a relatively new field and thus there is a dearth of research on this particular topic. It is important, however, to note contributions to the field and to build on and contrast them with similar international studies such as those conducted by Piller (2001; 2003), Lee (2006) and Martin (2002).
Dowling’s (2013) analysis of advertisements in isiXhosa newspapers and magazines before and after the apartheid era reveals clear social prejudice. isiXhosa advertisements produced during the apartheid era frequently depict black people in menial social positions such as being drivers for white men. In Figure 14 the final caption (translated here from the isiXhosa) that accompanies a picture showing a black man opening a car door for a white man reads, “Now Theboho has a good job and gets a lot of money. He drives a very beautiful car for a big businessman. Why don’t you try a tin of Bournville?”

Indigenous African languages were used to promote cheap or second hand products (Dowling, 2013) fostering the stereotype that black people and African languages were associated with limited opportunities and restricted access to quality goods.

Dowling (2013) suggests that linguistic prejudice has continued in the post-apartheid era with fewer and fewer companies opting to advertise their products in isiXhosa. She explains that English, which is perceived to be global and of a higher status, dominates advertising discourse, even in indigenous African language magazines such as BONA. Dowling (2013) notes that there is also an association between product value and status, and language status. On the other hand, Ngwenya (2011), does not explicitly examine the link between product status and
language use, but rather argues that multilingualism is becoming more prominent in the South African media because:

Brands are more than just products; they are statements of affiliation and belonging (Ngwenya, 2011: 2).

This echoes the argument made by Nemvhandu (2008) who suggests that products are purchased to illustrate wealth and desired personality traits as opposed to serving a purely functional role.

In an informal study in a 3rd year class at the University of Cape Town students were asked to look at the language used in advertisements in the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. Students noted a clear association of isiZulu being used to advertise low end products in less attractive advertisements that were not illustrated. For example, new luxury cars were advertised in full-page advertisements in English, while smaller less attractive advertisements for 2nd hand vehicles appeared in isiZulu (Dowling, 2014). Like Piller (2001) and Lee (2006) the 3rd year class discovered that English serves to index the new and progressive while indigenous African languages are employed with products that are cheap and of low status.

Dowling (2013) goes on to explain that indigenous languages are not always associated with inferior products and that in contemporary commercial society they are used to convey humour and cultural knowledge too. Piller (2001; 2003) argues that English is multi-symbolic and Dowling makes the same claim for indigenous African languages: in a multilingual society companies choose to include local varieties of African languages in order to associate their products with that which is current, local playful and trendy. In the forefront of this trend
are telecommunications providers and fast food companies who make use of indigenous language varieties to locate themselves geographically and symbolically within a South African context and to appeal to consumers’ sense of fun and freedom. The insinuation is “We get you, pick us, we are part of you and where you come from.”

Ngwenya (2011) suggests that using indigenous African languages gives people the opportunity to view each other with new interest, new insights:

Language can serve as a window through which one can see into the other’s social identity and worldview. The ability to see into the other’s worldview often leads one to appreciate things from a standpoint different to one’s own, which in turn, might lead to the reduction, if not elimination, of stereotypes one might have had about the other (that does not speak one’s language), and this may, in South Africa, contribute positively to this country’s pursuit of a new common identity (Ngwenya, 2011: 2).

The use of indigenous African languages in media marketing campaigns does not merely serve as a gauge of the socio-political state of a nation but as Slabbert et al. (2007) suggest, the employment of less hegemonic languages in a public forum, or platform such as an advertising campaign, may generate a new identity and support for these languages and the people who speak them.

**Conclusion**

The current use of language in South African advertisements, does demonstrate contemporary attitudes and stereotypes
associated with African languages. Appadurai (1988) suggests that the consumption of ‘things’ may provide insight into societies and explains how ‘things’ have the power to influence behavior, performing as actors opposed to objects. I suggest that language in South African advertisements may also be an actor, able to influence behaviour as well as mirror it. Ngwenya (2011) and Dowling (2013) argue that indigenous African languages provide a rich resource, which creatively used, could have a wide reaching influence in many domains.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The first chapter presented the subject of this thesis and explored literature related to this study. In essence, the central research question of this dissertation seeks to examine:

How, and for what reasons, are indigenous African languages used in contemporary television advertisements in South Africa?

The literature review examined links between the political and social history of indigenous African languages on the continent, taking into account factors such as language planning and policy, language and identity, the role of language in post-apartheid South Africa as well as the role of language in media campaigns, specifically those produced in South Africa.

This second chapter describes and explains the methodology applied in the study, making reference to the literature that informed the research techniques. This study analyses six video advertisements, all of which include an indigenous African language variety. The advertisements originate in the 2010 – 2014 time period. The advertisements are transcribed, translated and analysed in conjunction with image, location, speaker, product and socio-political context.

Over the past five years, I watched over 100 advertisements and collected and made a note of those that contained an indigenous African language. From the small corpus that I was able to identify as containing an indigenous African language (less than 30) I selected a sample of six, which was a fair representation of
the group and that highlighted key dynamics and trends in the field. The selected advertisements are for an assortment of brands and products and employ multiple uses and differing placements and varieties of indigenous African languages.

**Approach**

Kothari (2004: 1) describes research as an art of scientific investigation, advocating that it be a scientific and systematic quest for apposite material. If research methods and procedures are not clear, precise and thorough this may impact upon the validity of the analysis and findings of the study. My research involves the following types of methodology:

- *Ex post facto*
- Fundamental
- Empirical
- Qualitative

*Ex post facto*

As my study seeks to understand how and why indigenous African languages have been used in television advertisements in South Africa my research needs to employ an *ex post facto* approach. Nunes Silva (in Salkind, 2010) describes *ex post facto* research as research that happens after the fact without obstruction or involvement on the part of the researcher. For the study I have selected six South African advertisements that include lexical items, phrases or entire dialogues from indigenous African language varieties. Advertisements in video format were selected. The advertisements either appeared as part of an online or television marketing campaign for products
marketed to South African consumers.

As the advertisements I have selected have already been conceptualized, produced and aired, this study is taking place *ex post facto*. Kothari (2004: 3) explains that *ex post facto* research is often selected as a method when used for descriptive research purposes, especially when the researcher is unable to control the variables of a study: this is apposite for this research since I have elected to study South African advertisements which include indigenous African language varieties, that have already been conceptualized and executed.

**Fundamental research**

Very few theoretical studies on language and media in South Africa have been conducted. This research is fundamental to expanding the pre-existing theoretical database. Fundamental research is concerned with the production of theoretical knowledge (Kothari, 2004: 3). As this study will only serve as an indicator of possible trends and attitudes in South African television marketing campaigns (the sample size would need to be substantially larger to draw more specific conclusions) the research is fundamental. This does not mean that the study will not yield valid results but rather that any results derived from the study will serve to highlight potential trends and attitudes in the field. In order to accurately analyse the data in depth all advertisements will be transcribed and translated with the aid of indigenous African language mother-tongue speakers. Subtitles will be noted if and when they appear in the advertisement.

I hope to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this specific area of study. While many attempts have been made to
address the role of gender, age and race in advertisements in the global arena (Coltrane and Messineo, 2000; Stern, 1999) there is a veritable lacuna in relation to the role of indigenous African languages in advertisements, especially in the South African framework.

Empirical research

Empirical research includes the collection of data that can be directly and repeatedly observed by the researcher who uses his/her senses and experiences to record the facts (Robergs, 2010: 1). Empirical research often goes hand in hand with fundamental and qualitative research methods. This is because it is usually engaged in projects where data collection and processing is nuanced, it cannot be measured in the same way that quantitative search can be. As empiricism is essentially knowledge obtained through observation (Robergs, 2010), I have endeavoured to produce research that is consistent and detailed. I selected empirical research as a method for this study because assessing data from advertisements required engagement and observation of the data. The method also complimented and supported the other research approaches selected in this study.

Qualitative research

Unlike quantitative research that works predominantly with large quantities of data and often presents findings in numerical form, qualitative research goes deeper than a superficial description of a large sample (Bricki & Green, 2007). Qualitative research overcomes the challenge of assessing data in a rigid way since it appreciates that not everything can be counted and measured. Qualitative research has a holistic approach, taking an emic perspective and incorporating the
researcher’s insight while endeavouring to remain neutral (Snape and Spencer in Ritchie et al., 2013: 4). It is more explicit in its attempt to understand events, groups and individuals.

Qualitative research was fitting for this study, as it tends to assume a more flexible approach than quantitative data collection. It is often based on real world scenarios as opposed to laboratory or contrived settings where variables are more easily controlled and manipulated (Snape and Spencer in Ritchie et al., 2013: 4). The data in this study was collected from current or recent television advertisements. The advertisements could only be collected (not modified) and the focus group could not be too closely controlled or monitored although some of the members of the group, and the individuals who aided in the translation and transcription of the advertisements, were likely to have been exposed to the advertisements and brands that created them, prior to the study. I selected qualitative over quantitative research methods for my study because I had chosen to work with a small sample size (six advertisements). In order to do justice to the sample and lend credibility to my study it was important to consider the data in great detail. This proposed detail involved:

- comparing and contrasting the language in the transcription, translation and subtitles;
- analysing the language in the advertisements in relation to the imagery;
- analysing the language used in relation to any, possibly influential, past or present socio-political events;
- researching any media attention, award or recognition the advertisement or campaign may have received;
• surveying a small group of mother-tongue speakers of indigenous varieties (This does not serve as the basis of the study but helps to outline responses to language use, context and symbolism);

• co-ordinating data from sociolinguistic enquiry with media feedback and responses of respondents to create a thorough and holistic analysis.

Qualitative research endeavours to present emerging theories and themes from the data via ‘rounded understandings’ based on interpretations of data in context (Snape and Spencer in Ritchie et al., 2013: 4). The study seeks to answer how and why indigenous African languages are used in a specific context. As the study uses fundamental research to answer the research question on a more general theoretical level I have deemed qualitative research methods preferable over quantitative for this task.

**Questionnaire**

Questionnaires reduce the likelihood of interviewer bias and are also less intrusive than speaking to people in a focus group. Dowling (2014b) explains that group bias or peer pressure have the potential to sway a study. Participants may be inclined to tailor their opinions to that of the group, and they might not always be as open as they would be during a one-on-one, face-to-face meeting with the interviewer. Although questionnaires are often associated with more quantitative research techniques, they were used in this instance to support and inform the sociolinguistic analysis of the advertisements. The questionnaire helps to avoid interviewer bias and although the sample size is small it works well as a general indicator. The questionnaire was kept short and all questions asked were done so with the goal of
answering the research question, albeit in an indirect manner. Questions asked were limited to factual and opinion related questions. Cohen et al. (2004) argue that in research the rights of respondents as human beings should be respected at all times. In my study, respondents were not forced or coerced to answer any questions, were informed of the ethics of the study and were free to withdraw at any time.

Reproducibility

To lend weight and credibility to the study and to pave the way for other scholars interested in researching this field it was important to use methods which could easily be reproduced and present data in a manner that could be unambiguously interpreted. This is critically important for South Africa where there are 11 official languages. This study needs to be reproduced with multiple languages and on a larger scale to better understand the dynamics, developments and effects of language in the media. Kothari (2004: 1) describes research as an art of scientific investigation and in order to ensure that this study is recognized as legitimate research it was imperative that I be consistent in my methodology and presentation of data.

The data are available in the public domain: in my reference list there are web links to all six advertisements in their original video format. In addition to this, all advertisements have been transcribed and translated. These translations and transcriptions will be available in the body of the thesis. As I am not a mother-tongue speaker of any indigenous African language I employed mother-tongue speakers to do the translations and transcriptions: these were edited and proof read and checked against the original by an academic mother-tongue linguist.

When the advertisements used slang, code-mixing or non-
standard varieties, this required a more complex process of transcription and translation as this code is not described grammatically and its lexicon is constantly undergoing changes and semantic shifts. I thus collaborated with the translators to provide accurate conversions. The task involved being sensitive to possible lack of meaning or nuance when presenting a word for word translation: I had to keep the text true to the original without undermining comprehensibility and grammatical correctness. It was also important to employ the services of a linguist to do back-translations from the translated text to the original in order to ensure that the actual language used in the advertisement was correctly rendered in my English version and by the subtitles evident on screen.

Direct translation cannot be assumed to produce equivalent versions of verbal stimuli. Back-translation is not only achievable but is likely to be highly satisfactory if care is taken in its use, especially in locating translators facile in the actual language of target subjects (Sechrest et al., 1972: 41).

The multilingual advertisements chosen for this study also required specific translation and translation strategies as they include a variety of different African languages such as Sesotho, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Xitsonga, code-switching and slang. All transcriptions and translations were verified by academics in the field. This ensures that the data is as accurate as possible.

**Presentation and analysis of data**

Qualitative research involves the researcher viewing the data in context (Bricki & Green, 2007). As television advertisements are both created and viewed in different contexts my qualitative research is threefold:
i) Tabular format

Presentation of data in which time, language used, translations, subtitles and images are presented in tabular format to allow for easy access of language in the television advertisement template. I elected to present the data in a style used by Androutsopoulos (2014). This table allows for the transcription, translation, subtitles and screen shots to be seen concurrently. The time stamps down the side of the table mean give the reader an idea of the length of the dialogue. The time stamps also facilitate easy negotiation of the video in conjunction with the translation and transcription. This means the data can easily be verified and also used for further research by other academics as well as to train students how to scrutinize recorded data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>He/She</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Subtitles</th>
<th>Translations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>He/She</td>
<td>Remember when you used to use?</td>
<td>Forget / What's the matter?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td></td>
<td>some change</td>
<td>Ask</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td>How do you feel about it?</td>
<td>It's been since last week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td></td>
<td>Could you use a change?</td>
<td>If you want to come back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td>How do you feel about it?</td>
<td>It's been since last week</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td></td>
<td>Could you use a change?</td>
<td>If you want to come back</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: Example of tabulated transcription and translation data

ii) Sociolinguistic analysis

A sociolinguistic analysis of the data that makes use of information relating to the brand, product, socio-political realities as well as the age, gender, celebrity status and physical location of the speakers.

I have attempted to provide a brief introduction to each brand or product that appears in the advertisement. Brands tend to have a
personality also known as a brand identity. Brand identity derives from the company. Brand image refers to consumer views and includes a set of attitudes that consumers have about the brand. Oosthuizen (2013) explains that a brand is in essence a set of promises; some brands may promise quality, others quick service. Brand identity and brand image are associated, but separate notions. Marketers augment brand loyalty by guaranteeing that there is strong association between brand identity and brand image (Nandan, 2005: 264). Knowledge of a brand image and brand identity may help with the holistic analysis of the advertisement. It is also significant for this study to recognize the role that brands play in evolving and shifting indigenous African language varieties and their lexicons.

It is important to include background information relating to a brand, product or campaign in order for the reader and future researchers to negotiate the meanings of contemporary socio-political realities and to assemble these in relation to the brand positioning to fully understand possible motivations the brands may have to reinforce links between brand identity and brand image through the use of a specific code. Deumert (in Mesthrie et al., 2009) suggests that advertisements are parasitic, feeding off current events. For this reason I have also included, where possible, background information that may relate to the advertisements: occasions such as the 2010 FIFA World Cup, media preoccupations and style trends.

iii) Pilot study

A small pilot study in which participants are shown each advertisement features in my overall analysis (but not as the core of my research). Questionnaires handed out after the viewings of the commercials (see Appendix 2) elicit information
relating to their enjoyment, memory of the product and language use. This information, while not the focus of my study, is used to inform an audience response section. The information collected in this pilot study will highlight areas of interest and potential future research in this domain.

**Precedence**

As previously mentioned, there is a dearth of research in this field particularly in South Africa where studies on African languages and advertising media have focused primarily on text (Ngwenya, 2011; Dowling, 2013; Ndlovu, 2011). This study therefore is reliant on research done in other multilingual communities and the data presentation is comparable to one produced by Androutsopoulos (2014). In Androutsopoulos’ (2014) study the Turkish language dominates in a German advertisement for a German telecommunications company. I have replicated the presentation of Adroutsopoulos’ (2014) transcript, and gone on to modify it with the inclusion of subtitles (when they appear) and screen shots.

Dowling (2013) presents a study on print advertising, correlating image and socio-political context with language. The meanings of each image are evaluated within the South African context (both political and linguistic) and related to the dialogue. The author describes and analyses the motivations of the people who created the advertisements, the socio-political situation at the time and the audience who consumed them. Dowling (2013) examines orthography as well as register when analysing the text. I have attempted to include this approach in my study.

Ngwenya (2011) also examines South African advertising,
providing a more theoretical approach by exploring links between consumer perceptions of identity and the selected advertisements. This research was fundamental in its approach, drawing on existing literature and assessing the production (and reasons for production) of advertisements in South Africa using established theoretical frameworks. I have similarly drawn upon established theoretical frameworks recognized by theorists such as (Posel, 2010; Appadurai, 1988; Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Rationale and limitation of the study

This project had strict limits according to budget, the timeframe in which to produce it and the detail I could include in the analysis of each piece of data. It is for these reasons that I have elected to use qualitative, fundamental research methods. While a quantitative study would have produced more definite results the sample size would have had to be substantially larger. I had neither the budget, nor the time or space (written) to pursue such a project.

It is my hope that a thoroughly researched, multifaceted descriptive piece of work, which is consistent and correct in its presentation of data and analyses, will produce a good theoretical framework to assess the reasons as to how and why indigenous African languages are used in South African television marketing campaigns. In addition to the theories already mentioned my approach draws inspiration from social anthropologist Clifford Geertz’s (1973) ‘thick description’, providing as detailed and profound an account of data and interpretation as possible, so that other scholars may use, assess and replicate data and experience.
Sampling and reliability of data

As previously mentioned, the sample size of this study is not large, this partly being due to the paucity of television advertisements in any language other than English. However, six advertisements including an African language, selling a diverse range of brands and products (cell phone providers, fast food outlets and a new brand of washing powder) over a period of five years (2010 – 2014) are reviewed in great detail. The time period ensures that the advertisements are contemporary and are also distributed widely enough that they may suggest trends in indigenous African language use in television.

Boroditsky (2001: 1) claims that while language may not exclusively control one’s thinking, it remains a powerful tool in shaping thought in abstract realms. Because language is so important in this study I have gone to great lengths to ensure that transcripts, translations and subtitles are as faithful to the original as possible. Data has been checked for grammar and also nuances in translation discussed and queried. The layout of the table with the time stamp helps readers to locate the dialogue as the video is played and also to narrow down parts of the dialogue they may wish to verify or to scrutinize more closely.

Presentation of data and analysis: how the thesis is laid out

The thesis begins with a background to the creative agencies behind the advertisements, highlighting their approach to producing commercials. This is done to contextualize advertisements and to track and understand trends. This is followed by a distilled narrative of an in-depth interview granted by Paul Warner, founder of Metropolitan Republic. I include this because it provides insight to industry approaches towards indigenous African languages in South Africa and notes key
factors to consider when creating and producing an advertisement for the South African market. Warner’s company, Metropolitan Republic was behind two thirds of the commercials analysed in this study and represents many major local and international brands.

The advertisements studied are presented and evaluated in chronological order, beginning with the earliest produced in 2010, working forward to the most recent aired in 2014. Each analysis will be preceded by a time stamped grid presenting a transcription and translation and screen shots of the advertisements. This data will aid the reader to navigate the analysis and easily revert to the source.

Following the analysis of the advertisements, I present a brief section relating to audience response. In this portion I highlight speakers’ (of African languages) reactions to the advertisement as captured in the questionnaire. This part of the study is not the central focus, however it was important to include it because audience sentiments are a significant consideration in the production of these advertisements. It is my hope that this may highlight key areas of study in the field and encourage other scholars interested in more ethnographic research on language in the media in South Africa.
CHAPTER 4: BACKGROUND

4.1 THE AGENCIES: THE CREATIVE MINDS BEHIND THE CAMPAIGNS STUDIED IN THIS DISSERTATION

My science teacher once explained that ‘Nothing exists in a vacuum’ emphasizing that it was important to examine objects in relation to their environments. I analyse the advertisements in this study in relation to factors such as the socio-political climate in which they were created and the brands and products for which they were created.

I believe it is also imperative to review the creative minds that produced the advertisements, much like students of art history who study the masters as well as their oeuvres. Cawood and Du Toit (2006) have provided some background to the South African advertising industry but I thought it important to highlight the agencies that created these commercials specifically.

I elected to study six advertisements produced during the time 2010 to 2014. These advertisements have been selected for the following reasons:

- to identify linguistic trends in South African television advertising;
- to identify domains in television advertising that feature indigenous African languages;
to understand, from a holistic perspective, the role of language in the creation of contemporary SA television advertisements.

The advertisements selected, their year of production, the brand they were produced for and the agency that created them are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Advertisement</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>MTN</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>Metropolitan Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>MTN</td>
<td>Thula Thula</td>
<td>Metropolitan Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Fish &amp; Chip Co. Nkandla</td>
<td>Xamina Xawena</td>
<td>Metropolitan Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>King Pie</td>
<td>Mnandi-licious</td>
<td>Red Rocket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Ariel</td>
<td>Less scrubs</td>
<td>Saatchi &amp; Saatchi SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Metropolitan Republic

Metropolitan Republic produced the majority of the advertisements (four of the six) scrutinized in this study. This fact is incidental not intentional. One of the reasons I decided to include a brief background to the agencies was when I realized certain trademarks in the production of advertisements that featured indigenous African languages. I understood that while brand identity played a part, so too did the creative agency behind the commercial.
Metropolitan Republic is a Johannesburg based advertising agency, founded in 2007. The agency was originally established to facilitate the comprehensive re-positioning (marketing) for MTN, Africa's leading mobile operator. Metropolitan Republic has since expanded to represent other notable brands that include FNB, Nando’s and Wimpy. Metropolitan Republic currently boasts offices in five African countries as well as its Johannesburg branch. While they are a relatively young agency, they use this to their advantage, moving away from more conventional methods in order to create groundbreaking advertisements for their clients. A saying often repeated in the Metropolitan Republic offices is:

We are into following and observing human behaviour, trends and the outbreak of new movements. Sometimes we even start them. (Metropolitan Republic, n.d.)

Creative director (as at September 2014), Mike Beukes, and managing director, Josie Fisher, emphasize the diversity and vibrancy of their team. Beukes states that:

As an agency, we pride ourselves on being plugged into the world around us. We aren’t an agency living in an ivory tower of perfection. We love being part of society. We love the idea of having the outside world inside with us. We often talk of our ‘temperature-check thinking’, where we metaphorically put our finger out of the window to gauge the temperature of the nation (Beukes in Metropolitan Republic, n.d.).

Warner, the agency’s founder, explained that Metropolitan Republic, specifically recruits a multilingual, multicultural staff (Warner, 2014). The agency acknowledges that often the tried
and trusted formulas of the past no longer have the same effectiveness.

I have observed that commercials and campaigns produced by Metropolitan Republic often use humour to facilitate the communication of their message. The agency asserts that it seeks to communicate with the new South Africa by constantly doing what they refer to as a ‘temperature check’, which they describe as a method of following what is happening locally and globally in both social and political spheres. The agency reframes the cultural relevance of brands to fit the nature of a specific market. This incorporates audience familiarity with the brand, an appreciation of the impact on the brand in the market, and lastly, an honest appraisal of the cultural relevance of the brand and its standing at any set point in time. Metropolitan Republic discusses ‘riding the cultural wave’ and notes that:

As culture shifts, so should our approach to communication’ (Metropolitan Republic, n.d.).

This forward-thinking, novel approach has earned Metropolitan Republic numerous awards for the advertisements it has produced and landed the young agency many valuable accounts. Recently two of the brands it represents: MTN and FNB were recognized as South Africa’s most valuable brand and South Africa’s strongest brand respectively (Metropolitan Republic, n.d.; Warner, 2014).
Red Rocket

Red Rocket is significantly smaller than Metropolitan Republic and Saatchi & Saatchi South Africa. The agency has little information available online and could not be reached for comment (via email or telephone). I did, however, receive an email communication from Red Rocket’s Craig Morris in answer to the question of how the agency went about creating the King Pie *Mnandi-licious* advertisement, but, apart from this information, I was not able to garner much other background detail to the company. In the email, he referred me to Red Rocket’s 2014 Loerie\(^{10}\) entry. In their entry there is reference to the thorny issues pertaining to South African diversity:

> Let’s face it, when it comes to race, language and culture – which can be sensitive issues – it’s great to be able to take a step back and look at these issues with a collective smile on our face (Morris, 2014).

From the limited information available on the Red Rocket website I discern the following:

- The multimedia agency emphasizes that it creates effective advertisements.
- They are small but strive to create a good relationship with clients. (Red Rocket, 2008)

\(^{10}\) The Loerie Awards recognize creative talent in the South African advertising industry.
The agency does not comment on strategy or consumers nor does Red Rocket discuss the techniques it uses to create an effective advertisement.

**Saatchi & Saatchi South Africa**

The Ariel advertisement was created by Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock for Procter and Gamble. Saatchi & Saatchi is a global marketing and advertising firm with a branch in South Africa. Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock is a subsidiary of Saatchi & Saatchi South Africa. Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock has its roots in ‘experimental marketing’ (Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock, n.d.). Like Metropolitan Republic, Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock places emphasis on working with people who have specialized knowledge in the field, citing collaboration as one of the agency’s core values:

> We are generalists with specialized expertise. To deliver the best work, we’ll work with the best people…wherever they are (Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock, n.d).

Other areas the agency focuses on are: speed of production and simplicity of message. This ensures that they produce an on point advertisement that is relevant to public discourse and a message that is easily assimilated by the audience.
We believe the best way to communicate and get through to people is by speaking to them in their language, they understand better and they feel you're speaking to them personally (Siluma, 2014).

Interestingly, Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock also list ‘popularity’ and ‘conversion’ amongst what they aim to achieve with their work, proposing that ‘work should change behaviour and not just perceptions’ (Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock, n.d.).
4.2 DISCUSSION WITH PAUL WARNER OF METROPOLITAN REPUBLIC

The following narrative is a distilled version from an interview I was granted by Metropolitan Republic founder, Paul Warner. Mr Warner kindly granted me an interview on the 8 September 2014 at Metropolitan Republic’s Cape Town offices.

Question: Why don’t we see and hear more indigenous African languages in television advertising?

Paul: “It all boils down to budget.”

Paul explained that it depends on what the client wants to achieve and how much money they have to spend. Using an African language in a television advertisement is expensive because you often have to think in multiples (11 official languages to consider) and few brands have the budget to do this.

Warner added that the concept of a rainbow nation and the Mandela post-apartheid South Africa is fractured. It is important for advertisers to demonstrate a sense of national unity. Language can play a role in this.

Paul: “You don’t want to alienate consumers.”

Using a particular language may alienate non-speakers (e.g. English and Sesotho speakers may feel excluded if isiZulu is

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11 Direct quotes from Mr. Warner are punctuated by quotation marks. Supplementary information that follows is my interpretation of the interview, informed by notes taken.
used exclusively) and the main motivation is to communicate and relate to the target audience.

Question: What would motivate an advertising company to choose a particular language over another one?

Paul: “There are many different lenses through which to look at the creation of an advertisement; language is only one of those lenses.”

Paul explained that creating an advertisement is a holistic enterprise. Social, political, economic and linguistic factors must all be taken into account. He described how Metropolitan Republic follows key trends in music, the media and everyday social behaviour. They try to reflect these key trends in their advertisements so that consumers can relate to the brand.

He gave as an example of the use of Xitsonga for the Fish & Chip Company’s Xamina Xawena advertisement. After having established the demographic of the brand (black peripatetic urban males with limited domestic space) one of the creatives at Metropolitan Republic, who had insight into the humour associated with Xitsonga-speakers, suggested bringing this minority language to a national platform. The decision to use Xitsonga was prompted by a number of important considerations best elucidated by Metropolitan Republic in their YouTube description of the Fish & Chip Company Xamina Xawena advertisement:

‘In a country with 11 official languages, it only makes sense for a brand like Fish and Chips Co. to embrace all the cultural differences and appeal to a wider range of people, not only those who speak the most popular of
the 11 official languages. Our commercials aim to portray snippets of real South Africans (rich or poor) enjoying our product in their own environments…We make it our mission to talk to people on their level. The objective is to truly understand our consumers and to try harder than just "Yebo or sharp sharp" when addressing them. The Shangaan culture and its people have, for many years, been the centre of South African traditional jokes and ridicule. Yet a lot of people don't know that electronic Shangaan music (similar to drum and base) has already gone global and has had producers from New York and some other parts of the world raving about it.’ (Metropolitan Republic, 2012, my emphasis).

Question: Are advertisements that use indigenous African languages rigidly scripted or are the actors given free reign?

Paul: “If our multi-cultural staff still don’t represent the target market, we will hire someone who can relate to the product/consumer to provide inside information.”

The advertising agency does a ‘temperature check’ with actual potential consumers; the target market. The language used by those people (and the trends and terminology that they can relate to) is all important. For example in the Xamina Xawena advertisement while the matrix language is Xitsonga. The purposeful inclusion of slang elements of like Fong-Kong references a popular urban discourse.
Warner explained the importance of knowing whom you are marketing to. Reaching the ‘in’ group means the campaign gains recognition, then followers (people who wish to be part of the popular crowd) perpetuate trends and spend money to mimic them and be associated or included. This is where the brand profits.

Concluding remarks

The discussion included reference to the fact that advertising agencies in Southern Africa are engaged not only in selling but also in various different pedagogical pursuits, embracing the notion of teaching the nation to how to navigate its multilingual culture. For example, the Ayoba! campaign explicitly ‘taught’ viewers the semantic field of this word. Another issue that arose was the importance of South Africa’s youth who form the majority of our population. The youth has an innovative, non-conformist way of asserting their Afropolitan identity, which they emphasize as multicultural through fashion, language, music, association and style.
Access via subtitles

An additional issue that we discussed was that of the primacy of access to dialogue used, which is generally achieved via subtitles. This is important if the advertisement is to reach outside of the demographic associated with the code. For instance, journalists who would report on a controversial advertising campaign do not always have the time to transcribe and translate advertisement dialogue, particularly if it is not in English. The Fish & Chip Company’s Nkandla advertisement was specifically created to attract media attention and therefore needed to be media friendly. The subtitles were perfect in this respect. The dialogue spoke to the consumer; the subtitles were easy for the media to navigate. It also meant that it was simpler for English medium newspapers to write about and display dialogue to their readers as the job was already done for them because the English text, in subtitle format, appears on the screen.
CHAPTER 5: ADVERTISEMENT 1

5.1 MTN AYOBA! IN PICTURES (MTN, 2010)

Figure 16: MTN Ayoba Pied Piper in pictures
## 5.2 MTN *AYOBA!* TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSLATION (MTN, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Slang</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Pied Piper</td>
<td>Mzansi</td>
<td>We would like to wish you an FIFA World cup.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(vuvuzela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>(vuvuzela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>(vuvuzela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>(vuvuzela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>(vuvuzela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>(vuvuzela)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>(cheers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Ayoba!</td>
<td>one more time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 MTN AYOBA! PIED PIPER SCHOOL 2010: BRAND AND CAMPAIGN

MTN is currently a multinational company, launched in 1994, with its roots in South Africa (the head office is located in Johannesburg). MTN operates throughout Africa and has expanded operations to the Middle East. The brand labels itself as an ‘emerging markets mobile operator’. The company has a large market share and substantial expenditure, exceeding R130 billion in the past 5 years. The MTN brand cites its core values as: ‘integrity, leadership, innovation, a can-do attitude’ and says that focus on good customer relationships is key. The brand identity focuses on embracing diversity, innovative ways of facilitating communication (MTN, n.d.).

In 2006, MTN became Africa’s first and only global sponsor of the FIFA 2010 World Cup (Masters and Savant, 2010). This move placed MTN on a global stage with iconic brands such as Coca-Cola and Sony. In order for the brand to stand out brand General Manager of MTN’s Global Brand and Sponsorship Portfolio, Jen Roberti, stated that part of the MTN brief for their MTN FIFA 2010 world Cup campaign was the following:

The executions were required to be high-impact and memorable with a youthful, and dynamic look, feel and tone…interesting, engaging, WOW! (Masters and Savant, 2010).

The setting and campaign

In July 2006 mobile operator MTN became Africa’s first and only FIFA 2010 World Cup sponsor. However the progress on projects such as stadiums and supporting infrastructure for the event was slow. The country received a great deal of negative
attention from the press\textsuperscript{12} who intimated that the country was unsafe and not ready to host such an event (Taylor, 2009). Articles in the press relating to the event included opening statements such as ‘South Africa is a place where a lot of violent crime happens’ (Rohrer, 2010).

![Figure 17: Negative news reports leading up to FIFA World Cup](image)

In September 2009 with less than a year to go before the opening ceremony, MTN launched the MTN Ayoba! campaign to promote their brand over the world cup. A marketing campaign contains a predominant theme, which is leveraged with manifold variations over a time to relate a story (Marketing MO, n.d.). The MTN Ayoba! campaign received a substantial amount of funding, around R28 million (CNBC Africa, 2009), and was lead by a single thematic word, Ayoba! The campaign’s considerable budget enabled the creative agency behind the MTN brand, Metropolitan Republic, to craft unique, location specific advertisements. Paul Warner (2014) Metropolitan Republic founder, rationalizes that when creating an advertisement: ‘It all boils down to budget’.

A larger budget provides the creative agency behind the brand

\textsuperscript{12} See figure 17.
with more resources to research and create; language choice factors into a budget. A brand’s budget correlates with what variety is selected to feature in an advertisement. A larger budget for a brand’s campaign permits an agency to do multiple advertisements in different codes for a campaign (e.g. the Nedbank KE YONA campaign in three languages) or to create location specific advertisements.

The MTN Ayoba campaign concentrates on only one African language slang word, but uses it in different South African contexts and environments to index different meanings and associations. The most important aspect of Ayoba is that it is spoken, it is given voice repeatedly, so that while its semantic field is wide, and its morphology simple, its phonology is what is remembered.

Goldsmith (1991) explains that phonological features of language such as accent may serve as formal place markers; consequently by referencing the discourse of a particular location the advertisement is expressing a connection with the place. The sizeable budget for the MTN Ayoba! campaign allowed for significant market research in multiple locations (Warner, 2014). While the campaign was led by a single word, the campaign was tailored to relate to specific locations and the people present there.
The MTN *Ayoba!* campaign featured a series of television advertisements, which were pedagogic in nature. Warner (2014) explains that for the word (which was not part of the general public’s lexicon) to ‘resonate’ with consumers, they needed to teach them what it meant to be *Ayoba*. Khoury, creative director of the MTN campaign explains that they created numerous commercials to reach out to South Africans:

> We wanted to put our character in many situations with many different South Africans all over the place to actually teach the nation about *Ayoba* and what *Ayoba* actually means. *Ayoba* actually started in black urban, um like dialect and basically we trying to get it into the South African lexicon (Khoury in CNBC, 2009).

These advertisements were supported by radio, billboard\(^\text{13}\), print and online elements of the campaign.

\(^{13}\) See figure 18.
Language

![Ayoba! logo](image)

**Figure 19: Ayoba! logo**

The origin of *Ayoba!* and how it entered international representations of the 2012 FIFA world cup

*Ayoba* was originally a township youth word relating to dance culture (Warner, 2014; CNBC, 2009). Musangi (2009) notes that the word does not have a solid, fixed meaning but is one that is:

> Semantically marked by a degree of fluidity and an equal measure of elusiveness. Although very popular in Johannesburg street slang, the expression’s meaning and usage has always been unclear. Some people argue that the expression was coined by the late reggae musician Lucky Dube, thus its immense popularity after Dube’s death in 2007. At the end of the song, “I’ve Got You Babe”, Dube is said to have shouted “Ayoba-yho” as a sign of appreciation and joy. Other people believe that “Ayoba” was coined by YFM presenter, Rofhiwa Bologo (aka DJ Tholi B) in his popular show, *Midnight fix*. Like the uncertainty about its origin, the expression does not seem to have a particular context of usage. Its use ranges from a form of appreciation to greetings (Musangi, 2009: 55).
Because of the fluidity of the lexical item *Ayoba* I decided to do a quick vox pop survey with local African language speakers in Cape Town. I wanted to establish what speakers understood the word to mean. The following is a representative response:

*Ayoba* means it’s nice or something like that. Before it was the young ones using it. It was maybe the Xhosa or Zulu people but we didn’t hear it so much. Now everyone knows because of world cup. Even now when people use it you think of MTN (Anonymous respondent, 2014, Waterfront, Cape Town).

Metropolitan Republic identified the word as one that would resonate with the youth audience who would legitimize it by association as ‘cool’. The word *Ayoba* would also, as a result of its association with the youth, attract a more diverse community of followers who aspire to be part of what is new, fresh and contemporary. As observed by a popular local media personality, DJ Sbu:

When Johannesburg youth sneeze, the rest of the country catches the cold (Musangi, 2009: 49).

My discussion with Metropolitan Republic CEO, Paul Warner, highlighted the need to appeal to contemporary arbiters of style in South Africa. These individuals energize and reinterpret fashions14; they are young, often multilingual and constantly modify their code to reflect their current identities. The word *Ayoba* is made multivalent by MTN’s interpretation and promotion, and simultaneously the brand itself benefits from

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14 See figure 20.
such multivalency. Multivalency may be interpreted as a feature of *tsotsitaal*, which is known to be innovative, unique, stylish and shifting.

Tsotsitaal is a linguistic phenomenon that is inseparable from a style adopted by many youth living in urban townships in South Africa. The style is signalled by the unique and innovative lexicon of *tsotsitaal*, and additionally indicated by clothing and other identity markers. Features of the style are ‘urban-ness’, consumerism (in terms of brand names) and cultural iconography, such as music and sports. While many of these items are influenced by, or even drawn from, global cultures (particularly in the diaspora), they are transformed into uniquely South African cultural currency by a process of recontextualisation in township spaces and between individuals (Hurst, 2009: 224).

The ‘cultural currency’ of the slang term *Ayoba* was exploited by MTN, who appropriated the word and further expanded and defined its semantic field, and through an innovative campaign, taught the nation the new meanings it had assumed\(^\text{15}\).

\(\text{Figure 20:‘MaXhosa’ (I see a different you, 2014)}\)

\(^{15}\) See figure 19.
MTN’s Ayoba campaign reflects Warner’s (2014) belief that it is important to align with the temperature of the country and to place the brand that you are advertising within this context. This temperature testing can be seen in the deliberate and creative use of lexical items from urban African language varieties. The ‘pied piper’ addresses the nation as Mzansi – uMzantsi is an isiXhosa16 word meaning ‘South’, although here the elision of the initial vowel indicates the vocative: he is speaking directly to the nation, not about it.

“Mzansi we would like to wish you an Ayoba FIFA World Cup!” (MTN, 2010).

The word Ayoba is used adjectivally (using English syntax) to describe the FIFA world cup in South Africa. The word is repeated by a large group of school children that also give it textual representation by creating the word with the colours of their school uniforms17. The vuvuzela sound acts as a chorus to the chanted word. It is clear from the advertisement that MTN, represented by the ‘pied piper’, has taken on the role of teacher. The outcome of this particular lesson, which incorporates the repetition of a lexical item in order to make it memorable, is supported by academic studies on second language acquisition (Webb, 2007).

16 Without the ‘t’ umzansi is sometimes used by isiZulu speakers to translate ‘south’ although the correct term for South in isiZulu is iningizimu.
17 See figure 21.
In another advertisement for the campaign, the ‘Pied Piper’ continues his language lesson informing his class (the viewers) about what **is** and **isn’t** Ayoba. In this lesson he nominalizes the word *Ayoba* by adding the English suffix -ness (*Ayoba*-ness), thus rendering it making it bicodal. Bicodalism is the process of word formation by the amalgamation of morphemes from two different languages to create a lexical item. A bicodal word is thus made up of two different codes. In this process a language’s free form is combined with another language’s bound morphemes to create a hybrid word (Kamwangamalu and Moyo, 2003). In this instance the English suffix –ness (which is a bound morpheme) is attached to the free stem *Ayoba*.

A video case study of the MTN Ayoba campaign explains the process and results of the promotion. In this case study the notion of a ‘global lexicon’ is directly addressed, as is the MTN Ayoba campaign’s role in effecting it during the course of the FIFA 2010 World Cup. This case study explicitly highlights the MTN brand’s pedagogical role in ‘teaching everyone what it means to be Ayoba’. They also refer to language barriers which exist and their role in counteracting negativity:
Against this tide of negativity MTN launches a new campaign with a single word *Ayoba*. Created by a small subculture of township trendies *Ayoba!* is a word that perfectly explains what MTN wants the world cup experience to become for everyone. In a country where one of the biggest impediments to national unity is the language barrier, *Ayoba!* gives the nation a single positive word that everyone can unite in using. But before we could make the World Cup *Ayoba* we had to teach everyone what it means to be *Ayoba!* (Rawlinson, 2010).

The use of humour has become commonplace in advertising (Weinberger & Gulas, 1992: 35). The association between a product and positive sentiments is why advertisers elect to use it. Humour taps into current popular discourse, relating interests of public interest in a hilarious fashion. Weinberger and Gulas (1992) explain that humour works as an enhancer, and in the case of *Ayoba* the word already carries sentiments ascribed to youth, dance and good times. Humour enhances word association and makes the lexical item and its meaning memorable, bringing speakers who are not aware of its connotations into the fold.

**Ease of pronunciation and semantic access**

The FIFA 2010 World Cup slogan was, in fact, ‘Ke Nako. Celebrate Africa's Humanity’ (Bizcommunity, 2007). *Ke Nako* is a Sotho language expression meaning ‘it’s time’. The slogan’s meaning was not evident in FIFA campaigns; it is also made up of two words. MTN’s slogan, on the other hand, *Ayoba*, was a single word, easy to pronounce, positive and repeatedly explained in promotions. I believe this is one of the reasons it
achieved the success it did. It was easy to enunciate and the repetition, a technique of second language teaching (Webb, 2007), encouraged consumers to relate to, and use, the word. Another seminal reason for Ayoba’s success as a catch phrase over Ke Nako is the fact that Ke Nako has a quotidian meaning in Sesotho discourses while Ayoba was not part of an everyday South African discourse until it was marketed by MTN.

**Signs, sounds and symbolism**

Symbolism is an important element of advertisements as it conveys meaning to the consumer and helps them to relate to what they see in a commercial (Khalatbari, 2014). Language written or spoken is a form of symbolism. The written word is a symbol, a word conjuring up images, emotions and ideas in the mind of the reader (Whitehead, 1985: 2). Ortner (1973) explains how symbols fortify one another when used in unison. In the MTN Ayoba! Pied Piper School advertisement several symbols which index South Africa and soccer are associated with the word Ayoba.
The gist of the commercial is conveyed through the dialogue and supported by visual aspects of the advertisement. These visual symbols include the Bafana Bafana jersey the speaker is wearing, the vuvuzela, Table Mountain and the repeated textual representation of Ayoba by the crowd. Ortner (1973: 1339) explains that summarizing symbols are those which sum up, relay or embody what ‘a system means to them’. Ortner (1973: 1340) refers to these symbols as ‘catalysts of emotion’. In the commercial MTN features the Bafana Bafana 2010 FIFA World Cup jersey (worn by the Pied Piper), Table Mountain and the national flag (in the final Ayoba text).

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18 See figures 22, 23 and 24.
The jersey, representing the national team, and the flag are closely linked to the word *Ayoba* while the iconic mountain provides the advertisement’s backdrop. This demonstrates how summarizing symbols can be used in advertisements to facilitate comprehension of lexical items. The summarizing symbols elicit emotion (Ortner, 1973) and the emotion is linked to the word and the brand through the word *Ayoba*. Table Mountain and the vuvuzela (a horn popularly used at South African soccer events) further reinforce the word and brand as authentically South African. The vuvuzela is associated with the word *Ayoba* through imagery and sound. This advertisement illustrates that the word *Ayoba* belongs in the soccer stadium context. The use of symbolism and language concurrently demonstrates how consumers can be taught the semantic field of a word, encouraged to associate it with positive sentiments and occasions and informed on how to pronounce it.

**Conclusion**

We are into following and observing human behaviour, trends and the outbreak of new movements. Sometimes we even start them (Warner, n.d).

The MTN *Ayoba!* campaign was arguably the most successful campaign of the 2010 FIFA world cup: it was awarded a Gold Loerie Award and an AfricaCom acknowledgment for the best marketing campaign (Maota, 2011) and a significant number of South Africans surveyed (96%) claimed to have seen or heard the advertisements (Rawlinson, 2010). *Ayoba*, the key word of the campaign, was instrumental in creating this experience. The campaign demonstrated that:
• Indigenous African language varieties could unite and appeal to national and global audiences.
• African languages are alive and kicking, not simply relegated to rural areas and traditional practices.
• Advertisers can promote and encourage the use of indigenous African languages.
• The use of indigenous African language varieties in conjunction with respected products can increase their value and encourage positive association.
• Urban slang varieties of indigenous African languages can provide united neutral dialogic spaces.
• Indigenous African language varieties have the ability to create unique brand identities and increase brand value.

Maota (2010) explains that MTN was named the most valuable brand in Africa after their 2010 campaign. The MTN Ayoba! campaign paved the way for many others, demonstrating that big brands and respected products did not necessarily mean English.

Ditsele (2014) argues that if urban varieties of indigenous African languages are embraced it allows the language to develop and maintain currency. Following the Ayoba! campaign MTN has continued to use indigenous African language slogans: Mahala (Free), Qhubeka (Continue) (See Figures 10 and 11). These words have become part of the national lexicon and demonstrated that indigenous African languages have a place in South African media and the national discourse.
CHAPTER 6: ADVERTISEMENT 2

6.1 MTN THULA THULA IN PICTURES (MTN, 2012)

Figure 25: MTN Thula Thula in pictures
6.2 MTN *THULA THULA* TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSLATION (MTN, 2012)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>isiZulu</th>
<th>Sesotho</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Thula thula thu</td>
<td>Hush hush</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thula mntwana</td>
<td>Hush child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.04</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thula thula</td>
<td>Hush hush</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.08</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thul’ ubab’uzobuya ekuseni</td>
<td>Hush dad will return in the morning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thula thula thula sana</td>
<td>Hush hush hush baby</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Thula thula thula ’s’thandwa</td>
<td>Hush hush hush beloved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>O robale hantle ngwanaka</td>
<td>Sleep well my child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>Girl</td>
<td>Le wena papa 19o robale hantle</td>
<td>And you dad you sleep well too</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19 Although the Sotho language term for ‘father’ is *ntate* the child in this advertisement uses the word ‘papa’.
6.3 **MTN THULA THULA: BRAND AND CAMPAIGN**

The MTN brand is a multi-national telecommunications provider, which originates from and is based in South Africa\(^{20}\). The brand attracted significant attention during the 2010 FIFA World Cup thanks to the innovative MTN *Ayoba!* campaign, which cemented the MTN brand in the minds of consumers. MTN was named the most valuable brand in Africa following their 2010 World Cup campaign (Maota, 2010).

The 2010 MTN *Ayoba!* campaign was fronted by a single word and this formula was repeated with the MTN *Mahala* campaign in 2012. In both instances the key words were sourced from African language varieties. The MTN *Mahala* campaign promoted the network provider’s offer of a free airtime deal with every pay-as-you-go recharge voucher used on a Thursday. MTN General Manager of Brand and Communications, Ryan Gould describes the MTN *Thula Thula* commercial:

> The advert encapsulates a heart-warming portrayal of a father singing the famous Thula Thula song into his phone, for his little girl falling asleep, miles away while he works a night shift. This portrayal not only resonated with our brand values of commitment to community and enabling communication access for all, but allowed us the privilege of portraying a truly South African connection to the nation – one that really resonates with the larger MTN brand (Gould in My Broadband, 2012).

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\(^{20}\) A background of the brand has been provided in the preceding MTN *Ayoba!* analysis.
Metropolitan Republic, the creative agency behind the MTN advertisements, created the character Solly Semenya, the security guard in the advertisement. Semenya sings a lullaby to his little girl over the cell phone and the suggestion is that he has so much airtime he can sing his daughter to sleep. The advertisement ends with the slogan ‘The best things in life are Mahala’ (Ads of the World, n.d).

The MTN *Thula Thula* advertisement was nominated for a Pendoring award in the Truly South African category, which recognizes ‘advertising excellence that best embodies this pride across all 11 official languages’ (My broadband, 2012). Pendoring increasingly serves as the ultimate channel to support creativity and relate the brand’s message in indigenous languages (Pendoring, n.d.).

**Language**

![Figure 25: MTN Mahala airtime](image)

**Mahala**

*Mahala* means ‘free’ in isiXhosa and *mahhala* is ‘free’ in siSwati and isiZulu (Dowling, 2014b). The fact that the word is understood by such a huge sector of the SA population (Nguni language speakers make up 42% of the total SA population (Census, 2011) would make it a highly marketable word to
advertisers. Although the lullaby is sung in isiZulu, I suggest the isiXhosa orthography was used for simplicity. The one ‘h’ in the isiXhosa version makes it easier for readers to negotiate. Unlike the word Ayoba, which acted as the key word in a previous MTN campaign, Mahala does not have a wide semantic field. I suggest this is precisely why it is used in this campaign. Both of the words Ayoba and Mahala are used adjectivally, however the usage differs in that Ayoba was used to articulate an experience (the FIFA 2010 World Cup) while Mahala functions as a well-known loan word in the MTN campaign. Mahala performs the unusual task of substituting an English word (usually it is the contrary) with an Nguni lexical item.

Pedagogy and language

Similarities can also be drawn between approach used in the MTN Ayoba advertisement, whereby the brand ‘educates’ the consumer: the MTN brand taught consumers what it meant to be Ayoba. The word was used in campaigns and contextualized using sights, sounds and symbols and reinforced through textual representation. In the MTN Thula Thula commercial this technique of presenting a word in context to relay meaning to the consumer was endorsed. The word Mahala is featured at the end of the advertisement21.

21 See figure 26.
The word is embedded within an English matrix replacing the word ‘free’ in the well-known maxim: the best things in life are free. The word is given both adjectival and nominal status: it performs as an adjective directly translating ‘free’ but also as a proper noun, by virtue of its capitalization: “Mahala”. The syntactic placing of the word Mahala mirrors that of English, the Nguni word acting as a unique, fresh and entirely African substitute for ‘free’. English speakers will have no trouble understanding the word because as they finish the English sentence “The best things in life are …” they see and hear the word “Mahala” and, if they don’t already know the word, will immediately make a mental note of it and its translation.

Sternberg (1987) asserts that in language learning an extensive amount of vocabulary is remembered and assimilated through interface with words in context. Sternberg (1987: 90) explains that people do not have the time or inclination to sit and memorize list upon list of words and be taught their meaning and associate them with images or concepts. Rather meaning is derived from seeing how the lexical item operates in relation to
other words.

In the case of the MTN campaign the key word *mahala*, operates as a loan word: replacing its English equivalent and at the same time extending the African language lexicon of non-Nguni speakers. The Nguni lexical item is placed within an English matrix and immediately it is possible to identify it as an adjective as it is used to qualify the noun phrase “the best things in life”. In this way MTN moves away from using the word ‘free’ which is over-used and commonplace in advertising jargon and gives the campaign not only a new word, *mahala*, but an ability to celebrate the ordinary. The word ‘free’ in post-apartheid South Africa has become closely attached to notions of political liberty and can be ideologically charged – *mahala* is more down-to-earth and specifically relates to the absence of cost and has a history of being used in this way. In *A Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles* (1996: 434) *mahala* is glossed with historical examples:

A. adv. For nothing, gratis.

1941. ‘R. ROAMER ESQ’ in *Bantu World* 1 Mar.4 Jos: And who gave her away in marriage? Jer: She gave herself away – mahala. *Ibid.* 8 Mar.4 She says a man with a car can do anything with her. He can just have her mahala, without even seeing her parents about the matter. 1948. E. HELLMANN Rooiyard 40 Many domestic conflicts are occasioned by the desire of a ma to give his friends beer mahala (free of charge), while his wife demands that his friends, who form the nucleus of her beer-custom, should pay for their drinks. *Ibid.* 60 The host and hostess dispense beer and food *mahala*. 1991 L.E.G. COLLETT *Informant*, Pilgrim’s Rest Nothing for mahala: Nothing for gratis. 

B. adj. Free; obtained without payment or difficulty.
Song

Gorn (1982: 95-98) asserts that a commercial’s success may often correlate with stimuli that elicit emotion, explaining that stimuli such as music in advertisements may influence a consumer more than information directly relating to the merchandise. Music helps to make an advertisement memorable and is an effective way of enhancing consumer recollection of the brand.

Scott (1990: 223) proposes that ‘Music in advertisements is evocative and communicative behaving in a similar way to language’. This suggests that music has the formidable ability to communicate with a consumer and to increase consumer retention of that communication. I have often caught myself humming along to an advertising jingle: as a result I often know the words and the product because they are part of the tune or are associated with it.

In the MTN Thula Thula advertisement a lullaby is sung by a security guard, Solly Semenya (a character created by Metropolitan Republic), to his little girl. Levine (2005) states that lullabies, such as Thula Thula\textsuperscript{22} fall into the category of amagwijo (personal songs):

\textsuperscript{22} The original version of the song was Thula mtwana while modern version is Thula baba (Levine, 2005: 89). I refer to the lullaby as Thula Thula in this dissertation because of the altered lyrics.
These songs are emotive, often enabling listeners to identify with and become moved by the singer’s message (Levine, 2005: 89).

Lullabies are also known to thuthuzela ‘comfort’ (Levine, 2005:89). Thula Thula literally means ‘Quiet, quiet’ or ‘Hush, hush’, and even this word, like mahala, has a history in South African English. One of the examples given in A Dictionary of South African English on Historical Principles, refers directly to the lullaby using the old orthography ‘tula’:

RAPHAELY in Femina June 6 Nothing will stop a mother singing to her children … But as soon as they leave the tula tula baba stage the unmusical mama would be well advised to refer to the spoken word (1996: 745).

From this quote, and from anecdotal and written evidence, it is clear that Thula Thula is a Xhosa song that has been adopted throughout Africa and is performed as a contemporary lullaby (Levine, 2005: 89). At a musical performance in South Africa, conductor Andre Rieu recounted that he asked singer, Kimmy Skota, to perform a song for him ‘that everybody in South Africa knows. Then she sung for me a lullaby that was so beautiful I wanted to be the baby in her arms’ (Rieu, 2010, my emphasis). As soon as Skota starts to sing, the camera pans to the crowd’s emotional reaction23.

23 See figure 27.
Comments on the video’s YouTube page (Rieu, 2010) indicate that Skota selected a song that resonated with South Africans across the board.24

Figure 28: YouTube comments on Skota singing Thula Thula

This information is important because it makes it clear that even before it was used in an MTN advertisement (and broadcast in a nationally televised commercial) the lullaby Thula Thula struck an emotive chord with South Africans. Most South Africans, even during the worst years of apartheid, would have heard or sung the melody across racial boundaries. Underpaid, disregarded and often badly treated, domestic workers would have sung this lullaby to the white babies put in their care; the same white babies would grow up to witness a new South Africa and would feel both pleasure and guilt at the memories stirred

24 See figure 28.
by the tune and its lyrics: pleasure at the bond created between African woman and white child, guilt for the child left at home in the township or rural areas, a child who had to go bed often without food, without the sweet sound of its mother’s voice singing a lullaby.

A moving stimulus such as music is inserted into an advertisement to stimulate a purchase motivation. This emotional component most likely affects purchase intent through brand attitude. It is thought that music stimulates emotions, which may affect the brand attitude and lead to brand purchase and usage (Rossiter & Percy, 1991 in Morris & Boone, 1998: 518).

The lullaby definitely functioned in this way in the MTN Thula Thula advertisement, attracting positive and emotive reactions.\(^{25}\)

Scott (1990: 223) asserts that ‘Advertising music is a shared experience.’ The use of a nationally recognized song in MTN’s campaign connected with South Africans as a nation, appealing

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\(^{25}\) See figure 29.
to consumers with the powerful, positive feelings associated with the song.

A new leaf: reversals of linguistic and gender stereotypes

While I have referred to the use of song in the MTN Thula Thula advertisement and specifically a lullaby, it is important to examine the discourse of the commercial in its entirety and not only comment on the symbolic nature of the song featured. It is critical to note that although not immediately apparent, subtle alterations have been made to the lullaby’s lyrics. One of the most notable alterations is that the word for ‘mother’ is substituted with that of ‘father’: Thul’ ubab’uzobuya ekuseni Hush dad will return in the morning (MTN, 2012).

Barnard (2006) explains that South African prime time soap operas relay notions of hybridity and multiple ethnicities and identities through their discourse. I propose that this is what takes place in the MTN Thula Thula commercial. This happens in the following way:

- Gender roles are reversed; the role generally assigned to a mother is taken up by a father. This demonstrates shifts in identities and gender stereotypes.

- Rural to urban; often standard varieties of indigenous African languages are considered to be old-fashioned and inaccessible, with advertisers preferring to use slang to identify the brand as current: a strategy employed by MTN in the Ayoba! campaign. The song Thula Thula is positioned and reimagined in an urban environment. This recontextualises the language making it easy to relate to
whilst highlighting a beautiful performance in a standard variety of isiZulu.

- Monolingual to multilingual; the song is originally an isiXhosa lullaby (Levine, 2005: 89) but a slightly altered isiZulu version is sung in this commercial. The father then switches to Sesotho, whispering ‘O robale hantle ngwanaka’ (Sleep well my child). This represents and relates to a multilingual nation.

**Mahala Thursdays**

In South Africa Thursdays have long been regarded as special prayer or “Ladies’ Days” (Wilson, 2000: 84) which might be why MTN chose this day of the week to advertise their special offer. They however subtly reverse the expected gender (mother) stereotype associated with both Thursdays and child nurturing by introducing a young father as the role model. The fact that the father uses his airtime to sing a lullaby to his daughter appeals to cultures with strong collectivist worldviews26 but at the same time presents the relationship between father and child as private and personal. They are thus able to reach a wide target audience by reimagining parenthood, nurturing and Thursdays, without alienating cultural or religious understandings.

The lullaby, sung in an Nguni language, and the use of the whispered “Sleep well” in Sesotho play a central role in this because both the song and the language are known to South Africans to represent traditional values and identities not

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26 See Zhang and Gelb (1996) for a discussion of the link between advertising strategies and culture.
subsumed by secularism and consumerism.

The final screens show that the connection between father and daughter is facilitated by cell phones.27

![Figure 30: Cellphones and MTN Mahala airtime](image)

Studies of cellular network users in “developing” regions show that people have innovated new uses of technology to circumvent the costs of relatively high network tariffs. Indeed, network users use technology in ways that network providers did not anticipate (Bidwell et al., 2011: 118).

The MTN advertisement acknowledges this and reflects the reality of many consumers back to them, using another element they are familiar with, a lullaby. Song, a ‘multifaceted personality’ of advertising that enriches the message’ (Dahl, 2004: 2) further enhances the commercial. Warner (2014) suggests that advertisers are responsible for encouraging

27 See figure 30.
multilingual discourse in South Africa, the subtle use of multiple languages, as well as what has become a multicultural song, represents this rainbow nation identity.

**Conclusion**

This advertisement demonstrates how brands such as MTN can use indigenous languages to position themselves as contemporary without resorting to urban slang. While the previous campaign located the brand as local and metropolitan using an urban code, this advertisement facilitates inclusivity and a celebration of traditional values. It reaches back and takes something almost all South Africans can relate to and appealingly transposes the African language into present day South Africa. This advertisement also acts pedagogically, reintroducing the word *mahala* to the South African lexicon, giving it a fresh contemporary vitality and energy, and creating an appealing image of indigenous African language varieties. Following the commercial’s success, the word *mahala* featured in general discourse on social messaging platforms 28 demonstrating the power of advertisements to influence lexicons and attitudes towards language varieties.

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28 See figure 31.
Figure 31: Mahala on social network
CHAPTER 7: ADVERTISEMENT 3

7.1 FISH & CHIP CO. NKANDLA IN PICTURES

Figure 32: Fish & Chip Co. Nkandla in pictures
### 7.2 FISH & CHIP COMPANY NKANDLA TRANSCRIPT AND TRANSLATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>isiZulu</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Subtitles</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>Oh Zuzulicious sidla ifish and chips yakaShabba</td>
<td>today</td>
<td>Ooohhh Zuzulicious we are eating fish and chips from Shabba today?</td>
<td>Oh Zuzulicious we are eating fish and chips from Shabba today?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Idla shom-shom lam</td>
<td>there is a lot of good food here. It is from the Fish and Chip company</td>
<td>Eat up honey bunch, there is a lot of good food here. It is from the Fish and Chip Company</td>
<td>Eat up my love-love there is a lot of good food here. It is from the Fish &amp; Chip Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Nibaningi la ekhaya</td>
<td>and at only 25 land even hah even Plavin will approve this!</td>
<td>There’s many of you in this house, and at only R25, even Pravin will approve this!</td>
<td>There are many of you at this house, at only 25 Rand, ha even Pravin will approve this!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Haha heita! (whistle)</td>
<td>Gents Shabba’s hake and chips from the Fish and Chips company, hot and ungetable for only R25</td>
<td>Haha, cool! Guys get Shabba’s hake and chips from the Fish and chips company. Hot and unbeatable for only R25!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.3 FISH & CHIP COMPANY NKANDLA

The Nkandla television advertisement (Fish & Chip Company, 2012a) was released in November 2012 for the Fish & Chip Co. and was selected for this study for several reasons:

- It has indigenous African language content.
- It managed to harvest a substantial amount of media attention on a small budget.
- It was never shown on television but nevertheless increased brand awareness and revenue.
- The African language is used to set the brand apart.
- The advertisement employs new coinages using an indigenous African language as a base.
- Its success led to the production of a second advertisement in Xitsonga.  
- It has a socio-political link to a topical issue relating to a prominent political figure.

Background to the advertisement and the brand

Before the advertisement few South Africans recognized the Fish & Chip company brand. Consumers also struggled to distinguish between the Fish & Chip Company and “Old fashioned” Fish and Chips, their main competitor (Metropolitan Republic, 2013).

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29 The Fish & Chip Company uses the terms Shangaan and Tsonga interchangeably. For the purposes of this thesis I use the term Xitsonga, however I do make reference to the Shangaan people when discussing the language in a socio-political context.

30 See figure 33.
Metropolitan Republic was tasked with establishing the brand as a contender in the robust and populated fast food market dominated by fast food giants such as: Nando’s, Subway, KFC and McDonald’s. Unlike these large brands, the Fish & Chip Company had a significantly smaller advertising budget. Metropolitan Republic’s solution to this was the following:

- Get a big name celebrity.
- Latch onto the ‘pulse topics’.
- Use somebody relevant (Metropolitan Republic, 2013).

The agency state that they selected Jacob Zuma, the South African president, as the focus of the advertisement because:

- The Nkandla homestead he was renovating was receiving major press at the time.
- His multiple marriages attract much media attention.

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31 Nkandla is a residential housing estate belonging to President Zuma. It is located in KwaZulu-Natal. The property attracted the attention of the national media on the 11 November 2011 when the Mail and Guardian Newspaper reported substantial upgrades at the President’s rural homestead. (see: http://mg.co.za/article/2013-12-19-nkandla-task-team-vs-madonsela)

32 President Zuma practices polygamy, which is permissible according to his Zulu culture. However it has received much attention in the local and international press.
• The SABC has a tendency to sideline or ban any negative press the president receives (Metropolitan Republic, 2013).

Media outlets have reported that the SABC has a tendency to crack down on any negative press related to President Zuma (Ferreira, 2014). Metropolitan Republic speculated that the appearance of Zuma’s image in the advertisement meant that it was likely to be banned in less than a week (Metropolitan Republic, 2013). True to form the national broadcaster banned the Nkandla advertisement the night before it was scheduled to flight (Sibanyoni, 2012). Paul Warner, the creative director at Metropolitan Republic Group, the agency that made the advertisement, said the agency was informed that the commercial was banned because it was "degrading to the president" (Rolling Stone Magazine, 2012). eNCA News reported the SABC claims it had banned the advertisement because the president’s image could not be associated with an advertising campaign.

Metropolitan Republic saw this reaction to the advertisement as positive, because as a result of the SABC’s actions, the banned advertisement experienced a great deal of consideration in the national media (Metropolitan Republic, 2013). Within hours of being banned the commercial was a trending topic on social media platforms, such as twitter\textsuperscript{33}, in South Africa and it enjoyed a surge in popularity once the public was alerted that the advertisement was forbidden.

\textsuperscript{33} See figure 34.
The Nkandla advertisement also made the front-page news on newspapers\textsuperscript{34}, radio chat shows on stations such as 567 Cape Talk and was the subject of discussion on many online forums and blogs. The cartoonist Jonathan Shapiro (Zapiro) even used it as inspiration for one of his satirical cartoons\textsuperscript{35}.

\textsuperscript{34} See figure 35.
\textsuperscript{35} See figure 36.
Although the advertisement never appeared on television it was downloaded over 250 000 times before it was banned online. In addition to this the Nkandla advertisement was mentioned on social media around 775 000 times. Metropolitan Republic claims that the return on the investment from the advertisement was a staggering 30 692%\(^{36}\) (Metropolitan Republic, 2013). This was beneficial to the Fish & Chip Company and to indigenous African languages. An advertisement featuring isiZulu received a substantial amount of airtime and media attention. Although one could argue that not all the attention received by the advertisement was favourable, the simple fact is that a language other than English received exposure in the public domain.

The Fish & Chip Company brand

Background

The Fish & Chip Company was established in South Africa in 2009 and by July 2013 had 303 franchises open nationwide (Inside Woman Online, 2013) as well as stores in Swaziland, Botswana and Namibia (Fish & Chip Company, n.d.).

Product

The company markets value for money fast food meals to consumers. Their main product is seafood and chip options that they refer to as ‘Traditional English-style food’. However the Fish & Chip Co. menu does boast other options such as Vienna and Russian sausages, samosas and cheese grillers (Fish & Chip Company, n.d). The Nkandla advertisement specifically

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\(^{36}\) The figure given 30 692% was obtained from Metropolitan Republic’s Case study video see [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQc1dZcBA-Y&list=PLVCCwvCPetiQxYNAaCogjw8f5Nindexh47](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQc1dZcBA-Y&list=PLVCCwvCPetiQxYNAaCogjw8f5Nindexh47) go to 3:14.
marketed the R25 meal deal referred to as Shabba’s Hake and Chips\textsuperscript{37}; named after Siphiwe Tshabalala whom the Fish & Chip Company boasts is their ‘of-FISH-ial’ ambassador (Fish & Chip Company, n.d.).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{shabba_hake_chip.png}
\caption{Shabba’s hake and chip deal}
\end{figure}

\textbf{Logo}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{fish_chip_logo.png}
\caption{Fish & Chip Co logo with areas highlighted}
\end{figure}

The Fish & Chip Company brand logo features a fish wearing a top hat, holding a union jack flag bearing the slogan “English-style food” beneath it\textsuperscript{38}. The Union Jack flag, the top hat and the

\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{37} See figure 37.
\textsuperscript{38} See figure 38.
slogan “Traditional English-Style food” are all explicit symbols of the United Kingdom. The Union Flag, or Union Jack, has been recognized as the national flag of the United Kingdom since 1801\textsuperscript{39}. The Union Jack is a summarizing symbol; it is a visual representation that sums up ideals, a political system and a people (Ortner, 1973: 1340). The top hat is an elaborating symbol (Ortner, 1973: 1341) it is an image that denotes quality and success; usually associated with wealthy well-attired individuals\textsuperscript{40}.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.3\textwidth]{figure39.png}
\caption{HRH The Duke of Cambridge wearing a top hat (Morning Dress Guide, n.d.)}
\end{figure}

**Local is lekker: Situating a brand and product as local**

Communicating a brand image to a target segment has long been regarded as an important marketing activity (Padgett & Allen, 1997) and customers understand and interpret things within their frame-of-reference and experience (Oosthuizen, 2004; 61). As the Fish & Chip Company brand was looking to promote their product in South Africa, they needed to counteract the British symbolism of their logo and introduce local elements to appeal to the South African market. The brand accomplished this in various ways, by:

\textsuperscript{39} See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Union_Jack#Since_1801
\textsuperscript{40} See figure 39.
- featuring celebrity footballer Siphiwe Tshabalala.
- hiring popular South African cartoonist and animator Mdu Ntuli to create the television advertisement.
- feeding off of the national socio-political discourse (Polygamy, Nkandla, budget issues).
- including an indigenous African language.
- exploiting symbols South Africans could identify or interpret (the national flag, the president, the current finance minister, Nkandla, a showerhead).

**Business ideals**

The Fish & Chip Company strongly supports Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment (BBEE). BBEE is a set of policies introduced by the South African Government which aim to rectify inequalities and restrictions that exist within the country as a result of the apartheid administration’s injustices. The policies aim to sustainably empower Black individuals and others who were previously disadvantaged so that they may participate fairly and freely in the economy (The South African Department of Trade and Industry, 2013: 12). Of the Fish & Chip Company’s South African franchises; 76,57% are black owned (230 stores) and of these 16,50% are owned by black women (Inside Woman Online, 2013). The company clearly promotes the ideals of the BBEE policies, strategies that call for companies to redress past injustices in the economic sector created by the apartheid regime.

Backed by a *bhuti*: endorsement by celebrity footballer Siphiwe Tshabalala.
Research indicates that celebrity endorsers influence customer feelings towards an advertisement and the related brand (Erdogan et al., 2001). The Fish & Chip Co. have named Siphiwe Tshabalala their ‘of-FISH-ial ambassador’ (Fish & Chip Company, n.d.). Tshabalala is a soccer player; he plays for both the national team Bafana-Bafana and the local side Kaizer Chiefs. His career highlight was scoring the opening goal of the opening game of the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Tshabalala, also colloquially referred to as Shabba, is a South African icon that has represented the nation in a global arena, the FIFA 2010 soccer world cup. Tshabalala is also well recognized locally because the domestic side he plays for, Kaizer Chiefs, enjoys much success and support at home. Tshabalala’s endorsement symbolically associates the Fish & Chip Company brand with his success. Farrell (2000) submits that a celebrity endorsement of a product may significantly increase monetary returns for businesses that include them in their advertising campaigns. Mukherjee (2009: 4) proposes that a successful brand benefits from celebrity endorsement as follows:

\[ P + D + AV = S \]

\((S \text{ is a Successful Brand } P \text{ is an Effective Product } D \text{ is Distinctive Identity } AV \text{ is Added Values})\)

In this way we can see from the following chart\(^{41}\) how Tshabalala’s distinctive identity (D) and positive associations with other brands (Kaizer Chiefs and Bafana-Bafana) and events (AV) would help the Fish and Chip Company in developing a successful brand.

\(^{41}\) See figure 40.
Captivating with caricatures: hiring popular South African cartoonist Mdu Ntuli to create the Nkandla advertisement

Mdu Ntuli is a South African cartoonist, animator and programmer. Ntuli is also animator and creator of the controversial *Izikhokho* Show (Kona, 2013). Ntuli also releases episodes of the show on his you tube channel Mdu Comics (Mdu Comics, n.d). The show’s characters speak a variety of languages such as isiZulu, Xitsonga and English with a Black South African accent. Topics featured on *Izikhokho* are related to current events in South Africa: political campaigns, the justice system, housing issues and ethnic inequality. Characters include: Gogo Moloi, ‘Zulu boy’, a black Jesus and a sheep named *mbuzi* (goat)⁴².

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⁴² See figure 41.
In a similar vein, Nando’s used tongue-in-cheek comedy, releasing an advertisement containing a Z.A. News puppet earlier in the year (Nando’s, 2012). Z.A. News is an online site that produces comedic videos and award-winning satirical puppet shows with a controversial slant, much like the Izikhokho show. Z.A. News bases its puppets on the images created by renowned South African cartoonists such as Jonathan Shapiro (also known as Zapiro).

Metropolitan Republic has used a comparable tactic in the creation of the Nkandla advertisement by employing an animator who is skilled in negotiating South African political discourse in a humorous but controversial way. For instance, Ntuli created an episode entitled ‘Jesus is a Shangaan’ (Mdu Comics, 2012). In the advertisement Jesus learns he is a Shangaan and worries he will not be taken seriously.

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44 see www.zanews.co.za
45 See figure 42.
The episode was based on discrimination experienced by Shangaan and Tsonga people in South Africa. At the time of creation a Shangaan taxi driver had been murdered as a result of police brutality and media outlets were awash with reports of hatred and the persecution of Shangaan people (Mkhabela, 2013). The episode attracted the public attention and dialogue that Ntuli intended, although it was so controversial that a complaint was lodged with the Human Rights Commission (Chauke, 2012).

The same tactic was used in the Fish & Chip Company Nkandla advertisement but this time, instead of Jesus, President Zuma appeared, and the theme was changed from ethnic persecution to developments at the Nkandla complex, which dominated the media from 2011 through to early 2013 (Evans, 2014). The advertisement was created in 2012, right at the peak of media interest. The use of language to convey humour in the Nkandla advertisement demonstrates the dynamic nature of indigenous African languages. The humour, conveyed by spirited and imaginative language, allows biases to be challenged by turning

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46 Image originally from the Izikhokho Show. Episode: Jesus is a Shangaan. Time: 0.39.
preconceptions upside down through the use of unconventional language (Dowling, 1996: 64).

Clicking with media: using an indigenous African language in a television advertisement

Much like a celebrity endorsement, which associates a product with a well-known personality to differentiate it from its competitors (Erdogan et al., 2001), a language may operate in the same way in an advertisement. Oosthuizen (2013: 28) argues that brands should use the language its consumers use in the production of the brand’s advertising segments. A variety or dialect may demonstrate that a brand can relate to, or wishes to communicate with, a specific group (Noriega and Blair, 2008). Using a variety of language recognizable to consumers facilitates a relationship between brand and consumer. A specific variety also may imbue the brand and product with characteristics associated with the language (Dowling, 2013).

I argue that the Nkandla advertisement for the Fish & Chip Company featured isiZulu in the dialogue for the following reasons:

- It indexes positivity and the spectacular. The particular humour of a language can be linked directly to a product to index warm, comic feelings and communicate a feel of the extraordinary.
- It facilitates creativity. It is playful and allows for originality such as new coinages.
- It allows for the use of English subtitles. This means dialogue and image will appear should the image appear in print media.
• It works to locate and legitimize and reinforce. The language situates the discourse, topic and advertisement and reinforces visual key symbols.
• It establishes the brand as unique, contemporary and current. It helps the advertisement, brand and product to stand apart.
• It facilitates communication with consumers. The advertisement conveys humour and addresses topics of interest, facilitating consumer dialogue.

**IsiZulu situates**

The isiZulu situates the Nkandla advertisement in South Africa. In doing this the Fish & Chip Company, who the advertisement is promoting, is related to South Africa by proxy. IsiZulu is the mother tongue of President Zuma. The president often proudly asserts his Zulu identity. Examples of this include his trial, where he spoke exclusively in isiZulu (Waetjen & Mare, 2009) and his open marriages to multiple spouses in accordance with Zulu culture.

As the advertisement is set in the Zuma household in Nkandla the use of the isiZulu lends authenticity and is a very straightforward way of telling South Africans the advertisement is situated in South Africa. Nkandla, a residential complex belonging to President Zuma, is situated in the uThungulu district of KwaZulu-Natal where the majority of speakers claim isiZulu as their mother tongue (Oneale, 2014).

Adamson (in Oosthuizen, 2013: 42) explains that a simple clear message is essential in advertising. The South African symbols,
in conjunction with the isiZulu dialogue, are a clear indication that the brand and product are South African and can relate to and communicate with the South African consumer. Terms such as *shom-shom wam*, a term of endearment used by one of Zuma’s wives, make the conversation humorous and light-hearted and are a trademark of animator Ntuli.

The varieties featured in Ntuli’s *Izikhokho* show are current and humorous. The name of the show is possibly derived from the isiZulu verb *ukukhokha* ‘to pay’\(^{47}\) and could refer to bosses (the ones who pay), although Ntuli himself once joked that the term meant ‘burnt pap’ because the show was almost ‘thrown in the bin’ after SABC rejected it (Herimbi, 2012)\(^{48}\). This statement demonstrates how language can generate humour by using in-group knowledge. Nash (1988:9 in Dowling 1996) explains:

> We share our humour with those who have shared our history and who understand our way of interpreting evidence.

Using a local urban variety such as *tsotsitaal* allows the marketers to tap into current discourses with ease and creativity, establishing an immediate connection with divergent audiences. In associating quick-witted slang with quick fast food, the fare is also associated with innovation. Thus a tried and tested meal such as fish and chips is somehow given a new culinary identity purely through the use of creative slang in an indigenous African language. The humour of the advertisement delivered through the medium of language transports the viewer from the

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\(^{48}\) Burnt pap (A maize-meal dietary staple in Southern Africa) is referred to as *magogo* not *izikhokho* (Chauke, 2014).
ordinary. Exaggeration and inventive language removes the audience from the ordinary (Dowling, 1996: 27) and instils the brand and product with a feel of the extraordinary.

It has been argued that the word used to refer to deviant youth *izikhotane* is also derived from the word *izikhokho* (Chauke, 2014). Both words are associated with being current, popular and divergent. Ntuli frequently uses slang and controversial language in the *Izikhokho* episodes to reinforcing this association. For example, *mbuzi* means goat in isiZulu but can be used as an insult in township slang (Chauke, 2014). In one of the *Izikhokho* episodes Jesus has a goat called *mbuzi*: this demonstrates Ntuli’s ability to subversively use indigenous African languages in a humorous way. The Fish & Chip Company’s Nkandla advertisement, animated and copy written by Ntuli, is similar to his *Izikhokho* show in that:

- It is animated.
- It is controversial.
- The storyline is satirical.
- The dialogue features slang.
- The dialogue features an indigenous African language.
- Subtitles are used.

**Reinforces key symbols**

The isiZulu dialogue reinforces the South African symbols and discourse in the Nkandla advertisement. The South African constitution recognizes isiZulu as one of its 11 official languages (Republic of South Africa, 1996: 31). Using the variety in conjunction with symbols such as the national flag, the president and a South African celebrity reinforces the Fish &
Chip Company brand and its product as South African and not English as the company’s logo might infer. IsiZulu is one of the key symbols that serve as a locator much like a sign serves to indicate a direction, or mark the site of a geographical location.

Facilitates creativity

Indigenous African languages, specifically urban varieties, permit a great deal of creativity (Dowling, 2013). This flexibility has permitted copywriter to create new coinages by selecting an indigenous African language, isiZulu, as the root of the lexical item and attaching English affixes e.g.

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Un-</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>qued</th>
<th>-</th>
<th>able</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prefix</td>
<td>Root</td>
<td>Suffix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>isiZulu</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The root –*qed-* is derived from the isiZulu word *ukuqeda* meaning ‘to finish’ and is here used as a bicodal word: a word with morphemes from two different languages.

Provides an urban edge

The content of the Nkandla advertisement related to a current media topic and the language choice reflects this. Mazer and Hunt (2008: 22) have noted positive responses to individuals using slang with youth. Speakers were identified to be more approachable and ‘cool’. The isiZulu spoken in the advertisement is not a standard variety: it contains slang. This locates the advertisement, brand and product as cool, current and up-to-date. Mutonya (2008) chronicles the rise of Sheng, an urban Kiswahili slang, in Kenyan advertising campaigns,
explaining that this urban variety demonstrates that the product is urban and current. Ntuli uses slang in his Izikhohko show in which the animator tackles current topics; demonstrating that the subject matter and characters are contemporary. He takes much the same approach in the Nkandla advertisement where the slang localizes the brand and product, placing them in contemporary South Africa where freedom of speech is permitted, or at least, aspired to.

**Conveys humour**

The language used in the advertisement conveys humour because it is unusual to see the president speaking in such an informal way. Most viewers hear the president delivering speeches and not conversing with his family at home. Hearing terms of endearment such as Zuzulicious and listening to language spoken out of the usual context make for humour and may also have been the Fish & Chip Company’s way of allowing consumers to release their tensions about the political situation and thus associate good feelings with their brand. In addition, the subtle reference to the way in which isiZulu-speakers pronounce the letter ‘r’ also lends a comedic aspect to the discourse. Pravin is referred to as P-L-avin. The ‘r’ is replaced with ‘l’ the two sounds being allophones: one of two or more variants of the same phoneme. Davé (in Davé et al., 2005: 320), speaks of the way in which incompetence is referenced by ‘funny accents’ and it is clear that in the Nkandla advertisement this is exactly the device exploited by Ntuli to satirical effect.
Zuma, Zulu and Zapiro: Using symbols South Africans can identify or interpret (the national flag, the president, the finance minister, Nkandla, a showerhead)

The Nkandla advertisement goes a long way to locate the Fish and Chip Company’s brand as proudly South African and counteract the collection of symbols on its logo that give the impression of a British brand. The first screen shot immediately allows the viewer to literally place the brand in South Africa by the inclusion of the following elements:

- Dinner time at Nkandla title.
- The South African flag.
- A reference to a Zapiro cartoon, the showerhead.
- The Fish and Chip Co. logo on a scooter at Nkandla.

![Figure 43: Opening screen for the Fish & Chip Company’s Nkandla advertisement](image)
This initial shot places the viewer, and the Fish & Chip Company brand, firmly in a South African locale\textsuperscript{49}. The next scene goes a step further, with a fictional dinnertime scene at the president’s household\textsuperscript{50} where viewers are quickly able to recognize caricatures of the president’s wives and children, a subject that has previously attracted media attention (Maclean, 2012).

![Figure 44: The Fish & Chip Company's Nkandla advertisement: Jacob Zuma's wives at the dinner table in the Nkandla residence](image)

Other images that South African viewers are rapidly and easily able to recognize are objects such as the showerhead fountain\textsuperscript{51}: the showerhead image is one that has been connected to Zuma following his testimony in a trial. South African cartoonist Zapiro drew a cartoon of Zuma with a shower head attached to his head after Zuma testified in court, during his 2006 rape trial, when it was revealed that he had had unprotected sex with a woman whom he knew to be HIV positive. Zuma claimed he

\textsuperscript{49} See figure 43.
\textsuperscript{50} See figure 44.
\textsuperscript{51} See figure44.
had taken a shower quickly afterward to protect himself (Baldauf, 2011). The image has stuck ever since and has appeared in consequent Zapiro cartoons and other mentions of the President. ANC Youth league supporters have referenced Zuma and the showerhead image in the song *Shawara wa re sokodisa* meaning “the shower man is giving us a hard time” and the showerhead has now become an image synonymous with the President (Mtyala, 2011). Pravin Gordhan was the finance minister at the time the advertisement was produced. He is represented by a calculator, which appears and flashes ‘affordable’ on screen when the cost of the meal and his name arise. Gordhan called for government officials to practice austerity measures (Ephraim, 2013) and his inclusion in the advertisement is a satirical reference to excessive government expenditure that Gordhan was trying to curb.

![Zapiro cartoon showing a showerhead fountain with a reference to finance minister Pravin Gordhan.](image)

Figure 45: Zapiro cartoon showerhead, showerhead fountain, reference to finance minister Pravin Gordhan.

The language and the images

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52 See figure 45.
The language used in the advertisement is creative and informal; used in conjunction with the images which reference current affairs in a light-hearted manner, the advertisement clearly communicates from the offset it is not to be taken seriously. The references to current affairs such as Nkandla are also complimented by ‘current’ language, which demonstrates that the Fish & Chip Company brand has its finger on the pulse. It understands what is happening in the political and linguistic landscape. This is akin to advertisements such as *Izikhotane* and other advertisements produced for the Nando’s 25 Reasons Campaign. The contemporary subject matter and urban language variety employed made the brand seem deviant but also quick-witted and in touch with the latest news and styles. Mawadza (2000) and Miller (2004) explain how deviance from standard varieties demonstrates that speakers are part of a new generation, their language makes them modern and separates them from their parents’ generation. By exploiting identifiable South African symbols in conjunction with local languages and language varieties the Fish & Chip Company brand was able to locate itself as trendy and current locally: this demonstrates Metropolitan Republic’s ‘temperature check’ (Metropolitan Republic, 2011) approach in producing culturally and socially relevant advertisements.

**Subtitles**

The advertisement’s subtitles appeared in English. They are relatively close to the original although some words are not directly translated but rather substituted for an existing English word. For instance *shom-shom wam* literally meaning ‘my little puff-puff’ is translated as ‘honey bunch’. The advertisement has also coined new, bicodal, lexical items such as *Zuzu-licious* and
unqedable, which do not have direct English equivalents. As the advertisement featured on the news and in print, the subtitles were useful: they could convey dialogue without the audience having to watch the advertisement.

The subtitles are also a feature in other animated segments created by Ntuli and are present in a variety of popular South African soap operas such as *Muvhango*, *Generations* and *Isidingo* and permit producers to further communication with multilingual audiences. The subtitles enable the Fish & Chip Company to air an advertisement that speaks to a divergent audience. Zijderveld (1983: 47 in Dowling, 1996: 185) proposes that joking and laughter unite people, even bringing together people who were previously unknown to each other, or otherwise had little to say to each other. The subtitles assist in the communication of humour and language to many different South Africans.
CHAPTER 8: ADVERTISEMENT 4

8.1 FISH & CHIP CO. XAMINA XAWENA IN PICTURES

Figure 46: Fish & Chip Co. Xamina Xawena in pictures

(Fish & Chip Company, 2012b)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>Xitsonga</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Subtitle</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Ee, Abednigo</td>
<td>Why</td>
<td>Hey Abednigo</td>
<td>Hey Abednigo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ungalanguti</td>
<td>Fish and chips</td>
<td>look at your fish and chips</td>
<td>take a look at yours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yawena ibi ulanguta yamina</td>
<td>Boss?</td>
<td>now look at mine.</td>
<td>now look at mine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>Abednigo</td>
<td>Tafana maan!</td>
<td>It looks the same to me</td>
<td>It’s the same!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Atifani! Nuweta tamina buti</td>
<td>No they aren’t the same. Smell mine...</td>
<td>Not it’s not! Smell mine brother...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>Abednigo</td>
<td>Mmmh</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>Friend</td>
<td>Tawena yifongkong</td>
<td>and</td>
<td>Yours is ‘Fong-Kong’ and old.</td>
<td>Yours is ‘Fong-Kong’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.12</td>
<td></td>
<td>ti-old kufana nawena</td>
<td>so</td>
<td>Mine is from the Fish and Chip Company, the one with Shabba. Listen to your laughter.</td>
<td>Yours is old, understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.14</td>
<td></td>
<td>waswitiva?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tamina tihuma afish</td>
<td>and chip company</td>
<td>Mine is from the fish and chip company, with Shabba, understand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.17</td>
<td></td>
<td>liya yaShabba, waswitiva?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.19</td>
<td></td>
<td>Twana xihleko xawena, twana xihleko xamina!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Listen to your laugh, now listen to mine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Fish & Chip, Company 2012b)
8.2 THE FISH AND CHIP COMPANY  XAMINA XAWENA

*Xamina Xawena* meaning ‘it’s mine, it’s yours’ in Xitsonga, was the title of an advertisement flighted by the Fish & Chip Company in late 2012. Metropolitan Republic advertising agency followed up the Fish & Chip Company’s first television advertisement with *Xamina Xawena*, producing a second animated feature created by controversial South African cartoonist Mdu Ntuli. Like its predecessor, the advertisement featured a discourse in an indigenous African language, this time the variety presented was Xitsonga. In this advertisement language is a significant feature: the Fish & Chip Company (Fish & Chip Company, 2012b) claims that *Xamina Xawena* is the first Xitsonga television advertisement to be aired in South Africa. This is a noteworthy development: South African advertisements in indigenous varieties are scarce (Dowling, 2014a) and advertisements produced in indigenous African languages tend to favour dialogue in main Nguni varieties such as isiZulu. This is true of access to services too. ATMs in South Africa often offer a variety of language choices but languages such as Xitsonga and Tshivenda rarely feature.  

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53 Ntuli is an animator and cartoonist. He is creator of the controversial *Izikhokho* show and also generated the provocative Nkandla advertisement for the Fish & Chip Company.
54 See figure 47.
Opening scene and title

The title of the advertisement *Xamina Xawena* is a Xitsonga expression literally meaning ‘It’s yours, it’s mine’ with inferences of the notion of *ubuntu* (Chauke, 2014) implying a sense of community. The title immediately locates the advertisement as South African and is geared towards a local audience. Hester and Housely (2002: 111) rationalize that the title articulates between the implicit readership and the subsequent article. On this occasion the use of a Xitsonga title and Xitsonga in the dialogue communicates:

- **The advertisement is local.**

  The use of Xitsonga, a variety indigenous to Africa and recognized as an official language in South Africa, situates the brand and advertisement in this country but also gives it a wider African appeal because of
Xitsonga’s origin in Mozambique. It articulates that the brand wishes to communicate with a South African audience, including speakers of minority languages who might come from outside of the country’s borders.

- **The advertisement will differ from the norm.**
  The Fish & Chip Company are producing a television advertisement in an indigenous African language, which already makes it unique as these varieties are in the minority. The use of Xitsonga takes this a step further to garner even more individuality and attention as previously no other companies have produced Xitsonga advertisements for South African television.

![Figure 48: Arrows highlighting key features in Xamina Xawena opening scene: taxi rank, cityscape, traditional dancers, and multicultural audience](image)

The traditional dancers are part of the opening scene of the advertisement. The dancers reference tradition, with their
braided hair, matching outfits and body shaking dance routine\textsuperscript{55}. However they are performing at a taxi rank\textsuperscript{56} to a multicultural, multiracial audience and have a cityscape in the background.

The viewer immediately identifies:

- **Rural**
  
The sound of ululations, braided hair, a ‘natural’ afro and a dance routine imply a traditional element to the advertisement. A respondent to whom I showed the advertisement noted: ‘Mmm you know you can do those hairstyles at home, so yeah that’s why we think they are a bit rural. For relaxed hair and such like you must go to a salon’ (Manabe, 2014).

\textsuperscript{55} See figure 48.
\textsuperscript{56} In South Africa a ‘taxi rank’ refers to a public transport depot for what South Africans refer to as ‘taxis’. The word taxi usually refers to white mini buses, often privately owned, that transport passengers along a set route. Unlike a conventional transport system there are no assigned stops, passengers alert the driver or his assistant and the vehicle makes a stop. Taxis cater to the public and tend to be an inexpensive fairly reliable way for commuters to travel in South Africa. This is especially true along routes where other forms of public transport are not available or not as reliable. Taxi ranks are hubs of activity and are spaces where vendors, bus drivers and customers interact. They are also transitory areas, while commuters wait they chat with other passengers and can purchase food or drink.
• **Urban**
  The cityscape, music speakers and taxi rank in the background reveal that the advertisement is contemporary, urban and current.

• **The familiar**
  The bustle of a taxi rank is something many South Africans experience on a regular basis. This is a location many South Africans can instantaneously identify and are familiar with. The multicultural gathering of spectators and performers at the taxi rank speaks to the ‘rainbow nation’ identity associated with South Africa.

• **The unfamiliar**
  The variety is unexpected; Xitsonga is not a language viewers expect advertisers to use. Therefore the advertisement initially appears unfamiliar to the audience.

When explaining the motivation for this advertisement, the Fish & Chip Company refer to *Muvhango*, a popular South African Soap opera (Fish & Chip Company, 2012b). *Muvhango* stands out from other South African soap operas in that it has a predominantly Tshivenda dialogue (Muvhango, 2014) and is highly popular. Other soap operas such as *Generations, Isibaya* and *Isidingo* have chosen Nguni or English varieties for their
scripts as dominant languages for their narrative. However it should be noted that characters in these soap operas (particularly *Generations*) have characters that speak Sotho languages.

*Muvhango* is a situated in both a rural and an urban milieu (Muvhango, 2014). This relates to the *Xamina Xawena* advertisement as both include traditional and metropolitan elements. With many South Africans migrating to urban areas in search of work (Cornwell & Inder, 2004: 2) these broadcasts showcasing lesser-known language varieties are revealing situations all South Africans can relate to (including minority ethnic groups). The official *Muvhango* page on Facebook claims the show is:

A true reflection of the South African society with elements of culture, tradition, superstition and witchcraft infused into the characters’ lives. The show popularised the Venda culture, the main language used in the series. Being a minority cultural grouping in South Africa, it remains exotic and mystical (Muvhango, 2014).

To a degree the Fish & Chip Company are replicating the *Muvhango* magical formula with the *Xamina Xawena* advertisement. The brand is trying to convey to consumers that they can relate to all South Africans, not just specific groups and
not in tokenistic language (Fish & Chip Company, 2012b). They do this by speaking to consumers with symbols and situations that they instantly recognize, providing English subtitles and using an indigenous African language spoken by a minority. In this way the brand differentiates themselves and infers that they can connect with consumers across the board.

**Familiarity**

As I have argued, the Fish & Chip Company have located the advertisement in an instantly recognizable location for many South Africans: a taxi rank. Phillips and McQuarrie (2005) explain that images on video are typically seen as direct replications of reality. This strengthens the audience’s feeling of interacting with the product and image and helps them to relate to both in a more fundamental way. This familiarity with location and action is a similar tactic used in the Nedbank KE YONA campaign which looked to appeal to consumers by using everyday language in an ‘everyday setting’ (Nedbank, 2011).

The image of the taxi rank immediately indexes the familiar but presents a bizarre scenario juxtaposing reality (people at a taxi rank) with the fantastic (the viewer is magically enabled linguistically via the subtitles to eavesdrop on a dialogue in an otherwise inscrutable code, Xitsonga). This alchemy happens when the two workmen begin to talk. Their overalls, commonly
worn by builders and general labourers, indicate that they are typical blue-collar workers, people many South Africans can relate to.

**Uniqueness**

Davis (in Oosthuizen, 2013: 9) explains that a brand is essentially a set of promises. Therefore when a brand is establishing its identity it is important for it to separate itself from other brands by offering a unique identity. The viewer is jolted in the *Xamina Xawena* advertisement when the men begin to converse in Xitsonga. This action immediately sets the brand apart and permits it to establish an exclusive identity. The audience is not alienated by the variety as the appearance of English subtitles allows them to appreciate the humour and political undertones of the conversation. When Metropolitan Republic took on the Fish & Chip Company account they noted that one of the brand’s main issues was that consumers struggled to distinguish them from their competitors. The *Xamina Xawena* advertisement is radically different from many other advertisements, largely due to the dialogue. This demonstrates how an indigenous African language can help to define a brand as well as communicate with customers. The language keeps the advertisement fresh and current, with the incorporation of the word ‘Fong-Kong’ but does not rely too much on slang or neologisms as in the Nkandla advertisement.
This demonstrates that Xitsonga is original enough in itself because it is so unique and surprisingly under-exploited as a language in the media.

**The link to the previous Fish & Chip Company advertisement (Nkandla)**

The Nkandla advertisement, created for the Fish & Chip Company earlier in 2012, used key symbols such as isiZulu, President Zuma and the South African flag to index the Fish & Chip Company brand as local. The *Xamina Xawena* advertisement also uses an indigenous African language variety however it is an unexpected one. The images that appear in the advertisement index the brand as local in a more nuanced manner, for example, the taxi rank is a place many South Africans instantly recognize but would not be accorded the same symbolism as the South African flag which is an overt symbol.

**Xitsonga is ‘fresh’ not ‘Fong-Kong’: language in the *Xamina Xawena* advertisement**

Fardon and Furniss (2000: 3) contend that the choice of vernaculars in which to broadcast has always been a tough balancing act. In the *Xamina Xawena* advertisement the Fish & Chip Company have purposely selected a variety spoken by a
minority group and in so doing have chosen to recognize and promote Xitsonga. The brand argues they felt it was important to acknowledge the Tsonga language, the culture it conveys and to provide its speakers with a public platform. The brand explains:

It only makes sense for a brand like Fish and Chips Co. to embrace all the cultural differences and appeal to a wider range of people, not only those who speak the most popular of the 11 official languages (The Fish & Chip Company, 2012b).

Cultural studies scholars have reasoned that language is not a neutral channel for the construction of meaning (Barker & Galasinski, 2001) and note that the implications of broadcast media content are often social and political (Hooks, 1996: 73). In this instance the Fish & Chip Company suggest they are promoting a positive attitude towards the variety and are genuinely trying to communicate with all South Africans. The Fish & Chip Company states that the Xamina Xawena advertisement was created because they ‘aim to portray snippets of real South Africans (rich or poor) enjoying our product in their own environments’ (Fish & Chip Company, 2012b). The company states that they wish to communicate with consumers in their language, and that they ‘try harder than just "Yebo or
sharp sharp” when addressing them’ (Fish and Chip Company, 2012b).

The Xitsonga language is associated with a good quality product (the Fish & Chip Co meal), a popular celebrity (Tshabalala) and humour. I believe that Metropolitan Republic and the Fish & Chip Company are initiating a positive trend in attitudes towards Xitsonga with this innovative commercial.

Diversification of languages in broadcast media is closely tied to developments in political and economic emancipation (Fardon and Furniss, 2000: 3). The South African Constitution supports the use of indigenous African languages (Republic of South Africa, 2006) and the national broadcaster, the SABC, promotes the idea of cultural diversity and national unity (Barker & Galasinski, 2001). SABC has promoted these ideals through the broadcast of multicultural and multilingual programs. Studies have shown that multilingual soap operas produced by the SABC have encouraged understanding and integration on a national stage (Barnard, 2006). While the SABC must adhere to strict broadcasting requirements when considering the language in which to broadcast in, advertisers are under no such obligation, multilingualism is not enforced in the advertising industry (Cawood and Du Toit, 2006: 1).
My research (Grier, 2013) shows that the majority of advertisements produced for television in South Africa are in English. The SABC derives roughly 80% of its income primarily from advertising (Minnie in Fardon and Furniss, 2000: 177) and so in order to fund multilingual programming it is necessary for the SABC to air many English language advertisements.

Language conveys beliefs, significance and understanding audiences can relate to (Barker, 2001: 12). Metropolitan Republic, the creative team behind the advertisement, recognized that a significant amount of consumers were not being addressed through the English language discourses of South African television advertisements and looked to reach out to them through the medium of a minority indigenous African language: Xitsonga. The conscious selection of indigenous African languages in both the Nkandla and Xamina Xawena dialogues supports the brand’s claim that they ‘wish to communicate with consumers in their language’ (Fish and Chip Company, 2012b). In championing minority languages the Fish and Chip Company is setting itself apart from other brands; Oosthuizen (2013) explains this is key in establishing a successful brand. Using isiZulu and Xitsonga to distinguish themselves and connect with consumers the brand takes a step further than just setting themselves apart. The brand light-
heartedly illustrates (animates) a stereotype and turns it upside down; inverting preconceived paradigms so that those laughed at become those laughing. Those denied a language get to speak it.

The *Xamina Xawena* addresses what Hooks (1996) refers to as the politics of representation: in South African Xitsonga, which is associated with the Shangaan people (Maiden, 2014), has often been the subject of jokes and ridicule (Dowling, 1996). The Shangaan and Tsonga people were confined to the ‘homeland’ of Gazankulu during the apartheid era. Gazankulu has since been integrated into Limpopo province (South Africa Tourism, n.d.) an impoverished area of South Africa. An informant told me:

When people from Limpopo come to Cape Town we say ‘Yeah, welcome to South Africa!’ because, yeah, it’s like where they come from they are so dark and rural it’s not South Africa (Chauke, 2014).

Hooks (1996: 9) rationalizes that cinema does not merely offer us the opportunity to reimagine the culture we most intimately know on screen; it goes further and actually creates culture. Enlightened representations of social paradigms have appeared when moviemakers have deliberately not reinforced social
stereotypes. Strausbaugh (2006) recounts that this phenomenon occurred in Hollywood in the 1930’s when progressive movie makers created black characters that were intelligent and quick witted and presentable. This highlighted the social prejudices of race at the time and provided audiences with an alternate way in which to understand and view their worlds.

In the South African context Nando’s more recently highlighted social prejudices in their ‘diversity’ advertisement, which challenged South African’s to rethink social issues relating to xenophobic outbreaks in the country. The advertisement purposely poked fun at stereotypes making them and the prejudicial behaviour that happens as a result appear comic and ridiculous. The advertisement attracted a lot of attention in the national media (Channel 24, 2012).

Fardon and Furniss (2000: 3) remark that language may characterize a particular group. In South Africa the link between ethnicity, language and prosperity was reinforced by apartheid regime policies (Posel, 2010). Alternatively languages can act to unite as opposed to divide, a union of energies may blend to identify with a language (Fardon and Furniss, 2000: 3). It is significant that the voice artist of the Xamina Xawena advertisement is not a mother-tongue speaker of Xitsonga. This suggests that this minority language is indeed under threat in
South Africa and can be labelled as vulnerable. The commercial invites other South Africans to interact with the language. The Xamina Xawena advertisement by the Fish and Chip Company promotes a sense of national unity and an acceptance and enchantment with the diversity of language. This complements the company’s broad-based black economic empowerment (BBEE) stance; the Fish and Chip Company promotes South African’s previously disadvantaged by the apartheid system.

There is a strong rapport between the media and democracy in South Africa (Minnie in Fardon and Furniss, 2000: 177) established during the apartheid regime due to social and political injustices. This relationship with democracy and linguistic equality is apparent in the Xamina Xawena advertisement that promotes a minority language whose speakers have faced prejudice, and in some instances persecution as previously mentioned. The Fish and Chip Company are reflecting both their corporate ethos and distinguishing themselves as a brand. Language, specifically Xitsonga, serves as a medium for the company to communicate their message and identity with their audience. This language is complimented by symbols such as Tshabalala, a popular soccer player. The use of a symbol (Shabba) revered by many South Africans compliments the sense of national unity encouraged by the variety.
Laughter: the use of an idiolect

Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. (Geertz, 1973: 213)

Geertz (1973) goes on to explain how a simple action such as a wink may be interpreted in many different ways. He proposes that it be analysed in context in the ‘web’ of meaning in which it exists, arguing that actions exist and derive meaning from other actions and context. In the same way that a wink may suggest a variety of communications as a result of its context and how the action is performed; a laugh does not simply convey humour. Depending on the situation in which it occurs and the manner in which it is executed a laugh may express a variety of meanings.

In the Xamina Xawena advertisement two distinct laughs are presented to the audience; the first belonging to the secondary character to whom the Fish and Chip Company product is being ‘sold’ is high pitched and quicker. The second laugh belonging to the dominant authoritative character (selling the product) is
slower, heartier and lower pitched. The second laugh resembles a chuckle and in my opinion sounds more genuine.

In this advertisement the two laughs act in several ways:

- **To demonstrate authenticity and quality**
  
The advertisement creates an association between the speakers’ meals and their laughter. The conversation begins when one character notes the difference between the meals.

He says ‘Ee, Abednigo ungalanguti yawena ibi ulanguta yamina.’ (Hey Abednigo look at your fish and chips and look at mine)\(^57\) immediately the consumer is alerted to the difference in product. This difference is further reinforced by the character in orange noting that his smells better, then correlating his friend

\(^57\) See figure 49.
Abednigo’s food with the slang word ‘Fong-kong’ \(^{58}\). The laugh is what really drives the point home. While the audience can distinguish between the colours of the products they cannot smell or taste them. The audience is able to distinguish between the types of laughter. By associating the laughter with the products the audience discerns that the Fish & Chip Company has a good genuine product.

Songs, characters of stories and entertaining encounters that were part of Hausa radio advertisements had positive connotations or characteristics, which were then attributed to the product through association (Fardon and Furniss, 2000: 142). The Fish & Chip Company is distinguishing their product by associating it with a ‘quality’ laugh. The difference in the laughs is noted once the association has been made thus differentiating between the Fish & Chip Company and other fast food brands that are associated with the negative term ‘Fong-Kong’.

Sausurre (1960 in Barker & Galasinski, 2001: 12) proposes that a signifying system is constituted of a series of signs, which are analysed in terms of their constituent parts: the signifier and the signified. In the Xamina Xawena advertisement there are many signifiers however the **language choice** and the **laugh** stand out.

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\(^{58}\) Dowling (2014b) explains that the slang term ‘Fong-Kong’ literally means ‘from Hong-Kong’. It has a negative connotation indicating that the product is a fake or a copy of another and not great quality.
as central. While I have already discussed the choice of language for this commercial it is now important to assess the laugh in relation to political and social developments at the time to understand what they signify.

Why the laugh?
I will attempt to answer this question under a number of headings.

• **For comedic value**
  Laughter often encourages the same reaction in others (Attardo, 1993). The brand, by including reference to a laugh, and the image of an ordinary South African laughing, is able to create positive feelings of a mutual and shared humour.

• **Possibly to reference a the previous Fish & Chip Company advertisement**
  The previous Fish & Chip Company advertisement entitled Nkandla, featured President Zuma’s image and was banned by the SABC (News24, 2012). It is possible the brand is referencing the President with the laugh.
Zuma is renowned for his laughter, which has been remarked upon in several media articles\textsuperscript{59}.

Figure 50: Zuma’s laugh featuring in news articles

**Conclusion**

The politicized lives of South Africans has meant that advertising content which refers implicitly (by way of a laugh) or explicitly (actual reference to Nkandla) will have appeal and garner brand loyalty as humorous political discourse is part of South Africans’ identity. A language such as Xitsonga facilitates the successful relaying of such nuanced subject matter and creating advertisements in minority languages such as Xitsonga can earn the brand acclaim and attention as well as initiating trends in interest and positive attitudes towards the variety.

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CHAPTER 9: ADVERTISEMENT 5

9.1 KING PIE MNANDI--LICIOUS IN PICTURES

Figure 51: King Pie Mnandi-licious advertisement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>isiZulu</th>
<th>Subtitles</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00.00</td>
<td>Blonde Woman</td>
<td>Steak and kidney um.....</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.02</td>
<td>isiZulu-speaking woman</td>
<td>Hayi tshomi yam uma’ ehambela phezulu akayazi into ayifunayo.</td>
<td>Oh my friend, miss classy here doesn’t know what she wants.</td>
<td>No my friend, the woman who is going up [uppity woman] doesn’t know what she wants</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.06</td>
<td>Blonde Woman</td>
<td>Mamela sisi, ukhuluma ngami? Khawuthi ngikutshele: uyabona amapies maningi kule stolo? Uyawabona? Bheka nje.</td>
<td>Look how many flavours there are to choose from [hand gesture].</td>
<td>Listen sister, are you talking about me? Let me just tell you: do you see there are lots of pies in this shop? Do you see them? Have a look.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.13</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Every King Pie is folded with the lightest puff pastry packed with mouth-watering fillings and freshly baked all day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.21</td>
<td>Blonde Woman</td>
<td>Eyh!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.22</td>
<td>isiZulu-speaking woman</td>
<td>Oh, so you like King Pies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.23</td>
<td>Blonde Woman</td>
<td>Heyi awuyazi lutho wena. Kudala mina ngidla le nto. Wena uqale nou.</td>
<td>I’ve been buying King Pies forever.</td>
<td>Hey you don’t know anything. As for me, I have been eating this thing for a long time. You started now.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>00.26</td>
<td>Voice</td>
<td>Value-for-money meals that are mnandi-licious!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.3 KING PIE: AFRICAN LANGUAGES TO SHOCK AND AMUSE

The King Pie brand

King Pie is a South African brand that has stores located nation-wide, the brand also boasts outlets in other Southern African countries. King Pie is a fast food chain with its primary product being pastry pies. The company describes its brand as vibrant, energetic, relevant and on top of the game. The King Pie brand cites innovation as its key to success explaining that it achieves this through continuous development and is driven by customer centricity\textsuperscript{60} (King Pie, n.d.).

\textbf{Innovation is the Key to King Pie’s Success!}

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{king_pie_promotional_material.png}
\caption{King Pie promotional material (King Pie, n.d.)}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{60} See figure 52.
The King Pie campaign: ruling the roost with *Mnandi-licious*

Red Rocket the agency behind the King Pie *mnandi-licious* advertisement proposes a multi-disciplinary approach to advertising (Red Rocket, 2008). The *mnandi-licious* television commercial, flighted in 2013, was supported by additional materials such as billboards in high traffic areas and advertisements on public transport such as buses and taxis$^{61}$ (King Pie, n.d.).

![Image of King Pie advertisement on public transport and billboards](image)

Figure 53: King pie advertising on public transport and billboards

The campaign made a concerted effort to connect with to South Africans in their everyday lives. The assorted publicity went hand in hand to support the television campaign. Pomerantz

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$^{61}$ See figure 53.
(n.d.) suggests that billboards are a successful means of communicating a message to a vast audience in a distinct geographic area. I argue that advertising on public transport, which repeatedly travels the same route, acts in much the same fashion. As billboard and transport advertisements were located near transport hubs it is clear that King Pie is casting its net wide and attempting to appeal to an extensive group of consumers.

Social context

In early 2012 the proposal to drop isiXhosa and isiZulu at state schools where English is the primary medium of instruction and offer Afrikaans as a second language attracted considerable media attention (Times Live, 2012). Nando’s, a fast food chain, reacted in support of indigenous African languages releasing the “Hlonipha ulimi lwakho” (Respect your (mother) tongue) print advertisements that appeared in national newspapers.  

Academics across the nation rallied behind press criticism of the plan; citing a lack of linguistic awareness (Kaschula in Times Live, 2012), arguing that it was unjust (Kwatsha in Times Live, 2012) as well as further marginalizing indigenous African languages (Ngubane in Times Live, 2012). Television programs featured discussions on the topic and it launched several research initiatives such as Ditsele (2014). Campaigns like the Nal'ibali National Reading for Enjoyment Campaign helped to address the situation and draw attention to it. Multilingualism was promoted through the creation and distribution of stories in numerous languages, the use of which was encouraged in daily in reading clubs (Bloch in Cook, 2013).

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62 See figure 13.
It became clear that multilingualism was an important aspect of national identity. The support for African languages, and the promotion of first and second language teaching of them, gained significant support. The use of indigenous African languages in television advertising was still scant but on the climb post 2010. Campaigns such as Nedbank’s KE YONA had demonstrated that brands had begun to appreciate the importance of communicating with consumers in their mother tongue (Grier, 2013). While campaigns (Nedbank KE YONA, FNB praise singer, Nando’s Izikhotane) had used African language varieties in an assortment of codes, all had linked the code to the expected speaker (The Nando’s Izikhotane advertisement paired township slang with deviant youth while the FNB praise singer paired poetic language with a man clad in traditional attire). These advertisements had promoted multilingualism by making the languages visible and elevating them to a national platform where they had hitherto been scarce. However, these commercials had propagated social stereotypes of language and speaker, they had not demonstrated that an indigenous African language was not necessarily bound to the stereotypical speaker. The Mnandi-licious advertisement created by King Pie in early 2013, was created in this environment and addressed this issue.

**The Mnandi-licious advertisement by King Pie**

While a number of television advertisements have used African languages or African language varieties to amuse (eg. Polka’s Seriyas!, Zuzulicious in the Fish & Chip Company Nkandla advertisement) this humorous advertisement, which features a white, blonde woman speaking isiZulu, is unique in that it breaks the language-ethnic identity stereotype that white people
cannot speak African languages. It therefore serves both to shock and amuse.

We wanted to create humour with a true South African flair. The audience wouldn’t expect that the white lady would be able to speak fluent Zulu. As they say “Don’t judge a book by its cover”. (Ruwers-Lee, 2013)

The blonde woman is reacting to an isiZulu-speaking customer’s comment to the shop assistant that she is taking too long to choose. In normal circumstances white people are oblivious to the gossip going around them in African languages although anecdotal evidence suggests that the gossipers are sometimes caught out when the outsider signals the fact that she or he can actually understand what is being said by casually referring to the gossip in the indigenous language.

The fact that the blonde woman speaks not only good isiZulu but uses gestures congruent with that of a mother-tongue speaker is an essential part of the overall success of her isiZulu speech. Brookes (2005: 2080) notes that “gestures and gestural style are an important part of appearing streetwise and city slick” and help the outsider (the blonde woman) to establish a relationship with her interlocutor:

Gestural behaviour indexes, according to cultural norms of interaction, the nature of the relationships among

---

This is generally accepted as true but cannot be supported by statistical evidence, as Census 2011 has not made available figures relating to second or third languages spoken.
participants, representation of self, as well as social identities. (Brookes, 2005: 2080).

Exploding stereotypes and creating inclusivity

Red Rocket (the agency responsible for the *Mnandi-licious* advertisement) makes unequivocal reference to the connection between race and language. One of their executives articulated the tension thus:

It’s no secret that we South Africans aren’t afraid of laughing at ourselves, and of course one of the issues that we still have to deal with is race and crossing the cultural boundaries. In other words ‘whities’ have a lot of catching up to do in terms of learning the languages of the people who live in this great country of ours. Let’s face it, when it comes to race, language and culture – which can be sensitive issues – it’s great to be able to take a step back and look at these issues with a collective smile on our face…The delivery of the white lady’s isiZulu was critical to the success of the ad. We needed to find a pretty young white lady who could speak isiZulu so fluently, that unsighted, even the Zulu’s would think she was black – the last person you would expect to speak fluent isiZulu. (Morris, 2014)

Apart from exploding the notion of ethno-linguistic stereotypes, the advertisement emphasizes SA’s potential to grow into a truly multicultural society in which no language is owned by any one group and addresses issues of inclusivity and bridging divides between consumers in particular market segments. While much research has been done on the phenomenon of black youth
“acting white” and shifting their language of preference to English (De Klerk, 2000), little has been done on the reverse situation. This would suggest that English is clearly the language of prestige and ambition, the code most young people would like to associate themselves with, whereas African languages are associated with poverty, marginalization and a lack of education (De Klerk, 2000). By broadcasting an advertisement in which a young white woman speaks an African language fluently the company is clearly suggesting that African languages too can be aspirational. As has already been noted, the style of the isiZulu uttered by the white woman is greatly enhanced by her gestures, which give her street credibility, but her isiZulu is nevertheless not slang, but of a standard variety. While the style associated with Tsotsitaal has been noted (Hurst & Mesthrie, 2013) it is seldom argued that standard varieties of African languages are attractive or appealing to the youth.

Globally research has shown that ethnic minorities (such as Hispanics in the USA, see Koslow et. al., 1994) do not always respond favourably to advertisements that specifically target them as it speaks to discriminatory advertising and perceived ethnic differences. In a similar way in South Africa, advertisers during apartheid created separate advertisements specific to their language groups and ethnicity, and unwittingly appeared to be supporting the apartheid mentality (Dowling, 2013).

The King Pie advertisement, however, by cleverly having a white person speaking an African language avoids any criticism of condescension to poorer or marginalized clients by using indigenous languages; rather it suggests that the African language has status, style and prestige. The advertisement also speaks to the new generation of young South Africans who have grown up in a “rainbow” nation and who want to be part of
Mandela’s legacy in which all cultures mix and reach out to each other and who laugh at and celebrate each other’s differences and similarities.

The advertisement has been a huge success, receiving two awards\textsuperscript{64}, and it can be argued that this achievement is largely due to its multicultural, humorous and original situation. At the same time, the advertisers, by using isiZulu with subtitles and the voice over (giving details of the price and products) in English, have been able to:

- target multiple market segments (without alienating existing customers) while at the same time playing a social role by integrating different facets of South African society into their advertisements (Johnson et al., 2010: 191-192).

**Language**

Apart from the inclusion of some isiXhosa words (Mamela, Hayi) and one Afrikaans one (nou), both women speak in standard isiZulu.

The voice over, giving price and product information is entirely in English, apart from the slogan ‘Mnandi-licious’\textsuperscript{65}. This is a

\textsuperscript{64} Millward Brown South Africa announces The Best Liked Ads for Q3 2013 – King Pie Number 8 (Beating KFC & Nandos) - http://www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/12/104259.html (Follow the link for the full article) and Ad of the Year: South Africa’s 10 Best Ads of 2013 – King Pie Number 9 by Oresti Patricios (@orestaki) [1st 5 of 10] - http://www.marklives.com/2013/12/south-africa-10-best-ads-of-2013-part-1/?category=Adland (Follow the link for the full article)

\textsuperscript{65} See figure 54.
playful coinage, made up of the Zulu relative stem –*mnandi* (nice, tasty) with a new morpheme suffix taken from the English word *delicious*. Although the isiZulu forms the stem of the slogan –*mnandi*– (nice, delicious) the lexical item conforms to an English matrix by the addition of the ‘pseudo’66 English suffix -licious (from the word ‘delicious’) and again is an example of a bicodal lexical item – although this time the morpheme –licious is not recognized as a true suffix in English. This playfulness is apparent in other humorous advertisements making use of African languages, like the Fish & Chip Company’s advertisement featuring President Zuma’s Nkandla residence in which one of his wives refers to the him as ‘Zuzu-licious’ (Fish & Chip Company, 2012a).

The fact that the isiZulu mother-tongue speaker switches to English when she hears the English woman speaking isiZulu is an interesting demonstration of the relationship between language and power in South Africa. The Zulu mother-tongue speaker’s ability to respond in fluent, idiomatic English (“So you like King Pies?”) proves her sophistication and command of the situation. This is the reality of language and status in South Africa – English must always be used to assert status and educational standing. As Ndlhovu argues, no matter how much language policies insist that all languages are equal, in reality:

> actual patterns of language use have retained and entrenched the exclusive use of English and, partly, Afrikaans as media of communication in mainstream economic, social and political domains (Ndlhovu, 2008: 62).

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Another interesting phenomenon in this advertisement is that the actors have loosely translated the script, as the subtitles do not match the Zulu discourse word-for-word. The result is an isiZulu far more idiomatic, entertaining and natural than a direct translation from the English would have allowed. The creative team behind this advertisement clearly understood that in order to create a funny, idiomatic script in isiZulu they could not allow for a direct translation from the English. ‘I worked with internal staff who assisted me in translating my script in a manner that was naturally spoken’ explained Morris (2014) of Red Rocket.

![King Pie Mnandi-licious](image)

**Figure 54: Final screen for King Pie Mnandi-licious!**

**Why was the African language used?**

Humour was the main reason given behind the use of African languages in this advertisement, as was the need to create a commercial with a “true South African flair” (see Ruwers-Lee, 2013 cited above).
Thus while, as Lee (2006) argues, English is used to lend an international flavour to advertisements broadcast in non-English speaking countries, I would argue that we have an interesting reversal of the situation in South Africa. English is still the dominant language of advertisements in this country, but African languages are used symbolically to lend a local flavour to the product, thus increasing feelings of belonging, accommodation, comfort and identification (Krishna & Ahluwalia, 2008; Johnson et al., 2010). English in this advertisement is used not so much to lend an international flavour, but to reassert equality between the targeted consumers – while the isiZulu-speaking woman is temporarily unsettled by the English-speaking woman’s isiZulu outburst, she is able to regain status by addressing her in English.

**Ubuntu: a multicultural discourse for a rainbow nation**

Kamwangamalu (1999: 24) notes that language has been instrumental in the country’s efforts to unite previously divided communities. The author argues that television slogans such as *Simunye* have placed emphasis on national unity, specifically notions of community and togetherness as embodied in the word *ubuntu*. I suggest that the King Pie *mnandi-licious* advertisement is a concerted effort to communicate a sense of diversity and community. Language is one of the ways in which the company articulates this message. This is supported by gesture and the reversal of stereotypes.

Gunther (1987 in Furnham and Bitar 1993: 297) argues that the effect of television upon social conduct may be paramount during advertisements (as opposed to other programmes), which are often fast-paced, vibrant and enthralling. Often advertisements display stereotypical portrayals of features such
as gender (Furnham and Bitar, 1993: 297), race and class. The King Pie Mnandi-licious advertisement actively opts to reimagine the stereotypes relating to language and ethnicity in South Africa and portrays a multilingual, multicultural set of customers by using a linguistic technique referred to as crossing.

Rampton (1998) asserts that linguistic crossing is a way of redefining reality. Language crossing, also referred to as code-crossing is used to denote the use of a language which isn’t generally though to ‘belong’ to the speaker. (Rampton, 1998: 1). Cutler (1999: 428) illustrated how this phenomenon occurred with upper class white teens in the USA who employed linguistic features of African American Vernacular English in conjunction with gesture and specific activities (breakdancing) to index and identify with hip-hop culture. In the King Pie commercial linguistic crossing transpires when the white woman, typically associated with English, speaks eloquently in isiZulu. This shift initially shocks the audience as the variety seems out of place. Rampton (1998: 2) relates that language crossing involves a sense of movement which is felt somewhat abruptly when a speaker transverses social or ethnic boundaries and brings up issues of validity that participants need to consider during their encounter.

In the King Pie advertisement the white woman’s interjection: ‘Mamela sisi, ukhuluma ngami?’ (Listen sister, are you talking about me?) is initially bewildering to the audience and the black isiZulu-speaking character. The crossing is reinforced with gestures which mimic those of the mother-tongue speaker. Teens in the Cutler (1999) study engage in similar behaviours reinforcing the slang they use to indicate their hip hop affiliation with gestures associated with other speakers of the code. The linguistic crossing employed by the blonde woman in the
Mnand-ilicious advertisement locates her as multilingual and as someone who affiliates with isiZulu-speakers.

Unlike many other advertisements on South African television, both black and white South Africans feature in the Mnandi-licious advertisement and the African language, rather than English, is used to unite the consumers. The use of English subtitles exists because, according to Ruwers-Lee (2013) “We never wanted to discriminate and needed to include subtitles for viewers who don’t speak Zulu.” To be seen to be supporting multiculturalism is important for brands (Johnson et al, 2010) and there could also be the fact that such advertising can reduce costs (De Kock in Johnson et al., 2010: 191) because in this way a wider target audience can be reached.

The word Mnandi-licious is an example of a coined term, but a coinage is also a neologism: the use of slang, code-switching and a coinage can be a part of language crossing. These linguistic devices facilitate movement from one code to another and hint at identities or cultures associated with the code.

Although research has indicated that speakers are inclined to use (more) indigenous words over loan words whenever there is a choice, they argue that this pattern is swiftly changing (Nong et al., 2002: 1). The dialogue in the King Pie advertisement uses predominantly standard isiZulu however the word Mnandi-licious stands out. I propose that the coinage of such a term is a reflection of a multicultural, multilingual identity. African languages have borrowed a great deal from Afrikaans and English (Mafela, 2010) so a new coinage is not an alien concept to mother tongue speakers. The compilation of the stem – mnandi- with the English affix –licious indicates a dual identity. The coinage contains diversity and linguistic flexibility, much like the speakers of isiZulu in the advertisement.
It has been suggested that the language composition of the well-liked South African soap operas is wider than the language mandates of the particular channels allowing them to attract viewers that fall outside of their mandate (Slabbert et al., 2007: 345). I propose that the creation of new lexical items with indigenous African language stems as their base allows advertisers to cast their net wide and communicate with a multilingual multicultural audience. They do not confine the language to textbook correctness or relay their message in an exclusive code: the advertisements’ dialogues and catch phrases, like Mnandi-licious speak to new consumer attitudes and identities in a humorous manner.

**Conclusion**

This commercial displaces the code from the speakers it is stereotypically associated with, black South Africans, and establishes an alternate reality. English proficiency is considered a status symbol in South Africa, it is believed to be correlated with superior educational levels and upper income groups, although indigenous African language varieties remain significant as they relate to cultural ties with one’s family (Slabbert et al., 2007: 335). King Pie demonstrates in the Mnandi-licious advertisement that proficiency in an indigenous code demonstrates wit and intellect. This runs contrary to stereotypical associations. The displacement and shock attracts the viewers’ attention.

Oosthuizen (2013: 26) explains that satisfying consumer’s needs better than competitors makes brands successful. Despite the aspirational value of English, indigenous language speakers indicated a preference for African language stations over
English (Van den Berg, 2007 in Slabbert et al., 2007: 336). King Pie is demonstrating an ability to relate to multilingual consumers, specifically mother-tongue speakers of indigenous varieties who are not usually accommodated. Mass (1999: 79 in Piller, 2003) rationalizes that;

Language is considered as the major means by which stereotypes are communicated through interpersonal discourse, by which they are transmitted from generation to generation, and by which the press and other mass media create social representations of social groups.

King Pie is demonstrating that their brand (and as a result their product) is different. It embraces new multilingual South African identities satisfying consumer needs by demonstrating an affinity and applicability with consumers: essential to establishing a successful brand (Oosthuizen, 2013: 25). King Pie establishes itself as new and innovative by reimagining language ownership and boundaries: this sets the King Pie product apart from competitors and makes the commercial memorable.
CHAPTER 10: ADVERTISEMENT 6

10.1 ARIEL LESS SCRUBS IN PICTURES

Figure 55: Ariel advertisement

0.01 Ariel less scrubs

0.10 Ariel less scrubs

0.14 Ariel less scrubs

0.23 Ariel less scrubs

0.29 Ariel less scrubs

0.38 Ariel less scrubs

0.44 Ariel less scrubs (Procter & Gamble, 2014)

(Ariel advertisement)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
<th>isiXhosa</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Subtitle</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Male voice</td>
<td>Igama lam ndinguNomajama Lusithi, ndiyakuthanda ukuacula</td>
<td>ENGLISH MALE VOICE: South African women from Mossel Bay to Polokwane are telling their Ariel one-wash stories.</td>
<td>I love singing.</td>
<td>My name is Nomajama Lusithi, I love singing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Nomajama</td>
<td>Ukuhlala ndimhle ndicocokile kubaluleke kakhulu kum</td>
<td>To stay clean and beautiful is very important to me.</td>
<td>Staying beautiful and clean is very important to me</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>Etekisi mhlawumbi ukhwele ungabonanga ukuba mhlawumbi ikhona into engcolileyo.</td>
<td>Sometimes when you are in a taxi, your jacket might get stained.</td>
<td>In the taxi maybe you are on route and you have not noticed that there is something dirty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>Kule sepha bendisebenzisa kuqala, 'funke ndicikice kakhulu ukuze zisuke iziteyins</td>
<td>With the washing powder I used to use I would have to scrub a lot for the stains to come out.</td>
<td>With the soap I used to use first I had to rub very hard to get the stains out.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>I-Ariel ndayibona ya-advertiswa etvini so ndaqonda mandiyithathe ikhawuleze isuse isteyins ngoku nangoko</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>Ndiziva ndizithanda ndineconfidence ndicule kamnandi.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Ndinovuyo hymn repeated by Nomajama and choir)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>Zikhona iingoma endiziqalayo ke ngoku, ndiye ndorwabe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>I-Ariel yasusa amabala</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>Male voice</td>
<td>Ariel – Removes many stains better in one wash.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Procter & Gamble, 2014)
10.3 ARIEL LESS SCRUBS 2014

(Nomajama Lusithi, Real Life Testimonial)

Brand and campaign

The Ariel detergent brand falls under the umbrella of the multinational conglomerate Procter & Gamble. It was launched onto the South African Market in May 2013, challenging the Unilever detergent brands: OMO, Surf and Skip (Mokgata, 2013) which had previously dominated the South market. Initially South Africans were unfamiliar with the Ariel brand and product range. Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock were the creative agency charged with positioning and promoting Ariel on the South African market for Procter & Gamble. The Ariel Less Scrubs commercial that I analyse here was part of the brand’s first energetic marketing campaign in South Africa. When Ariel finally entered South Africa though, it did so authoritatively. Ariel’s strategy included a competitive advertising and pricing strategy that launched a brand battle with the Unilever brands, principally OMO. Nationally billboards bearing Ariel’s characteristic green were erected with the maxim claiming that Ariel removes stains ‘in one wash’\(^{67}\) (Ally, 2013: 347).

\(^{67}\) See figure 56.
The campaign includes a television campaign with ‘South African women from Mossel Bay to Polokwane’ providing real life testimonials (Procter & Gamble, 2014) supported by billboards as well as experiential and brand activations (Mokgata, 2013). The brand had specific ideas on how the campaign was to be laid out: Procter & Gamble advocated the use of real life testimonials (RLT’s) in their campaign (Siluma, 2014). Frey (n.d.) describes how real life testimonials can generate plausibility, integrity and a sense of security for consumers when used in advertisements. Nhlanhla Siluma, a member of the Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock team behind the Ariel commercial, explained:

This format of advertising has been used for years by Procter & Gamble in our African region as well as other regions globally [sic], when they find a winning formula they stick with it and suck it dry. We have tried to propose new ways of shooting these RLT's but they simply believe that if something isn't broken then why fix it (Siluma, 2014).
Having been informed that budget is a key consideration in the production of advertisements (Warner, 2014) I inquired as to why Procter & Gamble elected to produce several advertisements (each featuring a different consumer and different language) as opposed to the cheaper option of single commercial using code-switching or showcasing different consumers speaking different languages. Siluma, a representative of Saatchi & Saatchi Brandsrock, the company behind the campaign, responded:

Conglomerates like P&G spare no costs, they're a billion dollar corporation so simply put money is not an issue (Siluma, 2014).

To date the Ariel approach has been successful with many sources praising the Ariel campaign’s inclusive approach (Mokgata, 2013; Main Market Activations, 2013).

**A clean fight: code and context in the Ariel Less Scrubs commercial**

Ngwenya (2011: 1) explains that indigenous African languages were marginalized during apartheid and that the ‘norms, symbols and values of the white sector of the South African population dominated the advertising landscape’. The author notes that multilingualism has made its way into contemporary advertising discourse. The Ariel Less Scrubs advertisement is an example of this.

The Ariel Less Scrubs commercial features a real life testimonial, in isiXhosa, from Nomajama Lusithi, a woman from Khayelitsha, a township outside Cape Town. The variety of isiXhosa used by Ariel’s vox pop spokesperson is standard
with some code-switching and loan words (borrowings). Androutsopoulos (2000: 514) relates how speakers use linguistic resources to communicate sociocultural significance and meaning, simultaneously fabricating an ‘anti-standard’ in a restricted field of discourse. I propose that the standard isiXhosa locates the speaker, Nomajama Lusithi, as South African while the linguistic features such as code-switching and loan words that she employs demonstrate that she is urban.

Ngwenya (2011: 1) notes that advertising in South Africa has been evolving to meet the new demands of South African language communities. I suggest that the ‘anti-standard’ language in the Ariel Less Scrubs commercial is the inclusion of the loan words and the code-switching, which provides the testimony with an unpretentious honest feel because it reflects common daily urban discourse. Dowling (2011: 346) explains that standard isiXhosa is changing, particularly in urban areas, and notes that in some instances children opt to study English instead of their mother-tongue because they feel that it is easier than learning the standard variety (Hendricks, 2006: 33 in Dowling, 2011: 346). The use of an urban variety in the Ariel testimonial is positive in that consumers may be better able to relate to Nomajama through such a code (as opposed to text book standard language) and in addition it demonstrates that the Ariel brand recognizes and valorises African language speaking communities and their lexicons.

**Loan words and code-switching**

It is interesting to note that a key word in her narrative (stain/s) is translated by an English loan word rendered isiXhosa by the Class 8 plural prefix: *izi*- in *iziteyns* and also its Class 10 variant *iisteyns* but in the final catch phrase she uses the standard
isiXhosa word “*amabala*” which can be used to translate “blemish” and also refers to “colours” (see *The Greater Dictionary of isiXhosa*, 2006, Vol.1, p.67). Initially I assumed this was because the end of the advertisement was scripted (hence the standard *amabala*) however this proved incorrect. Siluma (2014) explained:

> Ok so we leave it up to her to say what she wants to say, it’s her story and in the Xhosa language they borrow a lot of English words so it's not scripted in any way (Siluma, 2014).

I suggest that the use of the loan word *iziteyns* and the standard isiXhosa lexical item *amabala* demonstrate the fluidity of urban varieties of indigenous African languages. I also argue that while speakers may elect to use loan words in everyday discourse they use the standard when they wish to seem knowledgeable or legitimate. Other lexical items which are loaned from English in the commercial include; *iTV* and *advertiswa* and *confidence*. *I-TV* replaces the standard isiXhosa *umabonakude* and is given the isiXhosa locative prefix *e-* and the locative suffix -ini to render it *etivini* (on TV). The verb “advertise” is used with the passive extension –wa to create “*advertiswa*”. The standard isiXhosa word for ‘advertise’ would be “*bhengeza*” which would be rendered as “*bhengezwa*” in the passive. The isiXhosa word “*bhengeza*” has a wider semantic field than just “advertise” (it can mean: lay out, expose, squander, blab secrets (McLaren, 1994: 11) while the gloss for “advertise” in the *Oxford English Xhosa Dictionary* (Fischer et al., 1985: 10) is “*azisa*” which can also mean “announce” or “introduce”.
The noun “confidence” is also borrowed and used with the associative –na- (with the vowel coalescence of -na- to -ne- when followed by the vowel i-) to translate “have confidence”. While there is an isiXhosa lexical item to translate “confidence” – “ukuzithebha” the English noun has been gaining popularity amongst urban isiXhosa speakers in much the same way as “stress” and “sexy” (Dowling, 2011). Dowling (2011) proposes that borrowing often happens in urban varieties of languages such as isiXhosa because:

Speakers themselves regard the borrowed word not as borrowed, but rather as a lexical item that forms part of the first language (Dowling, 2011: 347)

Soap and status: the history of detergent in South Africa

In this commercial the urban variety featured in the Ariel Less Scrubs commercial is a genuine (as opposed to tokenistic) way of connecting with South African consumers. Consumers are able to relate to the speaker and product because the language is not too ‘traditional’. Studies (Webb, 2010: 161-162 in Ditsele, 2014: 124) have demonstrated that many mother-tongue speakers view standard varieties of indigenous African languages as inferior, associating them with tradition and suggesting they are not relevant. The contemporary language used in the Ariel testimonial intimates that the detergent is a product for contemporary South Africans.

This is key in a South African context, as laundry, specifically dirty laundry, has had socio-political connotations as far back as the mid 18th century. Washing clothing was a reviled task which white madams passed down to their black staff. There even existed a league of Zulu women who were known as the
Amawasha (Atkins 1986: 44 in Ally, 2013: 330). The politics of race, social status and clean laundry flowed all the way through to the apartheid era:

Detergent ads eloquently summarised white South Africans’ aspirations to apartheid’s racialised urban modernity. Detergent ads provided the fantastic dissimulations of white domestic life that were necessary in the context of the actually variegated raced-gendered regime of labour and consumption under apartheid (Kenny, 2008 in Ally, 2013: 332).

Ally (2013) explains that detergent advertisements solidified apartheid notions of the lesser ‘dirty’ black, showing black people as domestic staff or the lesser. This symbolic association represented the apartheid notion of ‘dirty blacks’ who do not dress correctly or have a good home, as discussed in Posel (2010), and was perpetuated by detergent campaigns. Dialogue for these campaigns was often in English or Afrikaans because as Ngwenya (2011) asserts, African languages were marginalized during apartheid and the media and advertising were dominated by the norms and values of the white sector.

I concur with Ngwenya and further suggest that the inferior social status of black people was communicated and reinforced through English and Afrikaans. English was the vehicle through which culture and values were articulated.

Some studies (Rosa, 2013; Ally, 2013) reflect that such attitudes still abound in South Africa, citing literature and media that portrays black South African’s as domestic workers and whites
as employers. In an interview a successful black South African businessman explains that ‘The system taught us to be either a worker or a social worker or a policeman: the general worker.’ (Journeyman Pictures, 2009).

The linguistic departure from stereotypical portrayals of black South Africans as socially inferior is evident in the Ariel advertisement. The speaker, Nomajama Lusithi, is addressing the audience in her code (urban isiXhosa) as an equal and as an advisor. Page-Lee, an advertising executive believes Ariel has been successful thus far because:

It has positioned itself to a cross-section of society, not just the lower-income market (Surf and OMO) or the higher segments (Skip) (Page-Lee in Mokgata, 2013).

The Ariel testimonials act in stark contrast to their competitor OMO’s prominent campaign (OMO, 2011). The OMO commercial features a woman attired as a somewhat ridiculous maid/fairy godmother saying (in heavily accented English) ‘Ooh, eh eh… just one small cap is enough!’ 68. The advertisement perpetuates the notion of a black person as a domestic worker (albeit one sporting a gold uniform) and a white woman as the homeowner.

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68 See figure 57.
In the Ariel less scrubs commercial Nomajama’s everyday code is matched by her everyday surroundings: taking public transport (a taxi) and singing in the church choir. Much emphasis is placed on how clean she is and how she likes to remain clean and beautiful: *Ukuhlala ndimhle ndicocekile kubaluleke kakhulu kum.* (Staying beautiful and clean is very important to me) (Lusithi in Procter & Gamble, 2014).

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69 See figure 58.
This conversational tone, peppered with code-switching and loan words, in a situation many South Africans can relate to instantly makes the brand seem local and helps consumers to connect with it via language. It is critical to note that the speaker recognizes television advertisements as indicators of an authentic quality brand as she mentions that she heard about Ariel “etivini – on TV”. This reference to television and the underlying suggestion that she is the home-owner and authority in the house (she is not washing for a man or a white madam) demonstrates that she is upwardly mobile and counteracts apartheid associations between color and success often relayed in other detergent commercials (e.g. the white woman is the homeowner in the OMO commercial, while the black woman is the domestic worker). Unlike other detergent advertisements, which portray black people as dirty or simple (Ally, 2013) Ariel reflects the multicultural, multilingual South Africa advocated by Ngwenya (2011) through the very straightforward medium of a real life testimonial.

Music

Morris and Boone (1998: 518) explain that music is believed to be a key component of an advertisements background because of its wide range of uses as well as its ability to augment viewer stimulation and increase impact. The Ariel Less Scrubs advertisement ends with Nomajama singing in a choir attired in her clean blazer. Ndinovuyo! Ndinovuyo! (Literally: I have joy!)
The image and music present an aspirational image and song encapsulates the message behind the brand: Nomajama is happy. She is happy because Ariel has helped her to remain clean and beautiful\(^70\). This information is relayed to the consumer in an indigenous African language demonstrating one aspect of a multifaceted campaign that acknowledges South Africa’s diversity.

**Conclusion**

**What is special about this advertisement?**

The language used in the Ariel Less Scrubs commercial is natural and not tokenistic, displaying an urban variety of isiXhosa (not slang) in order to reflect a current and contemporary brand. Ditsele (2014: 123) argues that an acknowledgement of contemporary vocabularies of indigenous African language varieties may result in a revived interest in the languages themselves which has the potential to see them “being used as languages of high function.”

\(^{70}\) See figure 59.
Loan words are gaining popularity in many African language varieties (Dowling, 2011) and reflecting contemporary discourse on screen facilitates consumer brand dialogue as it is language variety they are able to understand and relate to. Ditsele (2014: 123) notes that some indigenous African language varieties have recently experienced negative growth, which may possibly be due to negative perceptions of these varieties. Considering the problem in a global context, a study of Irish in newspaper advertisements in Ireland demonstrated that a significant body of advertising in a language could signify linguistic vitality to consumers (Kelly-Holmes & Atkinson, 2007: 45). I suggest that this approach to indigenous codes may be addressed by positively reflecting the multilingual nature of South Africa in advertisements as proposed by Ngwenya (2011).

In Scotland efforts were made to address language shifts through the launch of a Gaelic channel, which would provide exposure and a resource for first and second language learners. The study notes the profound impact television and radio have on viewers and argues that the impact of both can be substantive and symbolic on viewers (Milligan et al., 2011: 349-350). I argue that exposure to codes, which are associated with attributes such as beauty, and cleanliness in everyday languages could contribute to correcting negative attitudes towards these languages. These global studies suggest that in this country television has the same potential to change attitudes and outlooks. Ngwenya argues that multilingual advertising:

> Has given rise to the creation of a new social identity and linguistic creativity seldom before seen in South Africa (Ngwenya, 2011: 347).
CHAPTER 11: AUDIENCE RESPONSE PILOT STUDY

11.1 WHY A PILOT STUDY?

I conducted a small pilot study of 5 respondents in order gauge audience responses to the advertisements analysed in this dissertation. Because of its size, the results of this study should be interpreted with caution bearing in mind this pilot serves merely as an indicator for potential future research. Van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002: 2) explain that there are many possible reasons for and benefits to conducting a pilot study. These include but are not limited to the following:

- assemblage of potential data
- gauging the feasibility of a larger more in depth study
- troubleshooting any potential issues
- assessing potential requirements and needs for a larger study.
- development of research questions and plans

Pilot studies are designed to navigate the terrain, a little like a scout who is sent ahead of his troop. They get an indication if a more in-depth study could prove worthwhile. Pilot studies can serve as ways for researchers to gauge the viability of a project in terms of resources such as time, money and manpower (Van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2002: 2).

When considering large-scale implementation of policy and procedure it is key to consider the potential issues and benefits an initiative may present. For instance the Basic Education Department in South Africa has tested some pilot schemes
relating to language in schools (Jones, 2014). This allows them to trouble shoot and review the value of a study on a small, less expensive and less drastic scale than a nationwide enterprise.

For this research, a pilot study served to address an issue brought up during a 'Media multilingualism'/Enregistering multilingualism' workshop which hosted by the Linguistics Section of The School of African and Gender Studies, Anthropology and Linguistics (AXL) on the 7th March in Cape Town. Scholars at the workshop (Professor Rajand Mesthrie, Associate Professor Ana Deumert), responded well to my presentation, but, while acknowledging that my study concentrated on the language used in the advertisements, suggested that I nevertheless include a small pilot study to gauge audience reactions. It was not possible to include this feature as a central part of this dissertation, however it was an important suggestion to take into consideration, hence the addition of a pilot study. As well as lending insight to my analyses, it may potentially serve as an initiator of future research developments.

11.2 DESIGN AND MATERIALS

Advertisements

Participants were individually shown, on a laptop, the following advertisements:

- MTN Ayoba!
- MTN Thula Thula
- Fish & Chip Company Nkandla
- Fish & Chip Company Xamina Xawena
- King Pie Mnandi-licious
- Ariel Less Scrubs
Questionnaire

Several questions were used to measure the participants’ perceptions of the advertisements, the language used in them, their understanding of the language, the use of sub-titles and their enjoyment of the advertisements (see Appendix 2).

Procedure

I approached shoppers at 3 different shopping complexes in Cape Town:

- Palmyra Junction, Claremont, Cape Town  
  (7 September 2014 – 15h00 to 16h00)
- Cavendish Square, Claremont, Cape Town  
  (10 September 2014 -09h00 to 11h30)
- Lifestyle Centre, Kloof Street, CBD, Cape Town  
  (18 September 2014 – 10h00 to 12h00)

I explained the study to shoppers and asked potential respondents what their first language was as I wished only to interview those who had an indigenous South African language as a first language. If participants were agreeable (and understood the ethics form I read to them) I sat with them went showed them the six commercials analysed in this dissertation. After showing participants the advertisement, I then went through the questionnaire (Appendix 2) with participants. I used responses as a platform for informal interviews, talking to speakers about:
• How they felt about the advertisements
• Their linguistic background
• How the language made them feel
• What the language reminded them of

11.3 RESULTS

Demographic data

While I collected data relating to respondents age and gender, I did not gather data relating to income levels nor did I gather data relating to their educational background.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mother-tongue</th>
<th>Other languages spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>English, Sesotho, Afrikaans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>English, isiZulu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sesotho</td>
<td>isiXhosa, English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall reactions from participants

Most and least favourite advertisements

Contributors reacted positively to the advertisements, especially MTN Thula Thula, which was clearly the most popular with all respondents in my random survey. Some even sang along and made gestures of rocking a child as they watched the commercial.
The only negative reaction participants had was to the Fish & Chip Company’s *Xamina Xawena*. Significantly, no one in this pilot study had Xitsonga as a first language. Participants said that they did not understand the advertisement although one noted that he liked the opportunity to learn a new language.

**Responses to languages used**

The advertisement that had the strongest impact on participants linguistically was MTN’s *Thula Thula*: the lyrics and the languages used are memorable and have personal associations. The fact that the languages featured in the commercial included those from both the Nguni and Sotho language families was noted by two respondents. The lullaby in the advertisement forms part of South African tradition and reflects a shared heritage and a sense of stability. It speaks directly to the core of being a South African. It elicited the following responses:

*Ndíyayithanda ngoba ucula kamnandi.* I like it because he sings well.
It show (sic) that guy is thinking about the child.
It shows father is checking on the baby.
It’s a nice song.
*Iyathuthuzela.* It comforts.

These responses demonstrate that respondents do not generally consider language as instrumental in their affective responses although, two respondents did observe that the inclusion of Sesotho was a positive factor, since both had a Sesotho-speaking parent.
This advertisement (MTN Thula Thula) appeared to speak to South Africans’ notion of the mother tongue, in both senses of the word. Lullabies are normally associated with a mother: it would be inconceivable for a mother to use a second language when comforting, (a word participants used in relation to this advertisement - thuthuzela) an infant. Even though it is a father singing he reflects the role of a key nurturer, singing in South Africa’s most well known mother tongue, isiZulu.

Respondents struggled to comment on the Xamina Xawena advertisement citing the fact that it was difficult to understand:

I don’t understand.
It’s difficult to talk that language.

This response is understandable since statistically Xitsonga is the least well represented of South Africa’s African languages, with only 4.5% of South Africa’s population citing it as their first-language (Census, 2011).

The fact that the Ariel advertisement was explicit and the language was used as a vehicle to convey product information was well received. Respondents did not comment on the language specifically. However, although language was not explicitly referred to, they clearly related to Nomajama more than to any other person in the commercials shown to them. I propose that this is because language was so intrinsically part of her identity that respondents did not see it separate from the core message and speaker.

The King Pie Mnandi-licious advertisement, with a white person speaking isiZulu, was the only instance in which language specifically generated a reaction:
I like it VERY much because it is a white person speaking other people’s language. Funny because you didn’t expect that woman can speak that language. I was shocked. Yho!

This reaction was exactly what Morris (2014) was looking for when he created the advertisement, stating:

The ad uses the power of humour: by making the audience laugh, the brand is associating itself with fun and happiness, and ensuring that the ad stands up to repeated viewing.

Subtitles

The only time that subtitles were referred to was in the Fish & Chip Company Xamina Xawena advertisement. Only one person said that they did not need the subtitles to understand the advertisement. Respondents did not need the subtitles that were supplied on screen for the three other advertisements; MTN Ayoba!, King Pie Mnandi-licious and Fish & Chip Company’s Nkandla. Initially participants appeared to be confused by the Fish & Chip Company Xamina Xawena advertisement, trying to figure out what language was being used. I argue that this indicates that Xitsonga is a marginalized language, which remains largely silent in South African television (and other) media. However it should also be noted that this pilot study was conducted in the Western Cape only; if it had been executed in Limpopo it is likely that participants would have reacted and related differently to the Xitsonga advertisement since in that province it is the second largest language (Census 2011: 25).
Would the advertisement have been the same in English?

62% of the time respondents indicated that the advertisements’ messages could not have been conveyed in the same way in English.

11.4 LIMITATIONS AND STRENGTHS OF THE STUDY

For a follow up study it would be necessary to have interpreters (representing all of South Africa’s African languages) present, and for information to be explained and recorded in the participant’s first language (and possibly videoed if they were agreeable). Due to financial constraints, this study was not optimal as there were no data recording facilities, interpreters or administrators (who would have required payment).

The randomness was the strongest part of the study. Respondents were not related, did not participate with each other and therefore did not influence each other’s opinions. All participants were spoken to individually and apart from a crowd. It was spontaneous, meaning that immediate reactions were recorded in writing, in exactly the words the participants used and participants did not have time to plan their responses, or to try to give what they considered the answer the interviewer most wanted to hear.

Concluding remarks

From this pilot study I have been able to draw the following tentative conclusions:
• People do not consciously think about the language variety used in an advertisement.

• On an unconscious level, language does impact deeply upon viewers’ affective responses: for example, they can be comforted, shocked and amused by the inclusion of a particular language.

• The use of indigenous African language varieties demonstrates inclusivity, or an exclusivity, that is not necessarily explicit but is experienced all the same. This is evident in responses to the Fish & Chip Company’s Xamina Xawena commercial where respondents did not speak the language that dominated the dialogue in the advertisement (Xitsonga). Even though they could understand the dialogue through subtitles, consumers felt some linguistic discomfort.

• Natural dialogues, in participant’s first-languages, such as the isiXhosa Ariel Less Scrubs encouraged consumers to relate to the character and the product, and to recount stories that were similar to that of the spokesperson. This did not happen when language was used deliberately as a marketing tool.

It is the naturalness of language used to reflect a sense of culture, tradition, stability and heritage, as well as real life situations that consumers can relate to. Mismatches of speaker to language (a white woman speaking isiZulu) are also effective since it speaks to a possibility of cultural crossovers and a future of shared discourses.
CHAPTER 12: CONCLUSION

It is important to note that all of the advertisements in this study have been created for local, rather than international, companies. This would suggest that local companies want to forge special relationships with their clients, by creating advertisements that resonate with them and with which they can identify.

In this dissertation I have discovered that African languages are used for the following reasons in contemporary South African television advertisements:

1. To demonstrate that the company embraces all South African cultures and to support nation building and multiculturalism. This comes through in all of the advertisements in this study.

Advertisers are reaching out to consumers and South Africa as a whole, showing inclusivity through many different codes from urban (MTN Ayoba!) to traditional (MTN Thula Thula). The innovative nature of advertising is impacting on the languages themselves; with some gaining popularity (MTN Ayoba!), others being reimagined and new terminology coined (King Pie Mnandi-licious).

2. To reach out to all South Africans, especially those in lower income groups and marginalized linguistic communities (The Fish & Chip Company’s Xamina Xawena and Ariel Less Scrubs) and to gain their trust and support by appearing accessible linguistically and physically.
3. To create brand relationships by creating feelings of similarity and belonging using languages of the majority of the population (MTN Thula Thula) and codes that people use in their everyday lives (Ariel Less Scrubs).

4. To shock and amuse, creating humour to create positive feelings towards the brand and to lend the advertisement a local flavour (The Fish & Chip Company’s Nkandla, King Pie Mnandi-licious)

Towards the end of my study by chance I had the luck to catch a shuttle with several advertising executives, from major firms, returning from the Loerie awards. They explained to me that

- the face of South African advertising was most definitely shifting in terms of indigenous African languages in advertising because ‘they are part of the new South Africa’.
- firms who do not employ mother-tongue speakers as part of their team are simply not performing. A multicultural, multilingual, Afropolitan firm is necessary in order for a company to reflect and relate to all South Africans. The image below reflects the new, young diverse face of advertising in South Africa\textsuperscript{71}.

\textsuperscript{71} See figure 60.
• Translating copy from English into an indigenous variety is becoming increasingly rare. Meaning is lost and the copy does not relate to consumers optimally. The advertising industry in South Africa, which used to be predominantly made up of English speakers, (Cawood & Du Toit, 2006) is diversifying and the new creatives on the block reflect the new national identity.

In some instances African languages in television advertisements are predominantly symbolic, other advertisements have evolved to include use the African languages to facilitate humour, intimacy with the consumer and a local connection. The advertisements studied indicate a development in the proficiency of the creative inclusion of African languages. Current advertisements are including urban varieties, word play, humour and linguistic creativity to demonstrate an affinity with consumers as well as maturity with regard to the way in which African languages reflect social discourse in South Africa and relate to consumers. Indigenous African languages are no longer token slogans or symbols, they are starting to provide creative copywriters with a malleable
semantic code that can enrich and provide fresh new platforms to reach consumers.

I argue that the social and political dynamics as well as the linguistic landscape have impacted upon the creation of advertisements. However, since advertisements have the power to influence, I contend that this power is not simply evident in encouraging consumers to purchase, but also in the popularity of indigenous African language varieties and their lexicons. Further research remains to be done, but on the basis of this study I assert that the repeated presentation of indigenous African language varieties to South Africans via their inclusion in television advertisements, could create a shift in perceptions of language status and expose and integrate these varieties into a South African lexicon. Ultimately, the continued use, study and celebration of all of our indigenous South African languages is a goal to which I hope this study contributes.
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Appendix 1

**MTN Ayoba! study**

**Voiceover:** What if South African township culture could change the global lexicon forever?

**Newscaster:** Nkaphila Mabusa joins us now live to give us a feel of this. I see Bafana Bafana are really considered Ayoba! over there right?

*(Laughter)*

**Newscaster:** Cool!

**Newscaster 2:** Exactly Zayd you’re getting the lingo right. That’s a good start.

**Voiceover:** It all begins on the 13\(^{th}\) July 2006 mobile operator MTN becomes the first and only World Cup sponsor from Africa but there’s a lot left to do and the press isn’t helping.

*(Images of newspaper headlines)*

**Voiceover:** 2 September 2009 it’s 9 months before the 2010 FIFA World Cup and South Africa is in trouble; negativity rules the day.

**Newscaster 3:** On this edition of South Africa 2010: will the stadiums be ready on time and will they be full?

**Voiceover:** Will the ever-present threat of crime and terror keep visitors away?

**Victim of crime:** I wanna be out of South Africa when the World Cup is here. Not because I’m not supporting the World Cup. I’m scared.

**Newscaster 4:** A country that is going through turmoil now, following the assassination of a white supremacist leader.

**Head of the AWB:** The soccer people who come to South Africa should also make provision for their own security.

**Vlogger:** If you’re going to South Africa don’t wear an England t-shirt. In fact don’t go at all to South Africa, they’re goin’ to hack you to def (death) wiv (with) machetes or shoot you with AK 47’s.

**Voiceover:** Against this tide of negativity MTN launches a new campaign with a single word Ayoba. Created by a small subculture of township trendies Ayoba! is a
word that perfectly explains what MTN wants the world cup experience to become for everyone. In a country where one of the biggest impediments to national unity is the language barrier, Ayoba! gives the nation a single positive word that everyone can unite in using. But before we could make the world cup Ayoba! we had to teach everyone what it means to be Ayoba!

(Examples of Ayoba! Advertisements from television, radio and signage.)

**Voiceover:** 4 February 2010 like wildfire the Ayoba!-ness starts to spread. Ayoba! becomes the buzzword on social networks, in schools, at the workplace.

**Radio presenter:** And now I know what Ayoba! is.

**Radio presenter 2:** Ok?

**Radio presenter:** Because err… you…

**Radio presenter 2:** Yes?

**Radio presenter:** You for example are Ayoba!

**Radio presenter 2:** Really?

**Radio presenter:** Yeah!

**Radio presenter 2:** Ok.

(Laughter)

**Radio presenter:** Joffers is not Ayoba!

**Voiceover:** The media takes ownership of it. South Africans from all walks of life adopt the word as a rallying cry for the world cup.

(Examples of Ayoba! advertisements)

**Voiceover:** Almost instantly the nation responded and made Ayoba! their own.

**Newscaster 5:** World cup Ayoba!-ness has hit this Bloemfontein school. It’s a fitting way of rooting for the national team. The vuvuzelela bleated proudly, the party set to continue long after schools out.

(School children in the background chanting Ayoba! and blowing vuvuzelas)

**Voiceover:** With the vuvuzela as its soundtrack the Ayoba! chant starts to gain momentum.

**Newscaster 6:** The support this past week in Johannesburg was hard to beat.
**Voiceover:** 11 June 2010: the moment of truth. 5...4...3...2...1.. *Ayoba!* Is *Ayoba!* ready for prime time? Sports fans start arriving from all over the world. Our visitors soon have their first encounter with *Ayoba!* What the townships had given the nation the nation was now ready to give to the world.

**Man:** Say *Ayoba!* it’s nice, it’s cool it’s fantastic, beautiful, terrific. *Ayoba!*

**Woman:** *Ayoba!* Bafana Bafana.

**Man 2:** *Ayoba!* Bafana Bafana!

**Man 3:** *Ayoba!* *Ayoba* Brazil

**Man 4:** I hear people saying it everyday… *Ayoba!*

**Woman 2:** It’s what little children are yelling all the time in the townships I think?

**Man 5:** It’s *Ayoba!* all the way

**Man 6:** Everyday it’s *Ayoba!*

(Fans shouting *Ayoba!*)

**Voiceover:** *Ayoba!* A small word from the dance floors of the townships had become the on word that truly expresses the spirit of the first African World Cup. And as our visitors and the press start telling their stories to the world *Ayoba!* Becomes more than a word, it becomes an experience.

(A series of screens with statistics relating to the *Ayoba!* campaign appear)

**Voiceover:** In the end after all the negativity the first African world cup had the 3rd highest attendance in history. Would it have been a success without MTN? Of course but it definitely wouldn’t have been *Ayoba!*
Appendix 2

I, ………………………………., understand that:

• I am under no obligation to participate in this study and may withdraw at any time.
• My name will NOT appear in the study at any time.
• My responses will be used in a UCT MA thesis examining the role and use of indigenous African languages in S.A. television advertising.
• I may indicate at any time I do not wish my responses to be used and this wish will be respected.

Signed……………………………..
…………………………………………………….
Date……………………………………………..

…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………
Age:……………………………
Gender:     M    /     F
Mother tongue……………………………………………………………………

Other languages
spoken………………………………………………………………….

Do you watch SABC? Y/ N

…………………………………………………………………………………………

1. MTN Ayoba!

1. Did you understand the language used in this advertisement?    Y    /    N

2. Was this because of subtitles?     Y    /    N

3. Did you like the advertisement?    Y    /    N

4. Why?............................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
..........................................................
5. Would it have been the same if there was only English?  Y  /  N

2. MTN Thula
1. Did you understand the language used in this advertisement?  Y  /  N

2. Was this because of subtitles?  Y  /  N

3. Did you like the advertisement?  Y  /  N

4. Why?..........................................................................................................................................
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5. Would it have been the same if there had been only English?  Y  /  N

3. Fish & Chip Co. Nkandla
1. Did you understand the language used in this advertisement?  Y  /  N

2. Was this because of subtitles?  Y  /  N

3. Did you like the advertisement?  Y  /  N

4. Why?..........................................................................................................................................
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5. Would it have been the same if there had been only English?  Y  /  N

4. Fish & Chip Co. Xamina Xawena
1. Did you understand the language used in this advertisement?  Y  /  N

2. Was this because of subtitles?  Y  /  N

3. Did you like the advertisement?  Y  /  N

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5. King Pie Mnandi-licious

1. Did you understand the language used in this advertisement? Y / N
2. Was this because of subtitles? Y / N
3. Did you like the advertisement? Y / N
4. Why?............................................................................................................................
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5. Would it have been the same if there had been only English? Y / N

6. Ariel Less Scrubs

1. Did you understand the language used in this advertisement? Y / N
2. Was this because of subtitles? Y / N
3. Did you like the advertisement? Y / N
4. Why?............................................................................................................................
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5. Would it have been the same if there had been only English? Y / N
Appendix 3

ABREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

BBEE: Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

CEO: Chief Executive Officer

FIFA: Fédération Internationale de Football Association

Pan SALB: Pan South African Language Board

SABC: South African Broadcasting corporation

SARS: South African Revenue Service