

## CHAPTER 13

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# A DISCOURSE-ANALYTICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE NATURE OF AFRIKAANS AND ENGLISH RADIO ADVERTISEMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

ANGELIQUE VAN NIEKERK<sup>1</sup>  
& MARISKA BERTRAM<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

In this investigation, discourse analysis is used to explore the nature of radio advertisements and advertising awards in Afrikaans and English during 2005–2006, namely, the Loerie Awards (English and Afrikaans: [www.theloerieawards.co.za](http://www.theloerieawards.co.za)) and the Pendorring awards (only in Afrikaans: [www.pendoring.co.za](http://www.pendoring.co.za)). A selection of eleven advertisements was made from each category based on the visibility of linguistic variables (for example, dialogue, code switching, rhyme and word games) and of variables that are related to language (for example, shared knowledge, humour and intertextuality). Radio advertisements were analysed in terms of their distinguishing features and their correlation with real spoken communication. The investigation has a didactic-academic purpose, namely, to describe the linguistic and language-related strategies that are characteristic of radio advertisements.

An exploration by means of discourse analysis into the recursive linguistic patterns in radio advertisements could contribute towards workable guidelines for

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1 Associate Professor, UFS/UV, Univerisity of the Free State, South Africa.

2 UFS/UV, Univerisity of the Free State, South Africa.

writing credible advertisements that echo word-of-mouth advertising. Although language and sound are the basic instruments for creating a radio advertisement, the primary focus of the current literature on copywriting is either the nature of the advertising medium or the specific marketing principles for copywriters and advertising texts, for example, identifying who the target market is. Sadly, a linguistic approach is generally missing and whenever linguistic analyses have in fact taken place, the focus has been primarily on print advertisements, leaving a gap in this field of investigation.

An empirical approach was followed in this discourse-analytical investigation into radio advertisements. Its aims were to uncover the linguistic strategies (such as dialogue and code switching) and the language-related strategies (such as humour and intertextuality) which are characteristic of radio copy in English and Afrikaans advertisements in South Africa.

### **Theoretical Framework: A Discourse-analytical Approach**

There is no well-defined difference between text linguistics and discourse analysis. According to Carstens (1997: 9), discourse analysis is often used as an expression that complements the term text linguistics. The concept of discourse can be understood in at least three ways. In the American tradition, it is used to refer to matters such as conversations, narratives etc. The analyses of discourse are done by means of formulated theoretical points of departure. In the more general convention, discourse refers to the broad framework that enables communication. Lastly, discourse is sometimes used as a complementary term for the text (Carstens 1997: 10). Salkie (1995: xi) maintains that text is what one speaker says, while discourse involves two or more speakers having a conversation.

As for discourse analysis, Stubbs (1983: 1) uses the term primarily to refer to the linguistic analysis of written or spoken discourse which takes place naturally. He adds that “discourse analysis is also concerned with language in use in social contexts, and in particular with interaction of dialogue between speakers”. Crystal (1987: 11) adds interviews, commentary and speeches to Stubbs’ list. On the basis of this assumption, the analyses of this study belong mainly to a discourse-analytical approach in the sense that radio advertisements in the dataset pretend to be true conversations taking place within social contexts. There is also dialogue, or at least communication, between a speaker and the intended target market or listener.

Discourse analysis concentrates on broader communication principles, while text linguistics focuses more on the textuality of a text (Carstens 1997: 12). Yet there is inevitably a certain amount of overlap between the two; both approaches concern the analysis of sections of language usage that are usually more than a single sentence. Only the focus on the sections of language usage differs (Carstens 1997: 12). During this study, the differences between the linguistic and the language-related characteristics have been based on Van Jaarsveld's (1987: 204) linguistic and communicative assumptions and also on Carstens's differentiation between textual linguistics and discourse analysis. According to Van Jaarsveld (1987: 204), the first supposition is the shared assumption that a speaker and a listener both speak the same language and that both fully control and understand this language. His second assumption is that a speaker always has a specific, recognisable purpose in mind when making each utterance. The linguistic characteristics are closely related to the communicative assumption as a prerequisite for successful communication. Carstens (1997: 105) shows his agreement with Van Jaarsveld by referring to constitutive and regulatory principles. He maintains that the first principle creates and defines the form of language behaviour that is known as textual communication. The second principle controls existing forms of behaviour and has, as its point of departure, the idea that this behaviour will indeed occur even though there are no clear rules which can be applied.

### **Advertising as a Unique Genre**

Advertising can be regarded as a unique genre because it relies on an established code between the communicator and the target market (Fourie 2001: 59). Genres can be regarded as the patterns, forms, styles, structures, analyses, narratives and content that the expression/encoding of communication by means of the mass media covers and also the encoding of these by the target market (Fourie 2001: 60, cited in Myers 1994). However, there are certain additional factors that contribute to the definition of genres:

- Genres represent points of reference.
- Genres contribute to the development and preservation of textual forms.
- Genres establish certain expectations in the sense that a certain genre has to conform to a certain format on which the target audience will base its expectations.

Myers (1994: 3–10) suggests six reasons why advertising can be regarded as a unique genre:

- Advertisements consist of patterns of textual choices, for example, the interplay or rhyme of parallel syntactical forms.
- Linguistic characteristics in one text are interpreted in relation to those of other texts (intertextuality).
- Advertisements are stereotyped actions of commutation that are regarded as a genre.
- Advertisements create a role for the target market to play.
- Target markets interpret advertisements in different ways.
- Advertisements create a relationship between the advertisers and the target market. The relationship is based on associations evoked by the meaning of the products.

### **Characteristics of Radio as an Advertising Medium**

As a medium – and as an advertising medium in particular – radio has unique advantages that competing media do not have. Radio is seen as a “theatre of the mind” (Felton 1994: 225). It can be regarded as a “blind” medium because it contains no images; it is immediate and relies only on hearing. Thus radio stimulates the listeners’ imaginations because they have to visualise the situation and try to “see” the speaker in their thoughts (De Beer 1998: 151). Radio creates a personal bond with the listener. It is one of the few media that successfully bonds with individual listeners and, in so doing, creates more personal contact than television. For this reason, it can be regarded as a one-to-one medium (Felton 1994: 225 and De Beer 1998: 152). Radio not only serves individuals but also a mass audience and is successful in making the outside world part of one’s everyday existence (Oosthuizen 1996: 328).

As a result of radio’s close link with the target market, it has a word-of-mouth quality. Word-of-mouth advertising takes place whenever someone that you trust makes a recommendation about a matter in which he or she is an expert (O’Day, n.d.: 1). For example, a radio advertisement using a friend as an advisor within the context of friendship is convincing.

Radio can also focus on certain demographic groups – teenagers, older people, Yuppie New Age listeners etc. – more narrowly than other media by means of market segmentation (Meeske 2003: 111). Advertisers choose a radio station whose target market shows the greatest agreement with the profile of the market to which the product is being directed. On the other hand, radio is also more flexible because of its mobility. Radio can be listened to at home, in

the car, at the office, on the beach etc. (Meeske 2003: 111). Another aspect of its flexibility is that radio advertisement can be created quickly and easily on impulse and broadcast immediately.

According to De Beer (1998: 152), radio has the widest coverage in the whole of Africa, and it can take on a huge diversity of forms. The reason that there are so many radio stations is because there are so many target markets that various programming options can reach. At the same time, radio deals with “invisible” target markets, and a radio station is not always aware of which people or groups are being targeted.

Finally, radio is relatively cheap and can act as a good supplement to other media. For example, radio and television complement each other well because prime time for watching television is normally in the evenings, while radio is listened to mainly during the day.

### **Different Genres of Radio Advertisements**

Radio copywriters make use of various textual options (choices of genre) in order to create a unique radio advertisement which will draw a listener’s attention despite the overdose of “white noise” which surrounds him or her. Accordingly, the following types of radio advertisements can be identified:

- Dialogue format: Such advertisements attempt to create the impression of a credible everyday conversation between two or more people.
- News flash format: These advertise things for sale at discounted prices or bring important marketing events to the attention of the target market.
- Jingles: These render the slogan of a shop or company with the aid of music. Often, the advertiser has its own jingle for its own series of advertisements. For example, the jingle associated with Shoprite-Checkers is repeated as: “Checkers, better and better!”
- Advertisements using a storyline to sell their product. Emotion plays a major role in gaining attention in such advertisements.
- Witnesses: Sometimes advertisers use witnesses to emphasise a product’s success, advantages, characteristics etc. In this way, they hope to convince people in the target market to buy the product. There are different ways in which witnesses can be used (Felton 1994: 283):
- “Man-in-the-street”: These advertisements use a “satisfied consumer” (Meeske 2003: 127) who has the same needs and longings as those of the target market. The aim is to make the target market identify with this person.

- Unknown expert: Although the people comprising the target market do not really know the expert, they understand that he or she is an authority. This knowledge gives them confidence in the product.
- Executive director: This person recounts his long experience of the product and the improvements which have been made over the years for the comfort and convenience of the people who comprise the target market.
- Famous person (Meeske 2003: 127): As soon as a well-known person acts as a spokesperson for a product, the members of the target market become convinced of the validity of the promises made in the advertisement.
- Anonymous well-known person who acts as a witness: This is a well-known person whose name is not mentioned in the advertisement. Consequently, the desired reaction “Isn’t that so-and-so?” is elicited. This technique makes the target group feel more involved in the advertisement than would otherwise have been the case.
- Fictional witness: Often, when a new children’s film comes on circuit, a restaurant such as MacDonald’s uses one of the characters in the film as a spokesperson to lure children to the restaurant.
- Comparative advertisement: Such advertisements are often used to compare advertisements for the same product or to compare elements within the same advertisement etc. (Felton 1994: 295). Different types of comparisons in advertisements encompass:
  - i. A new versus old version of a product.
  - ii. Comparisons that have no relationship with each other. For example, a Lipton Iced Tea advertisement with the slogan “It is like seeing your ex-girlfriend after five years and she has put on weight”.
- Advertisements with a sequel: Such advertisements involve a series of two or more advertisements with stories that have a sequel. Their success lies in stimulating the curiosity of the people to whom the advertisement is being addressed to find out what happens in the next episode.

### **Creativity in Radio Advertisements**

The most important principles for good radio advertisements are discussed below. A good advertisement should consider the following guidelines:

- Sell the results and not the product: According to O’ Day (n.d.: 15), the focus should be on selling the effects of the product and not the product itself. The people who make up the target market are not really interested

in the product per se, but rather in what the product offers them. Therefore, advertisers need, first, to identify a need to be fulfilled or a problem needing to be solved, then focus the target market's attention on the fact that they need the product to resolve the problem and, finally, prove to the target market how their need will be fulfilled or how their problem will be solved by using the product (O' Day n.d.: 16).

- Concentrate on the problem from the target market's point of view. A radio advertisement has to be written from the perspective of the people who make up the target market (O' Day n.d.: 17, 34). During the communication with people within the target market, successful advertisements consider daily human behaviour that is experienced by almost everyone (O' Day n.d.: 18). In so doing, the advertisement is linked to credible behaviour (human truth) and reinforces a strong marketing message at the same time.
- Use credible language and emotion: Credibility is a key concept in advertising. Without it, an advertisement loses its value. There are ways to make an advertisement plausible by linking it to mundane human behaviour without depicting a specific daily situation (O' Day n.d.: 20). This is achieved by using the same language used daily by the target market. Lewis (2004: 219) warns that copywriters should not use an advertisement as an opportunity to show off their vocabulary. Moreover, they should avoid adjectives or descriptive words that consist of more than three syllables. This creates difficulties in processing the information. Lewis uses the metaphor that the ear is the surrogate for the other four missing senses. In other words, the copywriter should create a mental image without having to demonstrate it (Lewis 2004: 225). An advertisement is also made credible by reflecting human emotions with which the target market can identify. Before an advertisement is written, the copywriter must have decided what the emotional point of departure will be. (O' Day n.d.: 37-38).
- Promote product advantage over product property. Radio advertisements should sell the advantages of the product rather than its properties.
- Provide a logical justification for consumer behaviour. The target market should also be given an excuse to "justify" to themselves and to other people exactly why they should buy a certain product. The advertisement should provide them with this justification (or excuse). This is done in two steps: (1) offer the target market a true, measurable price (in other words, a sale) and (2) make the consumer fully aware that he or she should hurry or miss the opportunity (in other words, set a time for the sale or special offer) (O'

Day, n.d.: 35-36). The target market's decision to buy has an emotional base. Thus, the copywriter should give them reasons to justify their purchase.

- Stick to the facts and the creative brief. It is always important that certain questions be considered before attempting to write an advertisement. The answers to some of these questions should be available in the list of information containing the facts and details of the product. These questions concern, inter alia, the following (O' Day n.d.: 41-44) questions. Who makes up the target market? Who would be interested in the advantages of the product? Is the product aimed at an active or passive market? What would the product mean to the target market in inflated terms? What would the product mean to the target market in realistic terms? What are the precise reasons that a prospective consumer would buy this particular product? (O' Day n.d.: 47). All the necessary facts have to be gathered to create an effective advertisement (O' Day n.d.: 46).
- Make your writing unique and do not follow a formula: The copywriter should avoid writing cookie-cutter copy. According to O' Day (n.d.: 53-54), many radio advertisements sound as though they have been cast in the same mould. In other words, it seems that the same recipe or formula has been used repeatedly for different advertisements.
- Focus on one message only. The fact that radio is fleeting in nature means that the radio message should be as short and simple as possible. It should never contain more than one message (Felton 1994: 226).
- Direct the behaviour of the target market. It has been found that people are more inclined to react when an advertisement tells them what to do (O' Day n.d.: 59).
- Overcome product prejudice. Consumers may react with scepticism towards promises that advertisers make about their products. O' Day (n.d.: 62) suggests that the problem can be solved in the following way: "When advertising a product or service to which a substantial percentage of your target audience is likely to have an objection, deal with that objection within the commercial".
- Avoid too much text. The copywriter should never have too much copy, because listening to a radio advertisement is secondary. Consumers are usually only half-listening. Their main focus of attention is on the traffic, their work or their own inner dialogue (O' Day n.d.: 66).
- Tell a story. Each copywriter should tell a story in each advertisement (O' Day n.d.: 67-68). This makes the target market pay greater attention



to what is being said, because a story is easier to recall and automatically summons up the marketing message (O' Day n.d.: 68).

- Avoid a shopping list (also known as a laundry list). The copywriter should avoid merely listing all the facts (in other words, the advantages of the products, in the form of a list). Truman Capote said: "That's not writing. That's typing" (O' Day n.d.: 74).
- Maintain a balance. It is important for radio to maintain a balance (Oosthuizen 1996: 333). Radio is not a medium that can successfully deal with extremes or quick changes, because this could lead to the disintegration of the medium.
- Use humour. Meeske (2003: 128) advises that humour should be used with great circumspection, because, although it can be very effective, it can also be disastrous. In order to write successful copy, the copywriter should consider the following questions (Meeske 2003: 128):
  - i. Can the target market recognise the humour?
  - ii. Will the humour help to sell the product? Or will the consumers remember the comedy, but not the product?
  - iii. Will the comedy survive constant repetition during broadcasts?

The advantage of humour in an advertisement is that the name of the advertiser or product does not need to be repeated constantly. Only the story needs to be repeated. This is because the trademark or the product is automatically called up in the consumers' thoughts (O' Day n.d.: 81). A great mistake that is often made is to interrupt the humour with the marketing message. The aim is not to create a funny advertisement but rather to deliver the marketing message with the aid of humour. In order to write humorous copy, the copywriter should bear the following in mind (Meeske 2003: 130): use a credible setup (a general human truth) and extraordinary characters, or create an extraordinary situation with ordinary characters.

- Develop credible characters. Some radio advertisements work well when special characters are used. However, it is essential that they should be representative of the target market. It is important both that the characters should be "attractive" and that the target market should be able to identify with them.
- Use voice to its full potential. It is important that one specific voice be used for the whole series of advertisements (campaign) for a specific trademark (Felton 1994: 105). As a result, consumers recognise a particular voice and associate it with the trademark. They then anticipate the advertisement

which will follow. In addition, the voice contributes to create the feel, the so-called mood or ambience, of the specific advertisement. For example, if the advertisement deals with someone who is unhappy about something, the audience should be able to identify this from the tone of voice. In addition, elements such as music and background noise contribute to the atmosphere (and thus the recognition of the trademark). The voice should preferably transfer the message in the first or second person in order to suggest the personality of a real-life person (Felton 1994: 114). There is an implicit distance between the speaker (the voice) and the audience. Consequently, the relationship of the voice with the audience should be made clear. In the copywriting industry, it is common for a client to insist on using his or her own voice in the advertisement. Some manage very well, but others should rather leave this in the hands of the copywriters. The solution would be to compromise in order to solve the client's inability to transfer the message of an advertisement himself or herself (O' Day n.d.: 87). This involves making clips of the client's voice in the advertisements. In other words, a professional person is used to do most of the speaking and clips of the client's voice are added. Another way of doing this is to interview the client about his or her product and then use excerpts of the interview in the advertisement. It must be remembered that using a child's voice in radio advertisements is a risky business. It is often amusing, entertaining, evokes emotion etc. but, incorrectly used, this technique can cause the whole advertisement to fail. This is because the audience focuses on the unusual element. It is important that the child or his or her voice is responsible for delivering the marketing message.

Radio is the only medium with the unique ability to transform ordinary sounds into lively visual images in the mind's eye of the audience. The human brain contains no prescriptions about what these images should look like; they are infinite. However, there should be a distinction between a real and a created image. According to O' Day (n.d.: 12-13) a real image can be defined as something that can be physically seen by the eye and then stored in the brain. This is a real memory in the form of an image. A created image is a visual memory that is never really seen. It is drawn so clearly by means of sound and descriptions that it is stored in the brain as a visual image. It is important to remember that sound may be an advertisement's greatest friend or worst enemy (O' Day n.d.: 95). The background sound determines the mental image that the target market forms. For this reason, copywriters should be aware that the sounds in the background should not be allowed to distract the audience from the advertising message.

The opening line of a radio advertisement is the most important element in the whole advertisement. O' Day (n.d.: 10-12) suggests several ways in which to create a "compelling, attention-getting headline":

- Start with a question.
- Give a command.
- Surprise the listener (the target market).
- Stimulate the listener's curiosity.
- Give the listener something to think about.
- Appeal to the listener's emotions or feelings.

Depending on the particular opening line, background sounds may be used to make this introduction more successful. As soon as the opening line becomes too long, the target market loses interest, their attention flags and the message becomes lost.

Another way to win the audience's attention is to use controversy to sell a product (Felton 1994: 309). This can be achieved, for example, by inverting the slogan of an advertisement and, in so doing, saying the opposite of what is expected. A slogan that previously read "Think big" would be effective and unexpected if it were changed to "Think small" in a subsequent advertisement.

Radio copywriters also need to be aware of the "negative space" of the product: If the negative space of the product is discovered, it may be turned to the advantage of the product (Felton 1994: 311). In such a case, the focus should be on the people who would not use the product or the places where you would not be able to buy the product. These are then manipulated to work *for* the product. Other examples are unusual uses for the product and mentioning the advantages that the product lacks. One can even focus on the competition, identifying and comparing the disadvantages of the competitors' products with those of the product being advertised.

In any case, it is important, when writing a radio advertisement, to favour the active form of the verb over the passive. Sentences written in the active voice motivate the targeted consumers to move to action and also make them feel as if they are being addressed individually. In addition, metaphors create positive, interesting associations. In the case of radio advertising, products are not experienced via the sense of vision. This is the reason why they must be described metaphorically in order to appeal to other senses. An example of this is the name of a new fragrance for a deodorant, "Ocean Breeze." Because it is being advertised on radio, there is no way that visual images can be used, so

the sound of waves breaking on the beach and gulls in the background evoke much more than the words. This allows the targeted consumers to smell the fragrance that is described in this way.

### **Linguistic Characteristics of Radio Advertisements**

The following section considers the language-related characteristics of radio advertisements.

#### ***Characteristics of Dialogue***

Cloete (1992: 69) explains that the simplest form of dialogue involves two people – a speaker and a listener – who are in a specific temporal and contextual relationship with each other. Dialogue plays an important role in radio advertisements because it is one of the few auditory elements available to the target market to interpret and deduce aspects of the product being advertised.

- **Forms of Address.** Speakers continuously use different forms of address. Carstens (1997: 412) maintains that a speaker's interpretation of a given context and the (social) context implicit in the relationship between the speaker and the listener greatly affect the style and form of language that characterises the communication taking place. It will also specify the particular form of address being used by the speaker in that situation.
- **Turn-taking.** Turn-taking in a conversation is a typical characteristic of spoken language. According to Crystal (2006: 477–8), "Conversation is seen as a sequence of conversational turns, in which the contribution of each participant is seen as part of a co-ordinated and rule-governed behavioural interaction".

However, turn-taking in conversation differs from culture to culture (Cutting, 2008: 27).

- **Hesitation.** Hesitation occurs in any real conversation when a speaker gets stuck or contradicts him or herself. Consequently, hesitation is used as a technique in radio advertisements to create the impression that a true and real conversation is taking place.
- **Use of Crude Language.** Crude language in an advertisement can be used to reflect the speaker's attitude, background and level of education.
- **Lexicon.** A speaker's lexicon refers to his or her choice of words. The lexicon plays an important role in advertisements in order to indicate the context and, in so doing, increase the credibility of the advertisement.

- **Interruptions.** Together with turn-taking and hesitations, interruption during a dialogue is a characteristic that is inherent in a successful conversation and, thus, in a successful radio dialogue. During turn-taking, the speakers interrupt each other continuously when one starts speaking before the other has finished saying what he or she wanted to.
- **Forms of Slang.** Slang is often used to stereotype a certain group of people. Matthews (1997: 343) explains the use of slang as follows: “vocabulary specific e.g. to a particular generation of younger speakers; also, as in ordinary usage, specific to a group of profession (e.g. army slang), to colloquial style, etc.” The use of a different register that is implied by the use of slang contributes to making an advertisement sound credible.
- **Tone of Voice.** Tone of voice is a characteristic that reveals a lot about the speaker. It can reveal matters such as demographic information (e.g. the speaker’s age, race, his or her mood or state of mind, levels of formality etc).
- **Pronunciation.** Pronunciation contributes to creating a context for the advertisement. This is because it is one of the few available auditory elements in the absence of visual elements. However, according to Cutting (2008: 155), differences in pronunciation could have the unfortunate result that an advertisement might be unsuccessful; the different variations in language might play an alienating role.
- **Interjections.** The primary aim of using interjections or exclamations during an advertisement is to express the speakers’ emotions. Matthews (1997: 169) defines interjections as follows:

Traditionally, an exclamation refers to any emotional utterance, usually lacking the grammatical structure of a full sentence, and marked by strong intonation, e.g. Gosh! Good grief! Semantically, the function is primarily the expression of the speaker’s feelings – a function which may also be expressed using other grammatical means, e.g. what on earth is she doing? (When it is obvious what is being done).

Interjections are part of convincing dialogue.

- **Abbreviations, Contractions and Assimilation.** Assimilation is a characteristic of spoken language. As Matthews (1997: 390) explains, “... units are sometimes referred to as ‘reduced’, such as phrases (e.g. phone’s ringing) and words (e.g. it’s him)”. These elements make up everyday conversation, and so they are included in dialogue in radio advertisements in order to create the impression of a plausible conversation.

- **Repetition.** Halliday and Hasan (1976: 278–84) distinguish between different types of lexical repetition, but, of the four they mention, only one is applicable to a dataset, namely, the verbal repetition of the same lexical item (Carstens 1997: 321). This refers to the repetition of the same item within a sentence or even in the following sentences. It is a strategy that is used to reinforce the trademark of a product.
- **Code Switching.** Crystal (2006: 79) defines code switching very clearly:
 

The linguistic behaviour referred to as code-switching (sometimes code-shifting or, within a language, style-shifting), for example, can be illustrated by the switch bilingual or bidialectal speakers may make (depending on who they are talking to, or where they are) between standard and regional forms.

The particular situation within a radio advertisement often results in code switching. For example, it often occurs that an educated person wants to adapt to the speech of someone whose level of education is lower than his or her own.

- **Code Mixing.** “Code-mixing involves the transfer of linguistic elements from one language into another: a sentence begins in one language, then makes use of words or grammatical features belonging to another” (Crystal 2006: 79). Matthews (1997: 58) maintains that code mixing takes place when two speakers regularly (but for no apparent reason) jump from language to language or from one dialect (or register) to another.
- **Rhyme.** Cloete (1992: 460) explains that the definition of rhyme in poetry is the similarity in sound between two or more words or syllables. In terms of radio advertisements, rhyme is used to make the advertisement sound good on the ear. This is particularly important because the target market is dependent on sound for the message. Moreover, rhyme makes the advertisement easier to remember because listeners remember the message more easily.
- **Word Games.** This practice is employed to keep the targeted consumers’ attention or to create humour. Word games use homophones, homonyms and polysemic words and are common in advertisements, according to Myers (1994: 65).

Due to space restrictions attention cannot be given here to an overview of all the relevant language-related characteristics needed to create authentic and credible radio-advertising. These include the use of, or reference to, shared knowledge, historical events, humour intertextuality, irony, auditory nature (background noise and music), controversy, the cyclic nature of time, stereotyping, etc.

Authors like Goddard (1998) and Myers (1994) describe the importance of these characteristics of normal everyday communication in the creation of credible radio advertisements that echo word-of-mouth advertising.

### **Analysis of Radio Advertisements in Advertising Competitions (Entries for the Pendoring and Loerie Awards)**

Because of constraints of space, only one example from each competition will be discussed here.

#### ***SABC radio sales (Pendoring Awards)***

A loose translation (2) of the text in this advertisement follows this original Afrikaans text (1).

**1: Pendoring advertisement for a radio station:** Original text in Afrikaans

JOHAN: Goeie môre, good morning.

TANNIE MARIET: Hallo Johan, dit is Mariet van Pretoria wat hier praat. Ag Johan, jy weet toe ek nou die dag gebel het omtrent die plot vir die haweloses, ongelukkig het my selfoon gekonk, en hy't sy gesiggie verloor, en ek vra asseblief laat die mense my sal bel op my landlyn, dis 01...

JOHAN: ...Ek mag ongelukkig nie sulke telefoonnommers oor die lug gee nie.

TANNIE MARIET: Nee Johan, ...my selfoon werk nie...

JOHAN: Ek glo en ek verstaan...

TANNIE MARIET: ...wag! Ek gee hom gou...01...

JOHAN: Wag...*(lag)*...Tannie Mariet *(lag)*...ek kan dit nie doen nie...

TANNIE MARIET: ...dis 01...

JOHAN: Tannie Mariet...*(lag)*...

TANNIE MARIET: ...01...

JOHAN: Kyk, Tannie Mariet try nou daai ding lekker kry daarso... *(lag)*

AANKONDIGER: Met meer as 24 miljoen mense wat elke dag luister, sal jy ook bitter graag op radio wil adverteer. Skakel 714 7000. SABC-radioverkope – praat met ons en jy praat met die nasie.

2: Loose translation of Pendering advertisement in English

JOHAN: Goeie môre, good morning.

TANNIE MARIET: Hallo Johan, this is Mariet van Pretoria. Ag Johan, you know that I phoned the other day about the plot for the homeless, unluckily my cell phone conked out and it lost its little old face and I want you to tell the people to phone me on my land line, its 01...

JOHAN: Unfortunately, I am not allowed to give such numbers over the air.

TANNIE MARIET: No Johan, ...my cell phone doesn't work...

JOHAN: I believe you and I understand...

TANNIE MARIET: ...wait! Here it is ...01...

JOHAN: Wait!...*(laughs)*...Tannie Mariet *(laughs)*...I can't do it ...

TANNIE MARIET: ...it's 01...

JOHAN: Tannie Mariet...*(laughs)*

TANNIE MARIET: ...01...

JOHAN: Listen, Tannie Mariet, now come on! You are trying a lekker thing there ... *(laughs)*

ANNOUNCER: With a daily audience of more than 24 million people, you will also be keen to advertise on radio. Telephone 714 7000. *SABC* radio sales – talk to us and you talk to the nation.

### Linguistic Characteristics

The broadcaster is trying to be informal and, in order to do so, he mixes his codes when he says, “try nou daai ding lekker kry daarso”. Tannie Mariet’s voice is very credibly stereotypical of an older Afrikaans-speaking lady. It supports the perception of the voice of a typecast older Afrikaans-speaking person on a phone-in radio programme. The frustration she feels because she is not allowed to give her number is clear from her tone of voice. This plays an important role in the marketing message, in contrast to that of the conventional voice of the radio announcer. His voice is even more credible than hers because it is recognisable as that of one of the most well-known radio personalities on the radio station in question, RSG.



Typical of dialogue are the many examples of turn-taking and interruptions which make the conversation credible, and the use of these features in a phone-in programme makes the situation even more convincing. The uncertainty of the announcer (in terms of how to react to Tannie Mariet's repeated and insistent attempts to talk) contribute to the credibility of the advertisement. In addition, the way in which the two characters, Johan and Tannie Mariet, continuously interrupt each other and do not give each other a chance to speak is typical of everyday conversation. The names and forms of address of the characters also contribute to the credibility of the advertisement. Tannie Mariet's choice of words also supports the stereotypical image of an older Afrikaans-speaking radio guest: "gesiggie, ingekonk" ("conked out and it lost its little old face").

### **Language-related Characteristics**

Humour definitely plays one of the most important roles in the success of this advertisement. It is amusing to hear how Tannie Mariet keeps insisting on giving her telephone number, despite being warned not to do so. Tannie Mariet's character is a stereotype of the older generation of Afrikaners who take part in phone-in radio programmes. Her determined character is apparent from her repeated efforts to supply her telephone number. Her choice of words, her use of language and her reason for calling support the perception that older people (women in Particular) are not very familiar with the latest technology.

The behaviour of the announcer and his courtesy towards the caller are also in accordance with the stereotype of Afrikaans radio announcers and one's expectations of them, particularly of those who work on a radio station such as RSG, which is the radio station concerned in this case and the station with which the voice of this particular announcer is associated.

### **Marketing Message**

Radio is a popular medium for advertising and, according to the advertisement, people will do almost anything to get their product mentioned (i.e. advertised) on radio.

### ***Lemon Twist – Twist Lemon (Buttercup guesthouse) (Loerie Awards)***

#### **Linguistic Characteristics**

One of the linguistic characteristics is word play. In order to emphasise the trade name, "Lemon Twist", this name becomes part of the word play and changes to Twist Lemon (the necessary repetition of the product being advertised is also

**Loerie advertisement for a soft drink, Lemon Twist**

SFX: Phone ringing.

FVO: Hello.

MVO: Good morning. Is this Evelyn Nel?

FVO: Yes speaking.

MVO: Yes ma'am. My name is Tolerance Maseko from the Department of Name Transformation, yes.

FVO: Yes.

MVO: Ma'am we are changing the names in line with our constitution and Africanisation. You are the owner of the Buttercup guesthouse?

FVO: That's right.

MVO: Well ma'am I must inform you, happily, that the Department of Name Transformation have decided to change it to Langelipalele.

FVO: No.

MVO: Ma'am sorry. Why are you upset? It means 'sunshine' ma'am.

FVO: NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!!!

ANNCR: It takes time getting used to a new name. *Lemon Twist* is now called

*Twist Lemon*. Put a twist in it.

achieved) This word play is functional if one considers the emphasis that is currently being placed on change and transformation in South Africa. Repetition (and the repetition of the name in reverse) stresses the name of the product

The register of Evelyn Nel's language stays polite and professional, but, as soon as she is informed of the proposed change of the name of her guest house, the definite "No" makes one aware of her being thrown off balance, as does the repetition of "NO, NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!" ("NO" is written here in capital letters to indicate how passionate-sounding her response is). The register of the official, Tolerance Maseko, remains formal and courteous throughout the conversation; he is expected to behave in this fashion because he is at work. The dialogue has features of a telephonic conversation that are very convincing. The

tone and pronunciation of both speakers contribute to making the advertisement seem like a plausible situation. Evelyn Nel's voice can be pinpointed as typical of an English-speaking lady who remains courteous despite being upset. Nevertheless, the definitive "NO" expresses her feelings about the proposed renaming of her guesthouse. Tolerance Maseko's voice is also convincing as that of a speaker of an African language. The audience can deduce that he is not a first-language English speaker and that the nature of his job forces him to speak many languages. Important turn-taking also occurs between the speakers. (Both speaker's turns are short and are interrupted by the other speaker) Finally, the advertisement uses different forms of address very successfully. Tolerance, whose mother tongue is an African language, uses the formal form of address ("Ma'am"). This is correct for his particular context as a service provider. The other speaker, Evelyn Nel, does not address Tolerance directly but is laconic in her answers: "Yes", "That's right" and "No".

### **Language-related Characteristics**

The humour in the advertisement is linked to the social commentary implicit in it. The whole idea of change in South Africa - and the fact that different cultures have to become reconciled with each other - is difficult. In this case, it is dealt with in a humorous manner, and many South Africans can identify with the situation being depicted. The intertextual references to transformation in South Africa help to create the context for the advertisement. The members of the target market have to know about the different forms of change happening currently, for example, the name changes of cities, towns, streets etc. If they do not, the advertisement will not be very successful.

The name of the African, Tolerance Maseko, has been chosen for its ironic value. The message that he delivers does not elicit tolerance from the person he phones. On an intertextual level, his name also refers to the government's appeal for tolerance so that transformation in the country may take place. The advertisement requires a certain amount of common shared knowledge of different feelings that South Africans experience in terms of the current changes of names and place names in this country. The advertisement offers a credible image of the multicultural character of South Africa and the transformation taking place.

**Marketing message**

Changing people's names and place names makes no difference to the nature or appearance of the city or place; in the same way, changing the name of the cold drink from Lemon Twist to Twist Lemon will not change the taste of the drink.

**Conclusions**

Radio advertisements communicate with real people via real characters or spokespeople and echo the credibility of word-of-mouth advertising. Dialogue is a genre of radio advertisement that can be applied extremely successfully if the characteristics of spoken language are taken into account. The tone of voice and pronunciation of the speakers are two of the most important aspects to consider in order to create a radio advertisement that is credible. Once again, one may refer to radio as a theatre of the mind in which the targeted audience creates the context in their own minds. The use of the same voice throughout a series of advertisements is an intertextual advantage. Rhyme, word games and metaphors can be used functionally in radio advertisements because of the fact that radio relies for the transmission of the message on sound only.

Because radio has the advantage of being generally available and mobile, people often listen to it quite by chance or unintentionally. This means that the copywriter must introduce an advertisement in such an effective way that an unsuspecting listener becomes part of the target audience without having intended to do so. Radio can focus on a highly specific target market, which means that the advertisement is deliberately written with one message for a specific group in mind and for whom it was originally intended in the first place.

Because radio has the quality of immediacy, this characteristic should be exploited to give specific instructions to the people in the target market. These instructions should tell them exactly what to do, so that they react to the advertisement spontaneously and follow the instructions impulsively.

A disadvantage of radio is its fleeting quality. This implies that messages cannot be recalled. The copywriter has to deal with this problem by writing the advertisement in simple language. The opening line of the advertisement is the audience's first contact with the product, and so it has to be catchy. Although there are different genres of radio advertisements, each copywriter has to strive to tell a story that the people in the target market can recall in such a way that they link it correctly to the product being advertised.

Situations change with circumstances, and the arrival and departure of political leaders or place names, for example, are linked to historical events that take

place within a certain timeframe. If the copywriter wishes to refer to matters such as these, he or she should establish that the facts are correct.

Humour may be used very successfully in advertisements. It creates an atmosphere of good cheer and provides amusement. However, it is an element that should be used with circumspection because, if it fails, the whole advertisement will fail. Irony and controversy are also techniques that can contribute to the success of an advertisement. Nevertheless, the copywriter should establish whether the people in the target market will be able to identify the irony or the controversy. If they do not, the advertisement will not deliver its marketing message.

Music is used in radio advertisements to create atmosphere and to evoke certain emotions in the people targeted. Additionally, music may also have an intertextual function: background sounds create the context and provide plenty of textual information. The copywriter should use these elements to create the theatre of the mind for the people in the target market. The copywriter should create characters that act as realistic representatives (stereotypes) of a specific section of the community. Different language-related variables are used repeatedly in the dataset and help to set guidelines in writing credible dialogue in radio advertisements in order to echo word-of-mouth advertising.

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