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**An investigation of**

**brand names as product names**

**in the South African context.**

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## Glossary of terms

1. **Proprietary Eponyms**: When successful and popular brand names are used for the original products, similar products and generic products (Cole, 2008: 124).
2. **Genericide**: Losing the legal power of a trademark due to its omnipresence. (Tams, 2013: 1)
3. **Ubiquitous**: When things, in particular for this paper brands, stand out and are found everywhere.
4. **Verbify/ Verbification**: When brand names are used as verbs instead of nouns or adjectives (Tams, 2013: 1)
5. **Brand Identity System**: is a system developed to help establish the relationship between brands and customers (Aaker, 2009: 44).
6. **Brand Identity**: Are the brand's name, communication style and visual elements that an organisation uses because of how it wants to be perceived (Gallagher & Savard, 2009: 2).
7. **Brand Image**: this is how consumers view the brand (Gallagher & Savard, 2009: 2).
8. **Brand equity**: is the customer's subjective and intangible assessment of the brand beyond its objectively perceived value (Aaker, 2009: 18)

## **Title**

**An investigation of Brand names as product names within the South African context.**

## **Abstract**

*This research paper studies the relationship between brand names and how people use them interchangeably with product names in South Africa. . The first types of generic branding can be dated back to 500BC in India, different forms of branding were used by glassmakers in Rome in the form of watermarks, blind stamps, hallmarks and silver maker marks in Italy. Brands have evidently existed for many centuries yet they became popular in mass-marketing during the 19<sup>th</sup> century through industrialisation. To discover the role of popular brand names representing products this paper analyses available information about branding and the meaning of brands, generic brands and proprietary brands around the world. Once the information has been collected and analysed the information will be narrowed down to the South African context. Through a mixed methodology approach, using both quantitative and qualitative research, this paper will explore how brands influence society and become part of vernacular languages. Brand names have become the window to product names, meaning we see products through branded packages. Brands have become very powerful to modern day society. They are the first things that people see and interact with on a daily basis. From bedding to body cleansing and moisturising products, clothing, cars, household products, food, shoes, mobile phones and much more. Through this process brands largely represent what people value and how they express themselves. It is evident in most readings that companies do not measure their success according to the generic use of their brands for other products. However understanding why people use brands interchangeably with products reveals a positive aspect of globalisation. Research shows that popular brands transcend borders and cultures no matter their origin. When brands start to become popular in other countries people use them as proprietary eponyms and they also use them when speaking their vernacular languages. Popular brands have intricately woven themselves into South African vernacular languages because they are easier to use when referring to various products that do not have a name in particular vernacular languages. Thus brands are support globalisation.*

## **Chapter One**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Brand names are a universal language. In the minds of most consumers the brand name is the product name. The following research paper is a discussion of how brand names are used as product names within the South African context. This study achieves this by analysing readings on brand names being used interchangeably as product names. It then narrows down the findings to South African vernacular languages to indicate that brands have a great amount of influence on globalisation. The purpose of this study is not merely to distinguish brands from products. It aims to make people aware of how brands have intricately woven themselves into vernacular languages around the world and in particular, South African vernacular languages.

### **1.2 Proposed Journal**

The journal most suitable to post the following research paper on is the Acta Academia journal on the University of the Free State website. This journal is dedicated to studies within the field of humanities. It publishes articles that study society, culture and politics. Through the social constructivist paradigm, the following paper studies the relationship that society has with brands and products within the South African context. A relationship that becomes so strong that original products, generic products and similar products acquire the name of the popular brand within that range. This makes it suitable to be published within the Acta Academia journal.

### **1.3 Background and orientation**

According to the book *Marketing in the Mud and Dust* by Muzi Khuzwayo (2000) the difference between a product and a brand is that a product has no character and it is generic while the brand has personality. Though his definition of the two is true it is beginning to change in current day reality because brand names are also becoming generic. People use brand names generically all around the world including in South African vernacular languages. The orientation of this research is to look into the most recent research to elaborate on Khuzwayo's theory and observe the transition in the positions of products being the only part of the package that are generic. The Background is about how popular brand names have become. They have become a part of a language. Brand names are used as substitutes for the names of products that either do not exist in that language or are not popularly used. Consequently this study puts forward the idea that

brand names have become universal and they bind us through the notion of globalisation. This is a phenomenon that continues to grow even though organisations are often against this use of their brand names.

This study defines new terms such as ‘verbifying’ and proprietary eponyms. It teaches through thorough interaction with literature that ideas and words will become synonymous with everyday actions once the core definitions and meanings are found. It uncovers that in such an interconnected world we have many words in common with many parts of the world and these words are simply popular brand names.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research is the Brand Identity System, a system developed by David Aaker in his book *Brand Leadership* (2009). The brand identity system helps establish the relationship between brands and customers. There are 12 elements to the brand identity system and they are organised around 4 categories (Aaker, 2009: 44.). The categories are the brand as a product, the brand as an organisation, the brand as a person and the brand as a symbol. Once the categories have been discussed, the core, extended core, brand essence, value proposition, credibility and brand-customer relationship are established. This framework first aims to understand branding and enquire into how organisations create brands with great value to people’s lives. Aaker (2009) also differentiates between brand identity, which is how the organisation sees itself, and brand image which is how the public views that brand (Gallagher & Savard, 2009: 2). It is also part of this framework to understand the various values such as emotional, rational, rarity or safety that consumers place on brands (Gallagher & Savard, 2009: 3).

The selected framework is relevant to this study because the aim is to establish the relationship between brands and South African languages. Brands have identities that they aim to build for themselves however these can differ with the image that people have of them.

#### **1.5 Rationale**

Brands are created to differentiate products. However popular brands tend to become household names and some people are prone to use brand names interchangeably with other similar or generic products. This is known as *propriety eponym*, when successful brand names are used as generic terms to describe products within a similar category (Cole, 2008: 124). The general assumption may be that using popular brand names for similar products indicates that they have

a strong brand identity. However there are theories that argue that this may not be favourable to what companies aim to achieve when creating a brand (Tams, 2013: 1). Some companies go to the extent of getting lawsuits to make sure that their brand names are used specifically for their product. This study explores how products are seen through well-known brand names.

When brands become the first thing we think about when we need a product linked to the brand, than the brand is regarded as being well communicated and successful. However it seems there is such a thing as excessive use of a brand's name. Brands have an identity and an image. The brand identity is how the brand positions itself and the image is how people see it. This relationship is built through the manner in which the brand communicates with its target market. It seems however that a brand can get so popular that its autonomy becomes compromised.

To a minimal extent, it is arguable that when aiming to grow their brands, organisations can actually be faced with the dilemma of a double-bind. The predicament created by a double-bind is when an organisation or a person is faced with two or more contradictory messages and one of those messages works against the other (Vandenberg, 2006: 259). This is a more extreme way of viewing the distress caused to organisations when they lose track of their brand name while equally attempting to create great recognition for their brand. When things that are closely related have a contrasting effect, they generally open up to a world of vast debates, exciting theories and contrasting content (Vandenberg, 2006: 259). What is particularly interesting is the reality that when people use brand names and products interchangeably they do so very nonchalantly. This of course does not mean that there are people who are not conscious of the correct terms for products as well as people who can differentiate between products and brands. However the very same people may have difficulty maintaining this precision when communicating in vernacular languages. For this study, this will be in particular to South African vernacular languages.

## **1.6 Research Problem and Research problem statement**

The research problem is the disdain of organisations on their brand names being used generically for products that are in a similar category. This research problem explores the implications of customers calling original, generic and similar products by the name of the popular brands within a product range. It seeks to understand this by studying the incorporation of brand names into the eleven official South African vernacular languages when a word for the product it represents is not readily available in one's vernacular vocabulary. This research paper explores the implications of customers calling original, generic and similar products by the name of similar and

popular brands within a product range. It seeks to understand this by studying the incorporation of brand names into the eleven official South African vernacular languages when a word for the product it represents is not readily available in a person's vernacular vocabulary.

### **1.7 Research Questions**

The research questions in this research paper are as follows:

The primary question is: what are the implications of people calling original products, generic products and similar products by the popular brand name within that product range?

For this study there are also secondary questions. The secondary questions are:

- i. How does this phenomenon occur within the South African context.
- i. Which products are South Africans prone to call by other brand names.
- ii. How does this phenomenon manifest in South African vernacular languages.

### **1.8 Aims and objectives**

The aim of this study is to conduct research on the value of popular products and how people incorporate them into vernacular languages. It seeks to study how brands influence people and become a part of South African indigenous languages. The Objective of this paper is to contextualise the use of propriety eponyms and generic terms introduced by branding. Moreover it serves to indicate the intricate details of how brands merging with vernacular languages is one of the many ways that globalisation weaves itself into societies in subtle yet effective ways.

The study suggests that by being interconnected we have many words that we share with people around the world and those are largely brand names.

### **1.9 Methodology**

The Mixed methodology research approach will be used. Quantitative research and qualitative research will be combined to study and measure peoples' responses to branding (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, dos Santos, du Toit, Masenge, van Aardt & Wagner, 2011: 62). The quantitative research will be used to facilitate the qualitative research (Bryman *et al*, 2011: 63). The quantitative research will be assessing the magnitude and the frequency of the use of brand names. While qualitative research will help explore the meaning and understanding of the use of brand names as product names in the South African context.

### **1.10 Delimitations**

This study does not aim to resolve or offer a solution for the struggle between organisations, their brand names and people using them for different products. Rather it offers insight on how people experience brands and an alternative on how organisations should perceive the effect of their brands on South African indigenous languages. The purpose of this study is not merely to distinguish brands from products. It aims to make people aware of how brands have intricately woven themselves into vernacular languages in South Africa.

### **1.11 Hypothesis**

This research report reconsiders the idea that people using brand names interchangeably with product names is harmful to brands. Rather that the incorporation of brands into South African vernacular languages embraces globalisation.

### **1.12 Assumptions**

The assumptions undertaken by this paper are that proprietary eponyms exist within the South African context and that brand names are used interchangeably with product names in South Africa. It assumes that South Africans have their own way of verbifying brands within the various vernacular languages. It assumes that there is great value in how brands are communicated, storytelling is effective. It also assumes that brand identity and brand image influence the relationship between society and brands. It further assumes that the omnipresence of particular brands creates a top of the mind relationship with consumers. It also assumes that incorporating brand names into vernacular languages forms part of globalisation.

### **1.13 Chapter outline**

Chapter one of this paper begins with an introduction into the use of brand names interchangeably with product names. The chapter provides background information that the research is set up against. It provides a theoretical framework, rationale and the problem statement accompanied by the research questions. There is an outline of the aims and objectives and a short summary of the research methodology as well as the delimiters, the hypothesis and the assumption that people use brand names and product names.

Chapter two is the literature review which indicates that there are conscious objectives that brands aim to achieve. Brands are the contact points at which customers engage with products. Therefore brand awareness is important for organisations. Furthermore people like products because of the value the products add to their lives. Organisations express the value of their

products through their brands and what they promise to do. The literature review debunks this contact journey between products, brands and organisations.

Chapter three presents the research methodology used for this study. It is a mixed methodology approach where a quantitative research will help establish the beliefs that people have about products, brands and brand names. The qualitative approach will establish why people hold the views they have about brands and products by sampling from different vernacular languages. It also includes the research design, sampling, data collection tool, reliability and validity, data analysis, ethical considerations and research assumptions.

Chapter four is the research analysis. This analysis of the data will help us understand the importance of the findings of the research on branding.

The conclusion will round up the research paper and establish what value this paper adds to knowledge about branding. It will establish an understanding of people and the relationships they form with brands when they incorporate them into their vernacular languages.

#### **1.14 Conclusion**

Altogether the background and orientation, the theoretical framework, the rationale, the research problem, the research problem statement, the research questions, the aims and the objectives, the methodology, the delimitations, the hypothesis and the assumption all discussed above are the building blocks of the this paper. Together they begin the process of researching people using brand names for similar and generic products names.

## **Chapter Two**

### **2.1. Literature review**

#### **Introduction**

To gain insight on the above research topic it is essential to engage with literature about branding and products that already exists. Engaging with readings opens up a plethora of content about the opinions, mainstream theories and contrasting theories available on how people experience brands and products.

The theoretical framework of this study is the Brand Identity System and it is used to understand the purpose of branding. How organisations create brands, which is their brand identity and how people perceive their brands which is their brand image (Gallagher & Savard, 2009: 2). It is also part of this framework to understand the types of value such as emotional, rational, rarity or safety that consumers place on brands (Gallagher & Savard, 2009: 3).

#### **Branding – a powerful tool**

The Aaker Brand Identity Model was created by David Aaker in 1996. It is a model that offers a four-fold perspective to concept of a brand. The purpose of this model is to help brand strategists consider different brand elements and patterns that can help differentiate or accentuate a brand. The Brand Identity System by Aaker (2009: 44) further states that a strong brand should have a rich, clear brand identity. The brand identity represents what the organisation wants the brand to stand for. People involved with a brand should be able to articulate the brand identity and care for it. For texture and depth organisations should look at the brand as a product, as an organisation, as a person and as a symbol (Aaker, 2009: 44). The twelve elements for the brand identity system organised in four categories are organised below:

Table 1: Brand Identity System (Aaker, 2009: 44)

| <b>Brand as a product</b> | <b>Brand as an organisation</b> | <b>Brand as a Symbol</b>     | <b>Brand as a person</b> |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Product Scope             | Organisations attributes        | Personality                  | Visual image             |
| Product attributes        | Local or Global                 | Customer-brand relationships | Brand heritage           |
| Quality/value             |                                 |                              |                          |
| Uses                      |                                 |                              |                          |
| Users                     |                                 |                              |                          |

|                    |  |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|--|
| Country of origins |  |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|--|

This model can be applied to most brands including human beings and their personal brands and it is used in this paper as the theoretical framework of popular brand names being used interchangeably with product names.

In his paper *The Nine Principles of Branding*, Stine (2015: 2) writes:

The success of a product, service, individual, business, organization, or even a city is based on being perceived as unique. Look at any market leader and you'll find they each own a place in the consumer's mind. They have positively differentiated themselves from the rest of the competition. Branding is creating that individual niche in the consumer's psyche and owning it. More than just marketing Branding is the entire effect that creates a memorable identity.

This bold introduction of the purpose of branding expressed by Stine (2015: 2) speaks to the effect that brands have on people's lives. It highlights the importance of branding as a necessary element of product differentiation. Most importantly it explores the foundation of how consumers interact with brands. A well communicated and effective brand creates the idea that there is no other brand (Stine, 2015: 2). This is a lead towards understanding how powerful branding can make a product. Hence cross-culturally, intentionally or unintentionally, people are inclined to call products by their brand names and occasionally refer to similar products by the name of other brands.

In his book *Brand Leadership* David Aaker (2009: 17) states that "the goal of the brand leadership paradigm is to create strong brands". While seeking to answer the question of what a strong brand really is he developed a module to understanding brand equity. Brand equity is the brands assets that are linked to the brands name and symbol, these assets either add or subtract the value of a product or service (Aaker, 2009: 17). Aaker's model groups the assets into four dimensions namely brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations and brand loyalty which are listed below:

- **Brand awareness** is how much people know about a brand. The more they know about a brand the more likely they are to want it. The brand or name that a consumer thinks of first when thinking of a product is the one that they will be drawn to (Romanuik & Sharp 2004: 1). Brands come to the top of the mind by being a perennial favourite, having a lingering bad taste and by getting the right exposure (Romanuik & Sharp 2004: 1). Top of the mind awareness is an effective way to measure how popular and memorable brands are to consumers.
- **Perceived quality** is how people view a brand. If they believe that it has high quality then they are more likely to be drawn to it. People respond to a brand according to their

perception of its quality. How people perceive a brand also impacts on the profitability of the brand.

- **Brand associations** are the things that connect the brand to its users for example user imagery, product attributes, organisational associations, brand personality or symbols. Brand managers and brand leaders are tasked with which associations should be developed and created.
- **Brand loyalty** is the heart of a brand's value. Its goal is to strengthen the size and intensity of each loyalty segment. A brand with a small but intensely loyal customer base can have significant equity.

Brand equity is the customer's subjective and intangible assessment of the brand beyond its objectively perceived value. It is reflected by how people act, think and feel about the brand while reflecting on the price, market share and profitability that the brand commands (Aaker, 2009: 18). A strong brand identity can result in long-term profitability

In an article titled *Branding: how to own a piece of your customer's mind*, Roddy Mullin (2006: 1) explains the importance of branding.

A brand is ownership of a piece of the mind of the customer: It gives instant recall when the brain is triggered by a connection between a need and a solution. Hopefully that trigger is when a customer has a need for a service or product and thinks of yours first.

The explanation given here of the power of brands leads into a further discovery of how brands aim to become a part of peoples' lives. Brands are thus particularly tailored to become embedded in our minds.

### **Top of Mind Awareness**

'Top of the mind' awareness is when a product or service is the first thing a prospective client thinks of (Findmorebuyers.com:2015). This is particularly effective when they think of your service or product first when they are ready to buy (Findmorebuyers.com:2015). Secondary research on this site indicates that buyers use an information oriented decision process. This is a process where the buyer gathers information, reviews the alternatives, chooses one alternative and lastly evaluates the decision after the facts (Findmorebuyers.com:2015). They further write the following research and solutions for creating 'Top of mind' awareness:

Today's successful business professional uses this approach: Get in at the beginning of the process, when the consumer is gathering facts relating to her/his problem or need and stay there. Your goal must be to create an awareness of who you are and what you offer. So, when your prospect finally decides to buy, s/he immediately thinks of you.

The 'top of mind' concept starts with knowing the relevance of the brand, once the relevance is established then it will be easily recalled by consumers (Wong, 2005: 20). Consumers are more likely to choose a brand that they can recall, connect with and understand. Thus subconsciously a consumer may consider Coke to be a cold beverage that is socially acceptable as it is seen as popular therefore they can connect with it (Wong, 2005: 20). Arguably if saying Coke is socially acceptable then there may be a connection between why people would refer to other forms of cola Coke and other products by the popular brand name within a product range. It is easier for them to recall the more popular name.

### **Brand names used as product names - a positive perspective**

In his book *Marketing Through the Mud and Dust*, Muzi Khuzwayo (2000) gives a personal account of his experience with brand names being used as products names.

"Colgate means toothpaste to many people in South Africa because it was the first in South Africa all my childhood I grew up knowing that 'groovy' meant any can of cold-drink. As a child I used to go to the store and ask for a 'Groovy Coke'. It was only in 1999 that I discovered that Groovy was the first cold-drink to be produced in cans. Simba Chips was the first in the black market, and is still the market leader by far. It never occurred to me until much later in life that Simba was a brand and company name. For a long time 'Simba Chips' meant any cold chips in a packet of 25g or more. One of my most embarrassing moments occurred in my first few months at Ogilvy & Mather when I said to the Willard's client, 'Are Willards Simba chips crunchier?' "

The above quote is an interesting and humorous take on brand names as company name by Khuzwayo (2000: 73-74) as he recollects how the first few and successful products to hit the South African market became part of the language. He discusses that to gain brand loyalty the name of your product must be memorable and easy to pronounce.

Despite where they originate brands transcend cultures and borders by creating a following where ever they go (Wong, 2005: 20). Brands can thus become a big part of global interaction. Examples include Japanese *Hello Kitty* in the US, German *Mercedes* in Japan, French *Louis Vuitton* in Japan or Swedish *Nokia* in Asia.

When these brands become popular in the selected countries they do not develop a new name, instead the name of the brand is used the same way when the people speak their own language and refer to them. There is a common unspoken fundamental understanding among the brands that appeals across markets regardless of their culture or origin (Wong, 2005: 1).

### **Brand names used as product names – when it doesn't work**

With some of the above mentioned research there is literature supporting that the aim of a brand is to become the first point of reference to potential consumers. However further research suggests that it is not always positive for brands to be very popular as they may be used out of context. The following paragraph from George Pike (2014) discusses the down side of brand names being used for product names.

Trademark erosion is one of the classic catch-22s of trademark law, in that it indicates such a complete success of the brand representing the product that the brand becomes the product and is no longer recognized separately as a brand. Companies with widely known brands often take significant steps to differentiate them from the underlying product. The Kleenex box on my desk is clearly identified as Kleenex Brand facial tissues to differentiate it from Puffs, Scotties, or Walgreens brands of facial tissues. (By the way, Kleenex is the only name in the first paragraph that remains a trademark. Aspirin, cellophane, yo-yo, zipper, escalator, and linoleum are all former trademarks that have become genericized.) The trademark owner also focuses on the trademark in the advertising and marketing of the product. At other times, companies will go to court or the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) to defend their trademarks.

The term *genericide*, defined as losing the legal power of a trademark due to its omnipresence, is used for the negative side of brands becoming *verbified* (Tams: 2013: 1). Essentially when a brand gets popular it drives sales, which is good for an organisation. Thus some organisations start off with the objective of making their brand popular. However it is possible for a brand to get so popular that it loses track of its intellectual property (Tams: 2013: 1). For example when people say they are going to get some Kleenex from the shops, it does not necessarily mean that they will return with a box of tissues branded Kleenex (Tams: 2013: 1). George Pike (2014) gives insightful context to the concept of *genericide* below:

The question is now whether the word "google" (also "googling" and "googled," etc.), when used as a verb to represent the action of conducting a search on the internet, has become genericized. The verb obviously arose from the trademarked Google search engine, which over the past decade has become the dominant internet search engine, with 67% to 90% of the market share--depending on which survey you read.

In an article published by the online magazine The Verge in September 2014 Vlad Savov wrote a short, striking and relevant article about the incorrect use of popular brand names for similar products within their range. It read as follows:

Microsoft is paying the NFL millions to use Surface, but the announcers still can't remember its name (Savov, 2014: 1). NFL players have been sponsored with the Microsoft Surface Pro tablet by Microsoft. However, when the sports commentators discuss the tablets or bring attention to them they refer to them as I pads. The coaches and players use them to review photos of plays. The tablets are encased in chunky cyan protective cases and have been attracting the attention of the broadcast commentators when put to use (Savov, 2014: 1). Microsoft is not pleased with this outcome after committing to spend \$400 million on an exclusive advertising and equipment

deal with the NFL (Savov, 2014: 1). It is now important for Microsoft to educate the commentators and the rest of the world about the Surface's advantages so as to generate brand awareness.

### **Brand names: from an identity to a verb**

Sometimes brands become so popular that people begin to use them as verbs rather than nouns, as Mike Hoban (2013: 1) explains. He elaborates by saying that there are opposing opinions within business around whether or not '*verbifying*' a brand is a good thing (Hoban, 2013: 1). Examples of '*Verbified*' words and the correct use of the word include Googling which is actually a Web Search, Xerox which is actually making a photocopy and to Photoshop, a product of Adobe, which is actually a type of digital image manipulation Hoban (2013: 1).

Many companies that produce goods and services for consumers face the dilemma that they are losing traction with consumers (Gerzema & Lebar: 2008: 4). The world is overflowing with brands and consumers are having a hard time differentiating between them. Every marketer is up against the new reality that brands are in excess capacity. The average supermarket in current day reality has an estimated 40 000 different types of brands on its shelves (Atkins, 2013: 1). Globalisation and increased competition have multiplied the number of new brands. The result of this democratization of creativity is that it has raised consumer expectations of what brands should offer. Consumers expect bigger ideas from new brands and they expect them faster (Gerzema & Lebar: 2008: 5). While other consumers resort to sticking to what they know and trust.

### **Conclusion**

In modern day reality there are conflicting arguments concerning brand *verbification* (Tams, 2013: 1). Initially marketers aim to make their brands ubiquitous (Tams, 2013: 1). They want to make their brands stand out from the rest and they aim to become a part of the consumer's common speech. Thus standing out as the best or the only brand doing what they do (Tams, 2013: 1). There are however contrary implications to making a brand so popular that it becomes *verbified*. For example Google, the fastest brand to be *verbified* and defined in the Webster dictionary as a verb that maintains that its trademark should be used only as an adjective (Tams, 2013: 1).

The writings discussed in this literature review indicate that there are conscious objectives that brands aim to achieve. They serve as the beginning steps of understanding how brands interact with consumers and how they set out to become a part of consumers' lives. Brands aim to perpetually be the first point of reference when consumers require services and products. The deeper the

relationship the brand creates with the consumer the more likely it is for consumers to associate them with the products they offer. This relationship can be seen as a positive one. However further enquiry into this topic suggests that brands at large struggle with the vast extent to which they may lose control over their trademark because of people using and associating their brands with generic products.

## **Chapter Three**

### **3.1. Methodology**

Research is important because it builds and reveals knowledge about the world. Conducting research adds new information to existing theory and it broadens perspectives on various views. It introduces new ideas and new solutions to consider about existing theory. There are three types of research approaches namely quantitative, qualitative and the mixed methodology approach. The quantitative approach counts and measures the relationship between variables emphasis is put on testing theories (Bryman, Bell, Hirschsohn, dos Santos, du Toit, Masenge, van Aardt & Wagner, 2011: 31). The qualitative approach asks questions through research to understand why phenomena take place (Bryman et al, 2011: 31). Mixed methodology is a compilation of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

### **3.2. Research approach and design**

This research paper applies a mixed methodology research approach, wherein both quantitative and qualitative research are combined to investigate the research questions. This study was based within a social constructivist paradigm as it plays a crucial role in figuring out how brands have shaped people's understanding of the world in South Africa (Ponterotto, 2005: 1). The design used was a sequential explanatory design, which, according to Creswell (2003 in Biddix n.d.) is characterized by first collecting and analysing quantitative data, which is then followed by a collection and analysis of qualitative data. The purpose is to use the rich, in depth data collected from qualitative data to elaborate on and explain the findings from the quantitative data (Biddex n.d.). Furthermore the quantitative research is used to facilitate the qualitative research (Bryman *et al*, 2011: 63).

### **3.3. Data collection**

Quantitative research, in the form of a questionnaire was used to establish people's beliefs about products, brands and brand names. These numerical findings aimed to help provide a basic indication of people's experiences with brand names and product names. The qualitative aspect of the research used an interview to see if there are differences in the way people view brands compared to the way organisations view brands. Together these methodologies will give different perspectives on the same problem.

The qualitative research further assisted with an in depth enquiry of the different phenomena that leads to people becoming comfortable with using brand names as a part of their language yet differs from the intended use of the brand by organisations (Bryman et al, 2011: 63). Analysing the collected

data helped make sense of the relationship between brands and the South African society (Bryman et al, 2011: 63).

The Study also shows how South African languages support globalisation through incorporating global brand names into their vernacular languages. This study establishes the deeper meaning and significance of how brands become so familiar to people that they use them as proprietary eponyms. It studies how popular brands transcend cultures and they come first to mind when people need a product associated with that brand (Ponterotto, 2005: 1).

### **3.4. Sampling**

The population for the study is Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana South Africans that make use of brand names instead of product names. Data was collected from a sample of sixty South Africans who speak three different vernacular languages. Due to the fact that South Africa has 11 official languages, it was decided to limit the data collection to three languages, namely Zulu, Afrikaans, Setswana, as there were time limitations to the study. All participants were over the age of 18.

### **3.5. Quantitative data collection sampling:**

Data was collected from 54 participants who completed an anonymous online, or face to face survey. Quota sampling was used until a minimum of 50 participants completed the survey.

### **3.6. Qualitative data sampling:**

Convenience sampling, where participants were selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher was used to identify 10 participants to interview, based on the aforementioned criteria participants were interviewed.

### **3.7. Validity and Reliability**

Reliability and validity is whether or not the instruments that are used to measure concepts are reliable and valid (Bryman et al, 2011: 38).

A measure should reflect the content in question. Validity is whether the research measures what it truly sets out to measure (Bryman et al, 2011: 38). Face validity is used to confirm the validity of data. Face validity is used to ask people with the experience of using brand names as proprietary eponyms and whether or not the measure captures the focal concept (Bryman et al, 2011: 38).

Measures should be consistent. Reliability has to do with the consistency of the measure of a concept (Bryman et al, 2011: 36). A measure is considered to be reliable if it can give us the same

results over and over again. Inter-observer reliability is used to assess the degree to which give consistent estimates of the same phenomenon (Bryman et al, 2011: 36).

### **3.8. Data analysis**

The data analysis method will be inductive to establish what leads people to referring to brand names as product names.

### **3.9. Ethics**

People are asked for their consent before commencing with the interview (see Appendix A) for informed consent form. They are given a consent form to fill out. They are made aware that their answers could possibly be used as part of the research for the paper. Their confidentiality will be respected and consent will also be required to use their names for the research should the need arise. They are given a date and venue as to where the interview takes place. They are given the option to choose whether they want their personal details to be used in the study.

### **3.10. Delimitations**

A small sample size means that the following information cannot be generalised. The research only gains access to 60 participants. Only the Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana vernacular languages are researched.

### **3.11. Conclusion**

Altogether the paper will use a triangulation approach for research, which is the use of both the qualitative and quantitative methods to check the results. The Interviews and questionnaires will strengthen the study (Golfshani, 2003).

## **Chapter four**

### **Research Report**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter is an introduction and discussion of the findings and the themes that have been identified and derived from the qualitative and quantitative data.

#### **4.2. Quantitative findings and themes**

A questionnaire was conducted on 54 participants. The following results were established from the responses. These are descriptive statistics used to analyse people's responses to how brands influence their lives and thus become a part of their language.

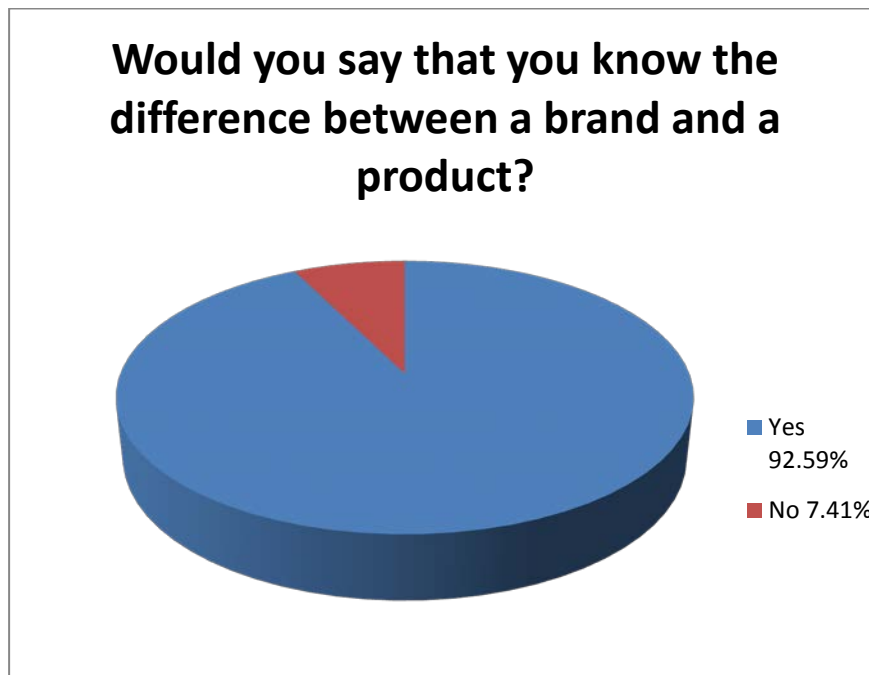
##### **4.2.1. The difference between the brand and the product**

92.59% of the participants confirmed that they knew the difference between a brand and a product. A product is information, an object or service that is created to serve a need or satisfy a want (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015: 1). A brand is a service, concept or product that is publicly distinguished from another so that it may be easily communicated or marketed (Wong, 2005: 19).

People knowing the difference between a brand and a product indicates that they understand the benefits of products in their lives. It also indicates that most people know that brands are not products, instead brands are used to represent and distinguish products. Furthermore it indicates that people are conscious of various brand names for original, generic and similar products. From the perspective of an organisation it can be assumed that most people understand the brand as a product.

Brand as a product is one of the categories of Aaker's Brand Equity model.

Figure 1. The difference between brands and products



#### **4.2.2. Influences on South African's product choices**

74.07% of the participants said that when they purchase products, the price matters more than the name of the brand that they are purchasing.

64.81% of the participants said that when they buy something for the first time, what they have heard about it matters the most to them. As compared to 35.19% of the participants who said that how something looks is what influences their decision when they purchase it for the first time.

70.37% of the participants said that when they cannot find what they are looking for in a shop they look for it in another shop. While only 29.63% would opt for another brand.

Most participants indicated that the price of products rather than their brand names influences their purchasing decisions. However majority of the same participants say that what they have heard about a product matters the most when they make a purchase for the first time. Thus most of the participants are influenced by the 'top of mind' concept. Furthermore most of the participants say that when they cannot find what they are looking for in a shop, they do not opt for another brand. Instead they look for it in another shop. This indicates that consumers are loyal to the brands that they use.

The 'top of mind' concept is when a particular brand is the first thing that consumers think about for a particular product or service because the brand has raised the awareness that it offers that service or product (Wong, 2005: 19). Thus most buyers gather information and reviews about products prior to making purchases. The above findings indicate that consumers are aware of the brand before they purchase a product.

Brand awareness and brand loyalty is one of the dimensions of Aaker's Brand Equity Model.

Figure 2. Influences on consumers purchasing products

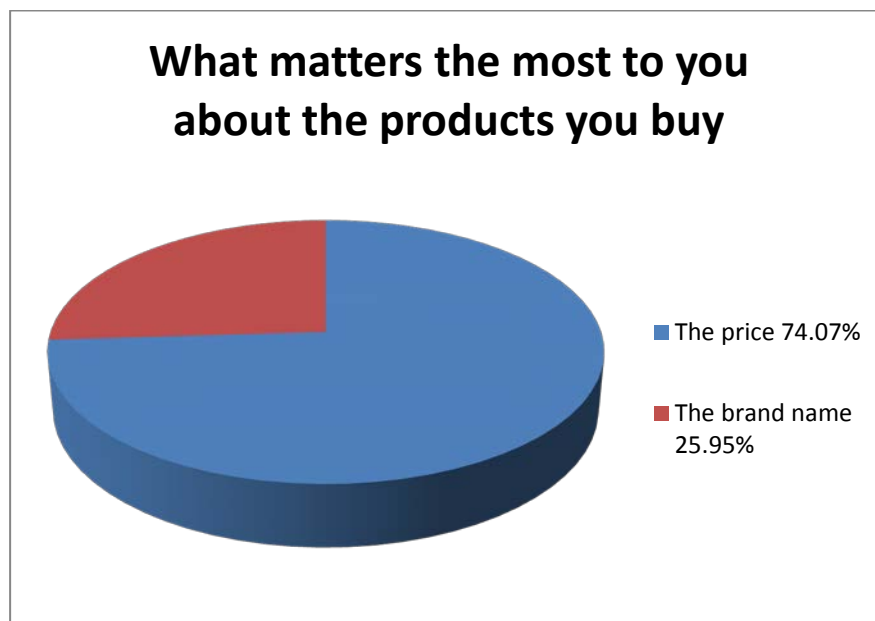


Figure 3. Influences on first time purchases

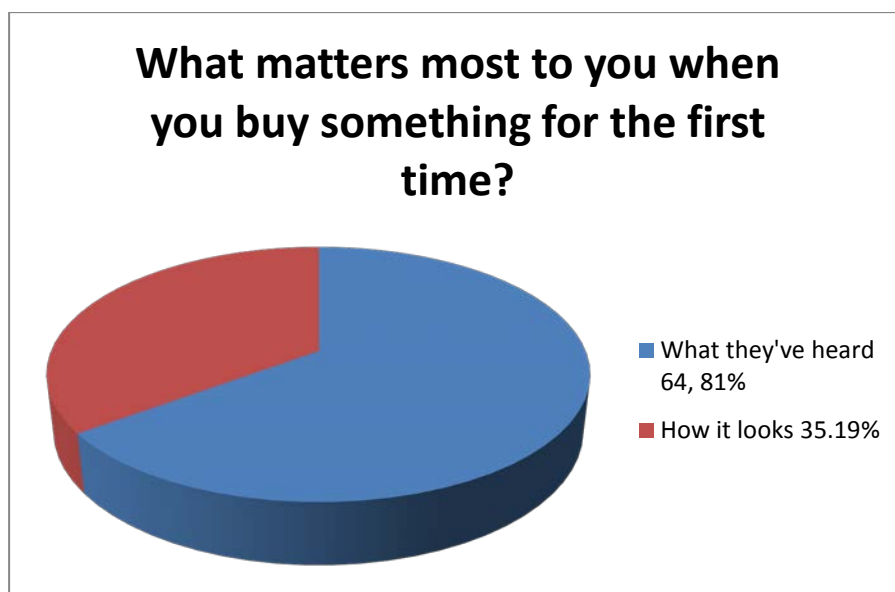


Figure 4. Measures taken when shopping for brands

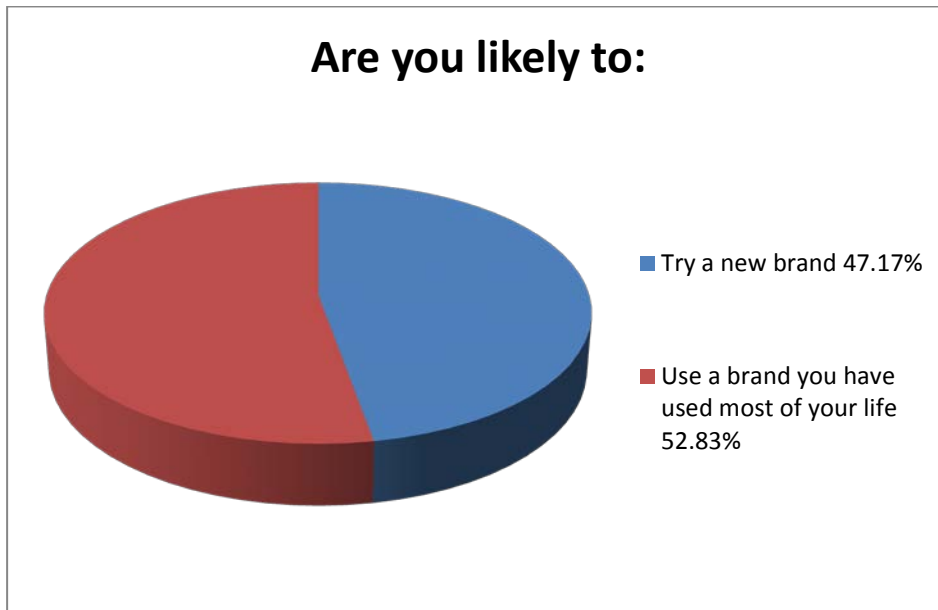


#### 4.2.3. Consumer relationships with brands

52.83% participants said that they prefer using a brand that they have used for most of their lives as compared to 47.17% who said that they would try a new brand.

This indicates that consumers stay loyal to brands that they are familiar with.

*Figure 5. Consumer relationships with brands*



#### 4.2.4. Naming products of a brand in Afrikaans, Zulu, Setswana

54% of the participants said that they did not know the names of some of the products they use in their home language. While 46% said that they could name them in their home language.

Most people do not know certain product and brand names in their home language. This indicates why consumers in South Africa use brand names for most of the products that they use.

Due to the notion that brands transcend borders and create a following wherever they go people connect with them and they become accustomed to saying them (Wong, 2005: 21).

*Figure 6. Names of products in Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana*



### **4.3 Qualitative findings and themes**

An interview was conducted on 10 participants who speak Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana respectively. The following information was established from the responses.

#### **4.3.1. Brands that have been used by grandparents and parents of consumers that consumers will continue to use**

Consumers form relationships with brands that have been used by different generations in their families. People continue to associate with brands and recognise their value to their lives over a long period of time. Brands carry a historical meaning to people's lives and they bring about nostalgia (Wong, 2005: 20).

Participants listed a variety of products such as Kinder, Omo, Woolworths, Handy Andy, Telefunken, Lennon's drops, Dove, Kelvinator, Colgate, Vaseline, Domestos, Knorr, Mrs Balls Chutney, Oros, Robitussin, Heinz, Mitchum, Kiwi, Mentadent, Nivea, Tastic, Rama, Dettol, Robertsons, BP, Nike, Tempo, Sunlight, Clover, Cerelac. VW, Kenwood, Gillette, Toyota, Estee Lauder, Phillips.

Participants said that they continue to use these brands because they have been used and trusted by their grandparents and parents. These are some of the popular brands that transcended into the South African culture and language. Participants remain loyal to these brands.

Brand loyalty is one of the dimensions of Aaker's Brand Equity Model.

#### **4.3.2. Naming the products of the brands they use in their home language (Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana)**

Participants said that they can name the products in English as compared to their home language. They said that it is easier to say the brand name so they commonly use the brand name even when they are speaking their home language. Some participants felt that it is possible to find product names in their home language but they do not usually use their home language when referring to them. While other participants said that they did not know the names of the products in their home language hence they refer to them by their brand names.

Many brands have developed over many years and they have developed a historical significance and an emotional attachment with consumers (Wong, 2005: 20). This has allowed them to transcend South African cultures and thus be adapted into vernacular languages. This is because they cut through markets and create a following no matter where they originate from.

#### **4.3.3. Referring to products, similar products or generic products by the name of the most popular brand among those products.**

Participants said that they do call products, similar products and generic products by the name of the most popular brands among them. The following brands were popularly mentioned as examples:

Colgate, Checkers (instead of a plastic bag), Coke for all versions of cola, Chappies for all bubble gum, Cutex for nail polish, Omo for washing powder, Google for web searches, Tupperware for food plastic containers, Sta-Soft for fabric softener, Pampers for baby nappies, Hoover for vacuum cleansers, Prestick, Simba for crisps, Camp master for foldable chairs, Ziplock air locking plastic bags, Lucky Star for tinned fish.

These are brands that have become 'top of mind' to consumers when they need a particular product or service. Consumers have a greater awareness of the brands that they have mentioned thus these are the brands they are drawn to (Romanuik & Sharp 2004: 1).

People make use of proprietary eponyms, when brand names become popular, they become household names and people begin to use them interchangeably with other product names, generic products and similar products.

#### **4.3.4. Perceptions of products being called by the popular brand names among the products**

A few of the participants said that it was not good even though they tend to do it often. Most participants said that it was good because it showed the success of the brand.

An interviewee said "it is good for another brand name to be called by the popular brand name in that product range because it means people regard it as having the same value."

While another interviewee argued that "It is not good to be calling other products by popular brand names because people will perceive them to have the same quality when they actually don't."

However both interviewees said that they do call products, similar products and generic products by the popular brand names among the products often.

The first few brands to enter the South African market became part of the language (Khuzwayo, 2000: 72). It can further be said that brands that communicated their product effectively gained a great deal of awareness and people connected with them hence they became popular in South African vernacular languages. Hence people use brand names no matter their origin even when they use their home language.

#### **4.4. Conclusion**

Primary research proves that people use brand names interchangeably with product names, generic products and similar products. It also shows that most people do not view this as being negative. Brands have intricately woven themselves into South African languages. Research indicates that people use brand names together with their home languages almost instinctively. People do not see any major problems with using brand names as a part of their home language. It is almost second nature to them. Therefore brands contribute to globalisation. They contribute to vernacular languages and to some extent they have become a part of them.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Recommendations based on themes**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter references the themes that were identified in chapter four and provides recommendations on the perception of brands becoming a part of South African vernacular languages.

#### **5.2. Brand awareness**

The more consumers know about a brand the more likely they are to want it. The brand or name that a customer thinks of first when they think of a product is the one that they will be drawn to.

Brands should enter a market knowing that if their strategy is to be the product or service that people consider first to satisfy their needs then they are likely to be used and referred to often by consumers.

When consumers commonly use a particular brand name, that brand becomes a point of reference when they need a particular product or service.

#### **5.3 Products, similar products and generic products as popular brand names**

A well communicated and effective brand creates the idea that there is no other brand (Stine, 2015: 2). Branding is essential for creating product differentiation. When a product or service is perceived as being unique then it is seen as being successful.

It is important for brands to be different, however many similar and generic products exist throughout brands. Hence people make use of proprietary eponyms.

While most consumers know the difference between products and brands they are the ones who decide how they refer to them. When speaking vernacular languages consumers use brand names and in some instances they use them as product names.

#### **5.4 Brands as part of South African vernacular languages**

The first few brands introduced to the South African market became part of the language (Khuzwayo, 2000: 74). To gain brand loyalty the name of a brand must be memorable. When the name is memorable people use it regularly.

When brands are popular in South Africa, people use them when they speak their vernacular language. They may know the name of the product that the brand represents in their vernacular languages but they still commonly use a popular brand name when referring to a product. In other instances they actually do not know the name of a product in their vernacular language hence the use of the popular brand name to get their point across.

### **5.5 Recommendations for future studies**

Future studies into brands contributing to globalisation by becoming part of South African vernacular languages will have to understand the impact of brands on vernacular languages and what this means for brand building.

Future research should be conducted on a larger sample as this will allow for insight on more people and the recommendations will be able to represent a larger population.

This research is applicable to both organisations and vernacular speaking people as it shows that as brands go global, no matter their origin, they become a part of various languages.

## **Conclusion**

The incorporation of brands into South African vernacular languages influences brand building. When brands go global they interconnect with multiple languages. When brands are successful at creating brand awareness consumers remember them with more ease. The first few brands introduced to the South African market became part of the language because they were memorable and this created brand loyalty. The incorporation of brand names into South African vernacular languages can build brand equity through brand awareness and brand loyalty.

A well communicated brand creates the idea that there is no other brand that offers that product or service. With a vast array of products available on the market people commonly remember the brand that is 'top of mind' and even when they choose a different brand the product is still associated with the brand that the consumer remembers easily.

Furthermore some participants say that they do not know the name of certain products in their home language. This is a direct result of why popular brand names are used to refer to products, generic and similar products when speaking vernacular languages.

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## **Appendix A. Questionnaires**

### **Quantitative**

#### **Indemnity form**

Thank you for participating in the following questionnaire. Your feedback is important. This questionnaire is a primary method of data collection on your responses about brands becoming a global language. The feedback will be used for a branding research paper. Your names are not required and your responses will be used solely for the purpose of compiling research feedback. At no point will your personal details be required nor your identity be compromised.

There are 5 questions. It should not take more than 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Please answer as honestly as possible and enjoy yourself while doing so. You may recommend the survey to your family friends or colleagues, people who speak a different South African language from you and people from different generations.

#### **Participant statement**

I note that:

I have read the information above and I understand what the study is about.

Should I no longer wish to participate in this project I can notify the researcher and no longer partake.

I consent for my responses to be used for this research study.

I agree that the research paper has been thoroughly explained to me and I agree to take part in the study.

#### **Questions**

- **Would you say that you know the difference between a brand and a product?**
- **What matters the most to you about the products you buy? The name or the price?**
- **What matters most to you when you buy something for the first time? How it looks or what you've heard about it?**
- **When you don't find what you are looking for in a shop: do you buy another brand or look for it in another shop?**
- **Are you likely to: try a new brand or continue with a brand that you have used most of your life?**

## **Appendix B. Findings**

### **Quantitative**

**1. Would you say that you know the difference between a brand and a product?**

92.59% of the people said yes and 7.41% said no.

**2. What matters the most to you about the products you buy?**

25.93% of the people said the name and 74.07% said the price.

**3. What matters most to you when you buy something for the first time?**

35.19% of the people said how it looks and 64.81% said what they've heard about it.

**4. When you don't find what you are looking for in a shop:**

29.63% of the people said they buy another brand and 70.37% say that they look for it in another shop.

**5. Are you likely to:**

47.17% of the people said they would try a new brand and 52.83% said that they would continue to use a brand that they have used for most of their lives.

## **Appendix C: Activation of research**

### **Message and audience**

- **Objective**

The main objective of this campaign is to create an example of how brand names have been incorporated into South African vernacular languages through the use of proprietary eponyms. This is to highlight that through brand awareness and gaining brand loyalty, brands have transcended borders and cultures around the world thus contributing to globalisation. By incorporating brands into vernacular languages South Africans indicate the importance of connecting with brands through good and effective brand communication.

- **Message**

The primary message of the activation is that brands aim to be the 'top of mind' when consumers require a service or product. By achieving this, popular brands are regularly used by people as it seen as being socially acceptable. No matter where brands originate when they become popular they transcend different cultures and languages and they become global. When they transcend the various cultures the names still stay the same. When a brand becomes popular within its product range it is then likely to be used a proprietary eponym. Thus people will use that brand name interchangeably with original, similar and generic products.

The secondary message is that although brands have raised issues about their brands being verbyfied or potentially enduring genericide due to the wrong use of their brand or losing their trademark it is almost inevitable. When brands go international they cannot expect to create an image that ties in neatly into their identity in every country because of different cultures and different interpretations of words. Thus people use them accordingly with their own norms.

- **Audience**

The target audience will be:

- Organisations with popular brands in South Africa
- Brand conscious consumers
- People interested in this study
- Communications and marketing agents

- **Concept**

For the activation the concept is to create a thesaurus that links brand names to Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana languages. This concept takes the form of an alternative brand contact planning approach which starts with the consumer in mind and not the brands. It aims to take on an unconventional approach that will break through the commercial clutter by creating something that consumers do not expect (North & Enslin, 2007: 1). The mind-set to alternative brand contact planning requires outside in thinking, zero based thinking, brand based thinking and media neutral thinking (North & Enslin, 2007: 1). This means that consumers should decide if the activation is unconventional and there should be no outside influences to sway the consumer's opinions in a certain way.

- **Execution**

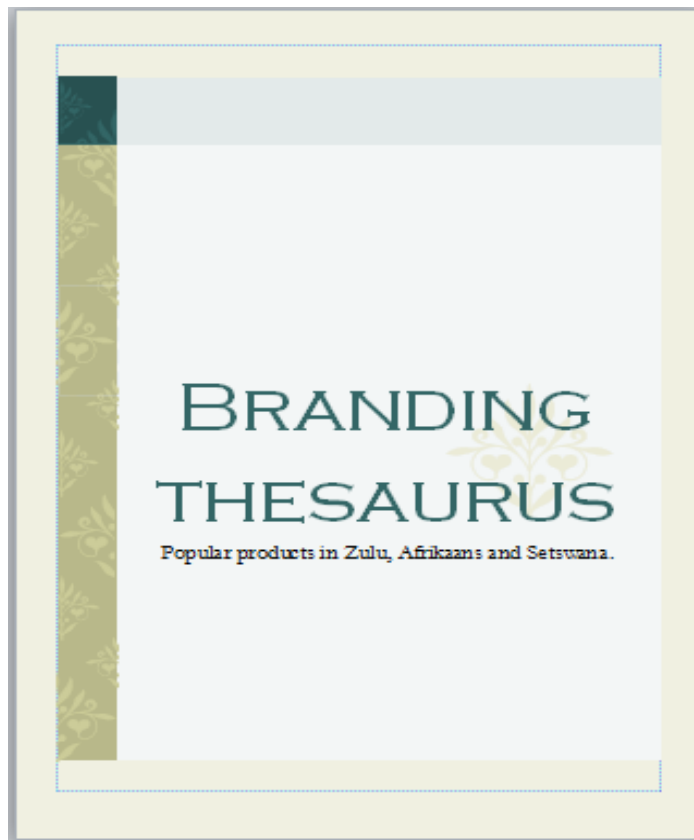
The execution required a compilation of brand names that were commonly used by the interview participants as proprietary eponyms. Thus the brand names that they commonly used in their language to refer to certain products were compiled. The real name of the product was established in English, and the synonyms for the products in Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana were filled in as the popular brand name that became part of South African languages as they became popular.

The execution thus illustrates the primary message that brands aim to be 'top of mind' and through awareness people use them regularly and they become proprietary eponyms. It also identifies with the secondary message which is that once brands go global various people will use them in accordance with the norm of their society.

- **Activation**

To share the message of the activation I created a thesaurus and shared it during a private presentation. The thesaurus has not been trademarked yet and due to the fact that I wish to develop it and later publish it I kept the audience as limited as possible. To maximise the impact of the thesaurus it will need to be developed further with more research so as to illustrate more brands that are used as proprietary eponyms in South Africa.

Figure 1. Thesaurus



| Toothpaste                | Cola                   |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Afrikaans:</b> Colgate | <b>Afrikaans:</b> Coke |
| <b>Setswana:</b> Colgate  | <b>Setswana:</b> Coke  |
| <b>Zulu:</b> Colgate      | <b>Zulu:</b> Coke      |

## Fabric Softner

**Afrikaans:** Sta-soft

**Setswana:** Sta-soft

**Zulu:** Sta-soft

## Vacuum cleaner

**Afrikaans:** Hoover

**Setswana:** Hoover

**Zulu:** Hoover

## Plastic bag

**Afrikaans:** Checkers

**Setswana:** Checkers

**Zulu:** Checkers

## Disposable nappies

**Afrikaans:** Pampers

**Setswana:** Pampers

**Zulu:** Pampers

### Conclusion

The thesaurus successfully indicated how product names are substituted by popular brand names in Afrikaans, Zulu and Setswana. The activation is a successful example of how brand names become product names.