

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA TO
PROMOTE INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES: THE CASE
OF DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL TELEVISION ON SABC**

BY

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Declaration

I, Sello Keith Ramalahla, Student number: 17003309 hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “An Investigation into the Use of Digital Media to Promote Indigenous African Languages: A Case of Digital Terrestrial Television on SABC” is my work and has not been previously submitted for a degree or assessment at any other University. This Master’s dissertation is being submitted to fulfil the requirements for the degree for Master’s in Media Studies and Communications at the University of Venda, this is my work in dissertation and implementation, and all reference materials enclosed herein have been acknowledged.

Signature: 

Date: 16/11 /2024

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the following people:

- I dedicate this work to my late loving mother, Sewela Jeridah Ramalahla. Your giving and wisdom have deeply influenced the person I am today. Though you are no longer with me physically, your spirit is a daily inspiration. Thank you for your continued support in whatever I do and for the numerous sacrifices you have made for me. May you find eternal peace in the heavens, dear mother. I hold you close to my heart, “Sewela sa kgomo tša barui”.
- I dedicate this work to my dear grandmother, Mokibelo Francinah Ramalahla, and father, Ntsi Joseph Mamabolo “Kolobe ya Bjatladi,” whose unflinching love and support have been the foundation of my educational journey since its inception. I am very aware of the sacrifices both of you have made so as to ensure my success, and for that, I am eternally grateful. Your commitments to my personal development and education had huge, profound impacts on my life. Thank you for embedding in me the love of knowledge and always believing in my capabilities. This accomplishment is a result of your hard work and support, and I remember what you taught me every day.
- All employees, management of SABC, and audiences at large, your contribution will never go unnoticed, and your role to the public broadcaster and societies will be to positively serve the public with impartiality across the country.

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Abstract

Digital media play an important role in promoting marginalised languages, particularly in the broadcasting sector, where they play second fiddle to English language. The unequal status in South Africa has resulted in increased social isolation and discrimination of indigenous African languages, the erosion of heritage and local cultural identities. Speakers of indigenous African languages have limited choices on television because indigenous African languages are either non-existent or limited on television due to the prioritisation of the English language. On the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) some programs in indigenous languages are ghosted in English to accommodate others who do not understand African languages. Misrepresentation of indigenous African languages has resulted in marginalisation of indigenous languages amongst 24-hour live-broadcast news channels. Linguistic inequality on television and digital media can manifest itself in several ways, such as discrimination or promotion, and unequal access to public services. However, very few studies have focused on how digital media could be leveraged to promote indigenous African languages, particularly in post-colonial contexts such as South Africa. Underpinned by the public sphere model and Jurgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere, this qualitative study examined the role of digital media in promoting African indigenous languages on the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT). The study focused on how digital media were used to promote indigenous African languages on SABC DTT, how these digital technologies enhanced audience participation on SABC DTT, and the strengths and limitations of these digital technologies as vehicles for promoting indigenous African languages on SABC DTT. Data were collected using a semi-structured interviews with purposively selected 20 participants comprising of five (SABC) officials and 15 members of the audience, participant observation as well as document analysis. Textual data obtained through interviews were thematically coded and presented in narrative form. The study revealed, notwithstanding the limitations associated with these digital technologies, that the use of digital media on SABC DTT to promote indigenous African languages, has been transformative through laying the foundation for the preservation and revival of these languages. This study further argued the integration of digital media for the promotion and continued existence of these languages bridges the gap between the public broadcaster and citizens, thereby enhancing a sense of belonging and public citizenship.

Keywords: Digital media, Indigenous African Languages, SABC, Digital Terrestrial Television, Marginalisation.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ADEA	: Association for the Development of Education in Africa
AI	: Artificial Intelligence
CD	: Compact Disk
DAC	: Department of Arts and Culture
DMNG	: Digital Mobile News Gathering
DTT	: Digital Terrestrial Television
DTV	: Digital Television
DVD	: Digital Video Disc
EPG	: Electronic Program Guides (EPG)
ICASA	: Independent Communication Authority of South Africa
ICT	: Information and Communication Technology
IK	: Indigeneous Knowledge
IR	: Fourth Industrial Revolution
IT	: Information Technology
PanSALB	: Pan South African Language Board
SAARF	: South African Advertising Research Foundation
SABC	: South African Broadcasting Corporation
STB	: Set-Top Boxes
UGC	: User-Generated Content
UGC	: User-Generated Content
UN	: United Nations
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VR	: Virtual Reality

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The inequality of language representation in the broadcasting media has attracted considerable scholarly attention (Mathur, 2012). Promoting and preserving indigenous African languages is essential for cultural diversity, empowerment, and human identity. Addressing the marginalisation of indigenous African languages is essential for communities to foster comprehensive development, and ensure etymological rights, while embracing the richness of linguistic heritage in Africa (Kabu, 2023). Many African countries have adopted colonial languages as the medium of instruction, which poses challenges for people who speak indigenous African languages at their homes (Alexander, 1989).

The supremacy of colonial languages in business, occupation, education, and technology further marginalises indigenous African languages. As a universal medium of instruction, English is the language of global business, resulting in a disadvantage for people who do not have proficiency in it (Chumbow, 2005). Language inequality presents a problem of unfairness towards people whose language is not given the same treatment as English. Indigenous African languages tend not to be prioritised (Alexander, 1989). This marginalisation of indigenous African languages on television keeps speakers of those languages outside of national debates in which issues of national importance are discussed. Digital media thus provide an outlet for these marginalised languages as they are not given the same treatment in terms of timeslots (Milenkova & Lendzhova, 2021). The inequality of languages further results in increased social isolation, discrimination, erosion of heritage, personality traits and abilities. In this regard, addressing the concerns encountered by digital media users in Africa, mainly those related to indigenous languages, needs a multidimensional approach that combines strategic communication, and cultural sensitivity (Fourie, 2007). Therefore, it is of paramount importance for educational institutions to collaborate with local organisations and media outlets to promote linguistic diversity, emphasising indigenous languages. This can be achieved through implementation of a multifaceted tactic to redress concerns of African digital media users in Africa relating to indigenous languages, promoting a more inclusive and culturally sensitive digital landscape.

According to Akinleye (2003), the fast expansion of technological advances and digital media has led to transformation and alterations in how people interact, obtain information, and conservation

of cultural heritage. However, Alhassan et al. (2015) note that the digital revolution has missed an important part of humanity's diversity for indigenous African languages. Even though these languages constitute an essential component of societies across Africa, they are still underrepresented in digital media, resulting in an increasing knowledge gap. Therefore, an examination of the present conditions related to the preservation of indigenous African languages will shed light on the key elements required to bridge this gap and ensure that these languages flourish in the twenty-first century (Haas & Steiner, 2006).

According to Salawu (2004), the existing knowledge gap in the literature relating to the digital presentation of indigenous African knowledge has led to difficulties in the preservation and propagation of some indigenous languages including Zulu, which only has 2% of its internet-based resources available (Ijioma, 2009), the Maasai language, which is spoken by approximately 1.5 million people in East Africa, however still lacks a strong internet presence (Kasoma, 1991). These examples demonstrate the need to review past research on these issues relating to the preservation of indigenous African languages to obtain a better understanding. The lack of representation of indigenous African languages in digital media has a significant impact on the preservation of these indigenous languages and the cultural legacy they represent (Laninhun, 2003). Mapi (2008) noted that the advances in technology shape how people interact: as such, it is critical to guarantee that indigenous African languages do not fall behind in the digital sphere.

A considerable body of research has underlined the insufficient use of online media platforms to promote indigenous African languages, showing a significant knowledge gap in this field (McQuail, 2010; Mapi, 2008). McQuail (2010) alluded that the majority of digital media platforms in Africa use the most popular languages, such as English, while ignoring the importance of indigenous African languages. As such, Musa (2003) argues that digital media has a unique chance to solve the issue concerning indigenous African language development (Musa, 2003). With an increasing number of digital tools and channels, it is now feasible to develop and distribute material in local languages to more people than ever before. This can help in creating awareness about the need for language preservation while also providing an opportunity for communities to communicate their language and culture across the world. Despite the promise of digital media, the conservation of indigenous African languages receive little attention in extant literature. Odegbenle (2013), for example, claims that there is a digital difference in how Indigenous African

languages are represented in digital media, implying that some languages are well represented in the media industry while many others are underrepresented, which can exacerbate existing power disparities and marginalise minority languages (Ogunsiji, 2008).

To overcome this issue, it is critical to prioritise the use of indigenous African languages in online media. Moreover, Oso (2003) suggested strategies with which this can be accomplished, including funding the creation of digital platforms and tools that promote local languages, offering resources and training for societies to create and share content in their native language, as well as encouraging the preservation of languages through education and outreach initiatives. The ignorance in ensuring the survival of indigenous African languages in the digital media is a critical concern that requires immediate response. Previous studies have underlined the importance of policies and programs that promote the use of indigenous African languages in technological environments (Oso, 2006).

Nonetheless, the conservation of these languages is important not just for cultural preservation but also for promoting social fairness, economic growth, and intergenerational knowledge transmission (Salawu, 2004). Therefore, there is an urgent need to invest in digitising indigenous African languages and developing a more diverse digital landscape that represents diversified human cultures and languages. Doing so will guarantee that no language falls behind in the digital era and that every population can fully benefit from the digital revolution (Tovar & Simon, 2019).

Tackling language problems associated with digital media is necessary to ensure these languages are preserved for future generations (Boum, 2018). This is primarily digital media which enables the construction of user-friendly and interactive materials for learning and maintaining these languages. For instance, websites and mobile apps can provide multimedia materials, such as video and audio recordings, to aid in learning a language and preservation. Thus, using digital media to preserve indigenous African languages offers enormous benefits for both language protection and cultural diversity.

Haas and Steiner (2006) reported that digital media plays an important role in conserving and fostering indigenous African languages by filling a knowledge gap. This conversation has highlighted the essential function of digital media in conserving these languages, as well as the need to address threats to indigenous languages through digital methods. Furthermore, the potential for technology to promote and revitalise indigenous African languages has been

emphasised. Therefore, the presentation of indigenous African languages in digital media platforms is a viable route for bridging the knowledge gap and ensuring the conservation, advancement, and revival of these languages for future generations. In this sense, the current study explores the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages.

In this digital age, developing and using indigenous African languages can only be completed successfully with technology. Digital media has become a crucial part of our lives, and it has transformed the way people communicate, learn, and entertain themselves (Fourie, 2007). Therefore, digital media has major purposes such as informing, educating and entertaining. According to Herring (2004), one important factor that has always made digital media hinder participants from communicating is the usage of foreign and indigenous languages. Therefore, information communicated through digital media in foreign and indigenous languages creates language barriers for people of different societies and populations (Androutsopoulos, 2006). This results in ineffective communication to audiences and digital media users.

It is further stated that the digital media landscape has become more complex (Cherny, 1999). Currently, multiculturalism has also resulted in tensions between the use of digital media for information dissemination and the provision of programming. Broadcasting in indigenous languages is a positive aspect to boost and create a platform for multiculturalism and enable society to receive consistent information effectively with a belief in technological determinism (Baron, 2000). Similarly, is the descriptivists aim to describe trends in the usage of languages and study factors which underlie these trends: technical, social or both. They do not agree that non-standard language is substandard or subpar (Danet & Herring, 2007). They tend to characterise language of this nature as creative, entertaining and fulfilling important social roles (Cherny, 1999). Subsequently, from a prescriptivist point of view, the non-standardness elements in much of the digital language and its impact on standard language use are seen as symptomatic of a progressive deterioration of the quality of language use. This is mostly feared for English but can also apply to all other languages as noted by Herring (2004).

According to Manda and Backhouse (2018), establishing egalitarian digital services in a multilingual and multicultural country like South Africa is deemed difficult due to the reconciliation of long-standing conflicts between linguistic and cultural diversity. Osborn (2006) reported on a lack of African language usage in ICT in Africa, notwithstanding the instances given

in the previous section. In favour of the issue raised by Osborn (2006) and Makgopa (2022), who stated that although indigenous languages are neglected and marginalised, European languages are spoken throughout Africa and recognised as official languages by those nations. Moreover, Osborn (2006) explained that there are parallels between the challenges faced in fostering African language literacy and those related to policy, attitudes, and occasionally orthographic concerns that impede the use of African languages in ICT. Nonetheless, Kinuthia (2006) argued that "when ICT is misused, the consequences can be repercussive; it introduces global languages, mass media, and popular culture to indigenous groups, which may conflict with local customs." Osborn (2006) emphasised that a further barrier to the problem related to the use of indigenous languages in digital technologies in South Africa is the unwillingness of foreign funders to fund ICTs and African languages.

Linguists are cautious about assuming that excluding indigenous languages from digital media will lead to long-term language transformation. According to Stein (2006) there is a universal concern about the future of indigenous languages spoken by smaller populations. In 2010, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), published the third edition of its Atlas of the world's languages in danger (Moseley 2010). Concerns regarding South Africa's indigenous official languages are often expressed, sometimes in more vibrant journalistic prose (Webb, 2012). English is greatly a dominant national language as indicated in Section 6(2) of the South African Constitution (South Africa 1996), which unambiguously recognises "the historically diminished use and status" of the country's indigenous languages and requires the state to "take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages".

The World Trade Organisation (2021) explained that the form, wording, and scope of rules associated with digital technology continue to be especially varied. Various initiatives have been implemented in South Africa and other African countries to strengthen indigenous African languages. However, the South African government is still working to realise the useful advantages of digital technology (Gumbi, 2019). According to Masenya (2022), digital preservation is seen to be one of the most advanced ways used for the conservation of indigenous knowledge (IK) and languages and can be shared and passed down to future generations.

The study conducted by Ndebele (2014) about supporting indigenous languages through ICT in South Africa discovered that integrating indigenous African languages with technology is a crucial and strategic necessity that must be accepted. Among other organisations, the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) and PanSALB played a major role in developing indigenous African languages in South Africa (Ndebele, 2014). Similarly, Gumbi (2019) clarified that the DAC's efforts have been primarily responsible for promoting indigenous languages.

Of paramount significance, in connection with this, Osborn (2010) pointed out that national languages as well as cultures of South Africa have come to play a much more active part in the affairs of international communications and relations at the beginning of the 21st century at the time of the 4IR. Ndebele (2014), however, identifies some potential roadblocks to initiatives, such as a lack of financial resources, large volumes of content that need to be localised, a lack of coherence between language and ICT policies, and persistent lack of expertise and collaboration among language and ICT experts, and the difficulty of maintaining localised ICT products.

According to Olaitan, Issah, and Wayi (2021), retraining most of the population to become proficient in using emerging digital devices is also necessary if South Africa is to meet its target of reaping the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These findings pertain to digital illiteracy and language barriers. Increasing the number of native IT experts is necessary to ensure that 4IR technologies are successfully adopted. According to the PanSALB (2020), the majority of stakeholders, including regular South African citizens, must devote funds to the advancement of indigenous languages.

Digital media has become a platform for users to engage on daily trending #tags. It has become a global phenomenon, with major consequences which affect their heritage, customs and culture in both developing and developed countries (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). Digital media plays a crucial role in creating a platform for various languages. Recently, the digital media landscape has shifted towards more participatory forms of communication, which may or may not influence their culture (Fourie, 2007).

According to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (2014), Digital terrestrial television (DTT) is a technology that allows television signals to be sent over the airways in digital rather than analog format. This enables more effective utilisation of the radio frequency band, which often results in higher visual and sound quality than analog television. Broadcasters

convert their television signals into digital format and send them over the network of terrestrial transmitters (ICASA 2014). These signals can be received via digital television (DTV) or a set-top box linked to an analog television. DTT provides numerous benefits over analog television, such as enhanced visual and sound quality, carrying larger amounts of data compared to analog signals, which leads to greater clarity as well as clearer sounds, digital broadcasting enables more effective utilisation of the accessible frequency the spectrum, enabling broadcasters to transmit several channels within the same bandwidth, and it frequently allows multimedia functions such as electronic program guides, online teletext, and interactive advertising (SABC, 2011).

The switch to digital technology has revolutionised several sectors, including television broadcasting. One significant example of this transformation is the SABC implementation of 2013 (ICASA, 2014). The introduction of digital technology has brought about considerable improvements in audio and video quality, more program options, and improved accessibility for individuals with impairments (ICASA, 2014). As a result, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) realised DTT's potential benefits and adopted the new technology to enhance its broadcasting services (SABC, 2022).

The SABC implemented DDT for transitioning to give an improved and more successful means of distributing material to its viewers. The SABC's use of digital technology has made it possible for them to give a higher-quality watching expertise with clearer and more colourful visuals and sound services (SABC, 2022). Furthermore, DTT has offered consumers a wider range of programming alternatives, enabling the SABC to meet the different requirements and tastes of its viewers.

Furthermore, ICASA (2014) notes that DTT has increased accessibility for those with disabilities, including those who have hearing and vision problems. For example, the SABC has introduced features like subtitles and sound descriptions, greatly improving the watching experience for those with impairments. The SABC's launch of DTT demonstrates its dedication to delivering accessible and inclusive content to all South African viewers.

The SABC's DTT services have numerous features that merit additional investigation, including the level of coverage and accessibility of the DTT service throughout various areas of South Africa (SABC, 2022). According to SABC (2014), this covers urban, rural, and distant places, as well as concerns with connectivity and reception quality. This also includes; investigating user satisfaction

with the DTT interface, which includes menu navigation, channel selection, electronic program guides (EPG), and accessibility options. Understanding consumer preferences and pain areas can help enhance the entire user experience. Evaluating the range and quality of material accessible on the SABC's DTT platform, which includes local programming, educational materials, news, and entertainment. Understanding the audience's tastes and demand for different kinds of content can assist adjust the content provision to better match viewer demands. Investigating the technological infrastructure that supports the DTT service, including transmitting devices, digital set-top boxes, and compliance with different TV models. Identifying locations for improvements to infrastructure or optimisation can assist in improving the reliability of service and performance, as well as investigating the legal framework that governs the DTT business in South Africa, such as license demands, spectrum allocations, and competition regulations. Evaluating the effect of regulatory actions on market conditions and consumer choice might help shape future policy.

The SABC is one of the most advanced broadcasters on the African continent. There is no denying the significance of language in a man's existence (SABC, 2022). From the banalest to the most profound human issues, it occupies the centre. The use of digital media in Southern Africa has grown rapidly in recent years, and users have also seen that as an opportunity to cope with new media (Faurie, 2007).

In China, there is a huge increase in people resorting to online competitions and live streaming for various events. The use of digital media has increased drastically among users in China as they participate in their common language in China - Mandarin (Cheng, 2020). In other countries, digital media is regarded as a key method which transmits and develops ways of communication faster (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). In developed countries, digital media is used as a means for social participation than in developing countries where digital media is used to address social issues such as racism and discrimination.

The SABC has made a statement on launching a second SABC News TV channel that would broadcast in indigenous languages. The channel is broadcast on Digital Terrestrial Television and SABC+ (SABC, 2022). The SABC developed its 24-hour African news channel to meet the demands of these viewers, who clamoured for longer and higher-quality briefings and current events in Indigenous African languages. The channel was envisaged to retain millions of viewers who long for in-depth news coverage in their languages (Mnube, et al., 2018). Group Executive

for News and Current Affairs Mr. Moshoeshoe Monare was quoted by the SABC saying “It is a fantastic channel that is not a copy of an English news channel.” It broadcasts various stories reflecting people’s ambitions in indigenous languages. According to Monare, the public service news was “an additional platform to serve primarily communities that are not always reached by mainstream commercial media.” (SABC, 2022). There are millions of people who wait until the evening to watch news in their indigenous languages that lasts less than 30 minutes. Due to its decades of expertise in public broadcasting in indigenous languages, SABC news is well-positioned to meet this task (SABC, 2022).

The South African Broadcasting Corporation is seen as one of the most advanced media companies on the African continent, this implies that language is constitutive of self-identity through some of the most routine and solemn events in one’s life. Language is the medium by means by which people communicate, inform each other, quiz, and, in an endeavour to explore the essence of the meaning of existence, put questions which are much deeper than required when messaging each other in ordinary ways. Language may very well be the greatest creation ever made by man since it has given humanity its most crucial instrument for advancement. Language is crucial in enabling the thought for anything other than the most basic mental activities and emotional reactions. Every language group serves as the primary channel for transmitting its cultural traditions, history, and traditional beliefs (Sultana, 2007). Therefore, the role of digital media serves as an overarching catalyst to embrace indigenous languages. The use of digital media in Southern Africa has grown rapidly in recent years, and users have also seen that as an opportunity to cope with new media (Sultana, 2007).

According to Feuls (2014), the use of digital media by society to raise and address concerns and express their views is destructive or beneficial to people’s social settings. In this sense, the use of digital media by people may influence how organisations, representatives, and society build new methods to engage them. Therefore, the phrase “digital media” refers to all online applications that have an unrestricted and communal function to share content. Digital media in its most common form, is an interactive medium (Milenkova & Lendzhova, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

Views of those speaking indigenous languages are limited or non-existent due to the prioritisation of English. This creates a limitation for digital media to play their role in the promotion and support

of African languages. In some programs, indigenous languages are ghosted in English to accommodate others who do not understand African languages. Misrepresentation of indigenous African languages has been the blackout to content democratisation; side-lining indigenous languages amongst 24-hour live-broadcast news channels has also resulted in language inequalities and limitations. However, other people are on the ground, and they are affected by this inequality among languages as language inequalities can have an insightful impact on society and the public through unequal broadcasting slots and suppression of a language group's social and linguistic tradition. In some instances, the population that speaks non-dominant or minority languages may encounter discrimination, isolation, and marginalisation from mainstream social activities. Linguistic inequality on television and digital media can manifest in several ways, such as discrimination or promotion, and unequal access to public services. Although most researchers focused on indigenous language preservation through digital media and ICT, this study will therefore fill the existing gap in the literature, which is considered problematic because it reinforces the devaluation of these languages and their speakers, and also contributes to language extinction. Furthermore, a shortage of accessible digital materials in indigenous African languages has resulted in a reduction in the usage of indigenous languages by younger generations. This is evident based on the findings of Gumbi (2019) who reported that about 2% of African websites contain indigenous African languages. Understanding previous studies about indigenous African languages in digital media emphasises the necessity of conserving these languages and the need for more research in this field. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the use of digital media to promote indigenous African Languages. This will also fill the gaps in understanding the importance of digital media on the public broadcasters to support and give indigenous languages access, promotion and preservation. This study explores the role of digital media in promoting indigenous languages on the newly introduced 24-hour channel (DTT) on SABC. This study will add to the existing research, by shedding insights into how digital media promotes indigenous African languages on SABC.

1.2 Aim of the study

This study aims to explore the role of digital media in promoting indigenous African languages on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Digital Terrestrial Television.

1.3 Research objectives

- i. To establish how digital media on SABC's DTT is being used to promote indigenous African languages;
- ii. To ascertain how digital media technologies are enhancing audience participation on SABC DTT;
- iii. To identify the strengths and limitations of digital media in promoting the use of Indigenous African languages on SABC DTT.

1.4 Research questions

1.4.1 The study seeks to address the following research questions:

- i. How are digital media technologies on SABC DTT being used to promote African languages?
- ii. How are digital media technologies on SABC DTT enhancing audience participation?
- iii. What are the strengths and limitations of digital media technologies in promoting indigenous African languages?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study could complement the existing body of knowledge on the use of digital media by highlighting the role of digital media in the recently introduced DTT on SABC to promote and support indigenous African languages. The study will also reveal the strengths and weaknesses of digital media in supporting and embracing indigenous African languages. As digital media is one of the dominating sources of information in South Africa, it is important to focus this study on indigenous African languages on SABC as DTT was recently announced and African languages were taken for granted and perceived as not fit for 24-hour live-broadcast at specific channels like SABC 2. The study may also raise awareness of indigenous African languages and national heritage.

1.6 Organisation of the study

Chapter One: Introduction and Background to Study

This chapter provides the background to the study, identifies the research problem, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study.

Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter reviews previous literature and discusses the theories informing the present study. The connection between the relevant literature and previous studies is demonstrated in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology.

The research methodology outlines in detail the research approach, research design, sampling strategy, population and location of the study, data collection method and techniques, data analysis and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Interpretation.

This chapter outlines the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the raw data derived from the participants of this study. The chapter encompasses the experiences of the participants as narrated during the interviews.

Chapter Five: Summary of findings.

This chapter presents the second part of the research findings based on data collected through in-depth interviews with purposively selected participants, who are staff members of the SABC.

Chapter Six: Summary of findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter covers the discussion of the findings of this study, conclusions made on the findings and literature review and the recommendations to the relevant stakeholders and scholars.

1.7 Conclusion

This chapter introduced the study, discussed the background to the study, the problem statement, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. The chapter also outlined the organisation of the study. The next chapter reviews literature related to the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews literature related to the study to contextualise the research problem and identify knowledge gaps in the existing literature. The section will start by describing the interface between digital media and indigenous African languages, outlining how digital media can be used in various ways to promote indigenous African languages, broadcasting and digital media, the relationship between communication, language, and culture, the democratisation of indigenous African languages in media, and African languages in the digital age.

2.2 The interphase of digital media and African indigenous languages

The interface between digital media and indigenous African Languages presents opportunities and challenges (Sawant, 1998). Kant (2012) believes that it provides new opportunities for the promotion, revival, and preservation of indigenous African languages. However, Mathur (2012) believes that challenges such as lack of digital infrastructure, low levels of digital literacy in some areas, and the predominance of the main world languages in digital spaces must be solved.

Accone (2000) asserts that research that explores how digital media interacts with traditional linguistic and cultural activities is the convergence of digital media and African indigenous languages. On the other hand, Akinfemisoye (2014) emphasises that highlighting the difficulties African languages confront in the digital era is an issue that also draws attention to the potential this convergence presents for language preservation, documentation, and revival. Nonetheless, Axford (2011) contends that investigations into the effects of digital media on indigenous African languages can generate information with which societies may learn more about the intricate relationships at work and the possibilities for these languages to flourish in the modern world.

According to Berger (2005), digital media and indigenous African languages coexist, providing a rare chance for the revival and preservation of these languages. In addition, Boczkowski (2002) notes that indigenous African languages are being preserved and given new life through digital media, which is a complex process including cultural, linguistic, and technological elements. On the same note, Bosch (2014) argues that the scarcity of digital content accessible in these languages is one of the main issues faced in the digital era. For speakers of indigenous African languages,

this not only makes it more difficult for them to obtain information and knowledge, but it also makes their languages and cultural legacy seem marginalised and erased online.

According to Breuer, Landman, and Farquhar (2015), the convergence of digital media with indigenous African languages offers a special prospect despite these difficulties. On the one hand, Bull (2016) asserts that there are major obstacles to overcome, such as the disparity in internet access within and across communities and the failure to contextualise communication tactics to fit local contexts and cultural dialectics. However, Cru (2015) notes that some could counter that there is not as much need for digital media and African indigenous languages to coexist as there might seem. The focus should, according to those who oppose this convergence, be on expanding widely spoken languages since they provide greater possibilities for international communication and economic growth (Cunliffe & Dyfrig, 2013). On the same perspective, Cunliffe et al. (2013) argue that speakers can also contend that rather than spending money on digital media for indigenous languages with few speakers, resources could be better used to raise literacy and educational levels in dominant languages. Nevertheless, Dolowy-Rybinska (2013) believes that the merging of digital media and indigenous African languages presents unique opportunities despite given obstacles and divergent opinions. Indigenous languages may be revitalised and preserved through digital media enabling continuous usage and transmission in a variety of settings, this is according to (El Gody, 2014). This may help to preserve indigenous peoples' traditional history, cultural identity, and sense of dignity. Additionally, Ezumah (2013) notes that indigenous groups may use digital media as a platform to share their knowledge, experiences, and tales with the world. Technology development may also lead to the development of online resources, applications, and platforms that are specially intended to promote these languages thereby conserving them. This might involve creating digital libraries, online dictionaries, and applications for language learning that support the documentation and preservation of these languages (Johnson & Callahan, 2013).

According to Jones et al. (2013), the modern world is rapidly growing and highly linked, posing new challenges to languages. One language disappears every two weeks, according to the UNESCO Atlas, and a sizable fraction of the 7,000 languages spoken worldwide are in danger of extinction due to numerous causes, such as urbanisation, migration, and globalisation which are to be blamed for this concerning trend (ADEA, 2010). In contrast, Mabweazara, Mudhai and Whittaker

(2014), allude that there is a bright side to these difficulties as the digital era has transformed language preservation and relevance, providing chances for their resuscitation and continued importance. The interphase impact and role of digital media, digital storytelling, and language learning applications in fostering linguistic variety and revitalisation are also important (Mare, 2014). Moyo (2009) contends that, in the end, the digital era will offer us a special chance to recognise and protect the world's varied linguistic environment, making sure that no language is ever lost.

According to Mathur (2012), the following are some key points to consider regarding the interface of digital media with indigenous African languages.

2.2.1 The Role of Digital Media in Language Preservation and Revitalisation

Through the creation of digital dictionaries, audio recordings, and text archives of language resources, digital media can play a significant role in the preservation of indigenous African languages. Vilanilam (2005) states that these materials can be helpful for future language revitalisation efforts, linguistic study, and language documentation. Digital platforms can develop interactive applications, online learning resources, and virtual communities where language learners may practice and participate in these languages. Thus, digital platforms provide a chance to resuscitate indigenous African languages (Mathur, 2012). Whitten-Woodring (2009) asserts that younger generations may feel more connected to their linguistic and cultural roots as a result of giving languages the same and equal treatment on digital media. The voices and cultural expressions of African groups in their indigenous languages can be amplified via digital media (Mathur, 2012). This is also supported by Vilanilam (2005) who asserts that digital media enables the production and distribution of various materials in African languages, such as books, music, films, and artwork, fostering cultural variety and overcoming linguistic marginalisation.

According to Jones et al., (2013), digital media and digital communication tools may be used to build online communities for speakers of indigenous African languages, encouraging language usage and offering a forum for the expression and exchange of cultural ideas. Similarly, Mabweazara et al., (2014), contend that these languages' digital connection not only makes preservation easier, but it also creates opportunities to be learned on digitals.

Tess (2013) asserts that a lot of effort is being put forth to create digital tools and African languages. The datasets used to train language tools are in English even though the majority of the tools have already been developed. Because it was developed for the language, a morphological analyser tool may work well for English, but it may not work well for isiZulu, Chichewa, or Chishona because these languages have quite different morphological structures from English. To better serve the African market, the most widely used internet search engine, Google, has slowly introduced more African languages to its Google Translate service (Lee, 2015).

According to Adam, Othman and Halim (2022), language preservation initiatives have been transformed by the digital era, allowing users to interact creatively and in novel ways with endangered languages. Adam et. al., (2022), further insist that users from all over the world may access and study a range of languages, even ones that are in danger of vanishing, with the help of mobile apps like Memorise and Duolingo. On the same perspective, Adu and Ngulube (2016), believe that digital media sites such as Facebook facilitate the establishment of language-specific groups in which members may interact, share, and practice language skills. Language learners now feel more connected and a part of a community thanks to these digital networks, which encourage continued language usage and development (Aiseng, 2023). Regardless of their location or linguistic background, users may now contribute to the preservation and rebirth of endangered languages thanks to digital tools and platforms that offer exciting and accessible learning experiences. Austin (2019) emphasises that it is crucial to investigate how digital technology may be used to revitalise endangered languages while analysing how it affects language preservation.

Beermann and Spreer (2018), argue that there are now more options for the promotion and preservation of endangered languages because of the digital revolution while Balogun and Kalusopa (2021) also believe that the development of online resources and platforms has made it possible for communities, educators, and linguists to work together to prevent the extinction of these languages. According to UNESCO (2003), the Maori Language Commission in New Zealand is one such instance; they created the language-learning app "Kupu." This software makes learning the Maori language more approachable and interesting for users by utilising augmented reality technology.

Furthermore, Balogun and Kalusopa (2021) assert the non-profit Endangered Languages Project has established that digital platform that links linguists, groups, and organisations devoted to the preservation of endangered languages. By facilitating the exchange of information, studies, and best practices, this platform promotes a cooperative approach towards language preservation.

The preservation of endangered languages and the promotion of linguistic variety have both benefited greatly from digital tools (Bird & Simons, 2003). Digital media tools, for instance, have been used to establish language communities wherein speakers may communicate and exchange cultural and linguistic information (Bird et. al., 2019). Similarly to this, Dutta et. al., (2019) suggest that language learning applications have increased the accessibility of endangered languages by enabling learners to study them from anywhere in the globe. Similarly, digital archives and online dictionaries have given communities a way to preserve their linguistic legacy (Fuseini, 2021). To preserve languages for future generations, digital tools make it possible to document languages together with their vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (García-Peñalvo et. al., 2020). Additionally, Grenoble and Whaley (2006) contend that the digital age has created new opportunities for maintaining and promoting languages that are endangered, allowing linguists, teachers, and communities to work together to rescue them from extinction.

According to Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023), the digital era has created new opportunities for languages that are endangered to be revived and used in daily situations. With the advent of digital media and the internet, languages may now communicate with one another while promoting their culture and language to a worldwide audience. For instance, the Maori spoken language, which was previously on the verge of extinction, has enjoyed a rebirth in popularity because of technological advancements (Harmon, 2019). The Maori Language Commission has created several online tools, such as a Maori dictionary app, to encourage the use of the indigenous language in everyday situations (Harmon, 2019).

Comparably the indigenous African Languages Net webpage provides a venue for indigenous linguistic groups to exchange their languages and interact with one another, so encouraging linguistic variety (Fuseini, 2021). Furthermore, García-Peñalvo et. al., (2020) believe that the website provides several materials, including language instruction, cultural data, and a platform for members of the community to interact with one another. These digital technologies have

contributed to the preservation and promotion of these languages, which has given them fresh importance in today's world. In addition to these particular instances, the internet has created an environment enabling minority languages to grow in general. Grenoble and Whaley (2006), note that digital media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter enable users to interact in their indigenous language while also connecting with people who reflect their culture and way of life. This has helped to foster a feeling of community and belonging among speakers of minority languages, who may have traditionally felt alienated and stigmatised. Furthermore, Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023) state that the World Wide Web has made it simpler for linguistic groups to generate and distribute information in their original language via blogs, websites, and podcasts. This has contributed to increasing the awareness and prestige associated with these languages, rendering them more appealing to younger people who might have previously preferred to speak the main language of their nation.

Harmon (2019) suggests that the advent of technology has contributed a substantial contribution to the resurgence and survival of minority languages while Hinton (2014) agrees that by allowing linguistic groups to interact and share their culture and language with an international audience, the internet has contributed to raise the visibility and significance of these languages in the modern world. As a consequence, minority languages are not anymore under fear of extinction, but rather thrive and evolve in the digital era.

The digital sphere has had a tremendous influence on how languages are preserved and resurrected, resulting in increasing significance in today's society (Hinton, 2019). Hinton et. al., (2016:76) note, “digital technology has helped to preserve several languages by offering accessible venues for evidence, dissemination, and study”. Additionally, Montero et. al., (2022) highlight that the Internet has served an important role in resurrecting endangered languages by facilitating social networks and digital resources that empower both speakers and learners. Furthermore, the internet provides a forum for encouraging linguistic variety, enabling minority languages to develop and prosper. Thus, the digital age provides a ray of hope for the ongoing diversity and richness of languages worldwide (Onyenankaya, 2022). As technology advances, Oosthuizen et. al., (2023) believe that societies and users might expect an even greater influence on how languages are saved, resurrected, and maintained in contemporary culture and opportunities for revival and ongoing relevance in today's environment.

A deeper exploration of the relationship between digital media and indigenous African languages reveals that this relationship involves more than just converting traditional languages to the digital sphere as it also involves using technology to support linguistic and cultural diversity (Otang-Mbeng et. al., 2023). The advent of technology can bring these languages to the forefront of the digital era and ensure their survival and vibrancy for future generations by utilising the power of digital media (Reijerkerk & Nyitray, 2023).

Reyhner and Lockard (2009) agree that indigenous African languages and digital media coexist in a way that offers exceptional potential for the development and preservation of these rich linguistic legacies. Similarly, Sarkhel (2017) suggests that the growing availability of digital technology presents an opportunity for the creation of digital platforms, tools, and materials that support the indigenous languages of Africa. In addition, Scholze-Irrlitz and Struß (2017) note that this allows the facilitation of communication within communities and creates opportunities for cultural enrichment and exchange.

Sithole (2007) agrees that reaching a larger audience is one of the main benefits of combining digital media with African languages as digital platforms facilitate the worldwide dissemination of material in indigenous languages, therefore increasing the visibility and acknowledgement of these frequently disadvantaged languages. By keeping these languages visible, society may help to preserve and revitalise the richness of African languages for the coming generations (Sweller et. al., 2019). Furthermore, Turin (2021) suggests that local communities may now actively engage in the production and marketing of material in African languages thanks to digital media platforms. This can enhance the cultural diversity of Africa by enabling people and groups to share their knowledge, customs, and tales with a worldwide audience. Digital media also makes it possible to create multimedia and interactive content, which can improve African language learners' engagement and learning opportunities (UNESCO, 2003).

Adam et. al., (2022) claim that the creation and consumption of information has been completely transformed by digital media. On the same note, Adu and Ngulube (2016) agree that multimedia and interactive information are now more accessible and entertaining than ever thanks to technological advancements. The possibilities are infinite, ranging from interactive webpages and virtual reality experiences to movies and animations. Aiseng (2023) argues that there are now more

opportunities for creativity and communication, enabling people and organisations to engage their audience in engaging and dynamic ways because digital media is interactive, people may actively participate with the material, creating richer and more memorable experiences. Austin (2019) claims that though there is no denying that digital media has increased the opportunities for content generation and consumption, it is crucial to take into account some of the drawbacks of the widespread use of multimedia and interactive content.

Beermann and Spreer (2018) state that the possibility of information overload and shorter attention spans is one such worry because there is so much multimedia material competing for our attention, that people could find it difficult to concentrate and comprehend the contents being presented. Furthermore, Balogun and Kalusopa (2021) note that as digital media is interactive, users may get accustomed to ingesting easily digestible material in bite-sized chunks rather than delving deeper into more complicated topics, which can lead to a lack of critical thinking and analysis. In addition, Bird and Simons (2003) agree that an incessant barrage of interactive content can cause a person to feel distracted and cut off from reality, which may harm their mental health and interpersonal connections.

Bird et al., (2019), contend that digital media are being used by communities, organisations, and people more and more to express and preserve their linguistic and cultural legacy. These digital platforms enable the production and distribution of language resources, including dictionaries, grammar, and language learning materials, offering a way to conserve and revive endangered languages (Dutta et al., 2019). Fuseini (2021) agrees that digital media is bringing speakers and learners together virtually, and also makes it easier to share and promote language revitalisation initiatives. Since digital media offers a forum for the recording, sharing, and promotion of endangered languages, it is essential to the preservation and revitalisation of language (García-Peñalvo et. al., 2020).

According to Grenoble and Whaley (2006), the incorporation of multimedia components like audio files, movies, and interactive exercises is made possible by digital media that improves the accessibility and engagement of language learning for users of all ages. Similarly, Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023) agree that communities and organisations may create and share language materials, link speakers and learners across geographic regions, and conserve and revive

endangered languages by leveraging digital media platforms. Apart from the previously mentioned advantages, Harmon (2019) claims that digital media facilitates the development of interactive and immersive experiences for language learners, which in turn cultivates a more profound bond with the language and its cultural milieu. Users may interact with the language in dynamic ways using elements like virtual reality apps and online language immersion programs, which improves their skills and comprehension (Hinton, 2014).

Hinton (2019) claims that digital media's accessibility also makes it possible to reach and interact with a larger worldwide audience. This worldwide reach not only increases awareness of language revitalisation and preservation initiatives but also builds relationships between various linguistic groups, promoting communication and cooperation. Hinton et al., (2016) contend that there is a chance to create sophisticated language learning tools that can adjust to the requirements of specific students, offering individualised learning experiences that accommodate a range of learning styles and aptitudes, as digital media continues to develop and integrate artificial intelligence and machine learning.

Montero, Dénonmé-Welch and Henry (2022), maintain that there are countless opportunities for creativity and cooperation in the dynamic and developing field of integrating digital media into language revitalisation and preservation initiatives. In the face of technological advancement, communities and organisations must make the most of digital media to maintain and revitalise endangered languages.

2.2.2 Accessibility and Connectivity of Digital Literacy for Languages

According to Accone (2000), digital literacy for languages must be accessible and connected to guarantee that everyone has an equal chance to prosper in the current digital world. However, attaining digital equity and inclusion still faces formidable obstacles. Akinfemisoye (2014) insists that these difficulties include problems with digital aptitude and mindset in addition to difficulties with actual physical access to digital devices and the internet. According to Axford (2011), it is critical to offer technology, software, and internet connectivity to address these issues. It is also crucial to guarantee that meaningful and culturally appropriate information is available in the local languages and that there are possibilities for digital content creation, sharing, and exchange. On the same note, Berger (2005) asserts that encouraging digital literacy requires having teachers who

are experts at using digital tools and resources at their disposal. It is also critical to have access to top-notch research on the use of digital technology to improve language acquisition; this is according to Boczkowski (2002). People will be equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to fully engage in today's digital society through the promotion of digital equity and the bridging of the digital divide (Bosch, 2014). Breuer, et. al., (2015) contend that educators must obtain the right instruction and skill development to guarantee that they possess the information and abilities related to digital literacy as this will lead users to be able to successfully use digital technology in language learning and teaching as a result.

Developing digital tools and software that support indigenous African languages, to mention a few; spell checkers, translation services, and language recognition, is crucial for their integration into the digital environment (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Goodfellow (2004) suggests that localisation efforts can create digital platforms further accessible and African language speakers will find it simple to utilise. All things considered, the interphase of digital media and indigenous African languages has the potential to strengthen communities, advance linguistic variety, and preserve cultural heritage. To overcome obstacles and fully capitalise on the advantages of digital media for indigenous African languages, governments, technology developers, educators, and communities themselves must work together. Kant (2012) suggests that linguists, scholars, and the public document and archive indigenous African languages. Language experts, researchers, and public members can document and archive indigenous African languages using digital media. The creation and sharing of audio recordings, movies, dictionaries, and grammatical resources online ensures the preservation and accessibility of language resources for future generations (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Operating systems, software programs, and digital user interfaces may all be localised to support African languages (Mathur, 2012). This guarantees that people may communicate with technology in their indigenous languages, promoting their use and exposure online.

Access to digital media is still a challenge in many parts of Africa, especially in rural and isolated locations. According to Feenberg (1991), African people can fully engage in the digital world and have access to information in their indigenous languages; expanding digital infrastructure and enhancing internet connectivity are crucial. For African populations to interact with digital media in their indigenous languages, it is essential to promote digital literacy (Warschauer, 2003).

Individuals may be empowered through education and training programs to utilise technology to generate content, navigate digital platforms, and conserve and promote their languages and cultures (Gee, 1996). Digital media platforms are dominated by English, French, and Portuguese, which might obscure indigenous African languages. African languages must be given more prominence in internet services, search engines, and digital media platforms to correct this imbalance.

2.2.3 Future Expectations and Challenges

According to Aiseng (2023), new technologies have a great deal of promise to further efforts related to knowledge preservation. These state-of-the-art technologies present new methods for improving knowledge recording and promoting cultural immersion, which gives indigenous people new prospects (Austin, 2019). As Johnson and Harmon (2019) argue that it makes it easier to create tools and applications for knowledge acquisition, artificial intelligence (AI) is essential to the preservation of knowledge and also makes use of artificial intelligence (AI) to develop creative solutions that support indigenous populations in their attempts at preservation. Harmon (2019) further suggests that using virtual reality (VR) technology to create immersive conventional experiences is a particularly intriguing approach. Through virtual reality (VR), people may interact with indigenous speakers, improve their language abilities, and become fully immersed in various cultural situations. Virtual reality (VR) technology may also be used to digitally conserve traditional practices, cultural heritage places, and storytelling, providing future generations with a way to connect with their knowledge and cultural legacy Harmon (2019). However, Montero et. al., (2022) suggest that it is also critical to acknowledge the difficulties that indigenous people face when it comes to access to technology and the digital divide.

Adam et. al., (2022) contend that the differences in internet connectivity and technological access that might impede efforts to preserve information are referred to as the "digital divide." Many indigenous groups may have challenges with infrastructure, internet accessibility, and insufficient technology resources, particularly those living in rural places (Adu & Ngulube, 2016). Additionally, Aiseng (2023) notes that it is essential to guarantee fair accessibility to technology and close the digital gap to solve these issues. Similarly, Austin (2019) insists that governments, groups, and tech firms may work together to give indigenous people the digital gadgets, internet access, and infrastructure they require. The community should be empowered to use new

technologies to preserve knowledge by putting in place initiatives that support digital literacy and the development of skills (Beermann & Spreer, 2018). Moreover, Balogun and Kalusopa (2021) believe that tackling the issues around technology access requires active community engagement and participatory methods.

Bird et. al., (2019) asserts that to ensure that the technologies utilised are in line with their cultural values, requirements, and preferences, indigenous groups should be involved in the planning and execution of preservation initiatives. Through cooperative collaborations between scholars, technological professionals, and indigenous communities, Digital media technologies that revitalise indigenous knowledge systems promote community-driven, culturally aware methods (Dutta et. al., 2019) while Fuseini (2021) claims that traditional preservation is a continual process requiring constant dedication and resources, the long-term viability of knowledge preservation efforts depends on continued support from diverse stakeholders. According to García-Peñalvo et. al., (2020), the following elements support the sustainability of indigenous knowledge preservation over the long term: Ensuring the sustainability of knowledge preservation programs is contingent upon the availability of sustainable financial resources. Language preservation projects require specific funding from governments, philanthropic groups, and other stakeholders. These funds can support a variety of initiatives, such as traditional documentation, curriculum creation, technological facilities, and community engagement. The durability of these projects is ensured by sustained funding, which allows them to take on tasks like hiring indigenous specialists, creating instructional resources, and managing digital platforms (García-Peñalvo et. al., 2020).

Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023) contend the long-term viability of indigenous preservation initiatives is contingent upon the active participation of indigenous populations. Communities must be given the authority to take charge of projects aimed at preserving knowledge and actively engage in the decision-making process. According to Breuer, et. al., (2015), creating a feeling of ownership, this involvement encourages community people to actively participate in language revitalisation and makes sure that preservation initiatives reflect local needs and cultural values. Ongoing collaboration, interaction, and capacity building among indigenous people are essential for the sustainable preservation of traditional practices. Initiatives aimed at revitalising traditional knowledge should prioritise education and transmission, with a focus on younger generations (Bull, 2016). A key component of cultural sustainability is the intergenerational transfer of

traditional knowledge. Cru (2015) asserts that programs that effectively incorporate traditional preservation into both official and informal educational environments, like community centers, schools, and online learning platforms, have the potential to guarantee the survival of indigenous customs for future generations. On the same note, Cunliffe and Dyfrig (2013) believe that integrated educational institutions, cultural nests, and mentoring programs are examples of comprehensive programs that greatly aid in the learning and transmission of traditional knowledge.

2.3 Use of Digital Technologies in Promoting Indigenous African Languages

2.3.1 Online Language Learning

Digital platforms can host language learning materials, communication courses, and applications specifically aimed at indigenous African languages. Users from all around the world may use these materials, offering chances for language learning and practice (Bronack, 2011). Rao (2019) suggests that African language classes, for instance, can be found on specialised websites or online language learning services like Duolingo.

The establishment of terminology is crucial for ensuring that students understand the curriculum in its entirety. Any language speaker can access any communication issued by the local government when local languages are integrated into the digital age. It is important for local media entities, including newspapers and radio stations, to create and disseminate new terms that indigenous language speakers of the language will comprehend. Milenkova and Lendzhova (2021) believe that digital media enabled the growth of several new terminologies in indigenous languages thanks to COVID-19.

Digital media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp can be used to build online communities and groups for speakers of indigenous African languages (Rao, 2019). Castells (1996) believes that by connecting, exchanging materials, honing their language abilities, and spreading awareness of their languages and cultures, language enthusiasts may do so on these platforms. Mathur (2012) indicated that digital media enables the production and distribution of literature, films, music, and other types of media in African indigenous languages while Collins, Neville and Bielaczyc (2000) believe that Podcasts, YouTube channels, websites, and digital publishing platforms may all be used for this. Moreover, Kant (2012) suggests that indigenous

language content production and dissemination contribute to the promotion of cultural expression and a rise in their visibility.

According to Bull (2016), indigenous African languages must be taught digitally to preserve and advance linguistic variety and cultural legacy. The preservation and revival of indigenous African languages might be significantly impacted by the Internet and other digital technologies (Cru, 2015). Digital media, smartphone apps, and online language learning platforms may all offer easily accessible materials for language learners (Cunliffe & Dyfrig, 2013). Cunliffe, Morris and Prys (2013), suggest that digital resources may also be used to produce and distribute literature, music, and movies in indigenous African languages, reaching a larger audience and assisting in the preservation of the languages.

Dolowy-Rybinska (2013) notes that providing instructional tools to a worldwide audience is one of the main benefits of utilising digital technologies to promote indigenous African languages. Users from different parts of the world may access resources for learning languages that might not be commonly spoken outside of their local communities by using Internet platforms (El Gody, 2014). Additionally, Ezumah (2013) claims that as younger generations are frequently more accustomed to and at ease with technology, using digital technologies can aid in bridging the generational divide. Younger speakers of African languages can interact with and study their indigenous languages in a contemporary and dynamic manner by incorporating them into digital media (Johnson & Callahan, 2013). Furthermore, Jones, Cunliffe and Honeycutt (2013) believe that by creating online communities and digital media groups devoted to indigenous African languages, language enthusiasts and speakers may communicate, practice, and share resources as this helps to preserve and promote these languages by creating a feeling of community and support for language learners and speakers. Through creative and engaging online projects, there is tremendous potential to further promote, and conserve indigenous African languages as digital technologies develop (Mabweazara et. al., 2014).

2.4 Broadcasting and Digital Media

According to Everett (2003), the transmission and receipt of audio and visual signals meant for a broad audience is known as broadcasting. It is employed to disseminate messages, information, and entertainment to public broadcasting. According to the Independent Communication Authority of South Africa (ICASA) (2021) this is the sector of the economy that uses the electromagnetic

spectrum to transmit signals to the public across great distances and sets broadcasting apart from short-range and local area networks (like Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and baby monitors). A greater number of broadcasting services are now accessible over the Internet and phone networks thanks to the advancement of digital technology (Everett, 2003). Ultimately, the general public is the target audience for broadcasting. This differentiates it from conventional point-to-point or private communication methods like web-based email and mobile phones. Digital, interactive media that uses platforms or technology like the Internet are referred to as digital media. Websites, computer multimedia, video games, CD-ROMs, DVDs, and digital information that can be shared online are only a few of the digital media examples cited by Bardoel and D'Haenens (2008). Bevacqua (2019:14) pointed out that "old media" like print, radio, and television are frequently contrasted with digital media.

Bevacqua (2019) claims that it is well-recognised that the conventional media sectors would be significantly impacted by the emergence of digital media. First of all, compared to conventional media, digital media is more interactive (Jakubowicz, 2011). On a webpage, for example, people may search and select material without any audience involvement with the television shows that are being shown. Second, consumers have more options for media and content thanks to digital media. While traditional media services are often aired on a schedule, digital media users may choose what to watch and when to watch it (Bevacqua, 2019:14).

Broadcasting and digital media are two aspects of the media landscape that have endured substantial transformations in modern years (Li, et al., 2012). Collins, et al., (2000) argue that broadcasting usually refers to the circulation of audio or video content through radio or television channels, digital media includes digital platforms and technologies that permit the creation, distribution, and consumption of content in different formats. Broadcasting and digital media intersect and influence each other.

The advent of digital media has steered the convergence of broadcasting and digital platforms. Li et al. (2012) state that many broadcasters now use online streaming services, websites, and digital media channels to reach wider audiences and engage with audiences beyond traditional broadcasting methods. Vilanilam (2005) believes that broadcasters may now deliver programming across various platforms and adjust to shifting media consumption trends because of this convergence.

According to Vilanilam (2005), digital media has transformed broadcasting by introducing fresh channels for the dissemination of content, interactive interaction, and audience involvement. This is supported by Mathur (2012) who suggests that the media environment has changed as a result of the convergence of broadcasting and digital media, providing audiences with more accessibility, on-demand material, interaction, and a variety of voices and viewpoints. The complexity of both conventional and digital platforms is now negotiated by broadcasters to provide audiences with material in fresh and interesting ways (Kant, 2012).

Digital media platforms have simplified the shift towards on-demand consumption of content (Keen, 2007). Audiences can easily access broadcasts and other media content at their convenience through streaming services, video-sharing platforms, and online archives. Slater (2003) asserts that this adaptability puts the conventional broadcast schedule to the test and enables individualised watching experiences.

As language is the basis for user identity, it is essential for building relationships with people both online and offline. The material that is offered online for different languages varies, which affects who and what is represented and by whom. The way we comprehend locations and experiences online might be impacted by the disparities in information and representation across languages (Pacey, 1992). Institutions of higher learning in South Africa are promoting multilingualism (Lee, 2015). This makes it possible for instruction to take place in any of the languages that are mentioned in the institution's language policy.

Digital media platforms inspire user-generated content, allowing individuals and societies to create and share their own broadcasts or media content. By enabling content producers to develop and broadcast their shows, platforms like YouTube and podcasting services have increased the variety of voices and themes available to consumers (Goodfellow, 2004). It also provides communication features that allow audience participation and engagement (Warschauer, 2003). Broadcasting is no longer a one-way communication ideal; audiences can now network with content, provide feedback, and take part in discussions through digital media, live chats, comment sections, and dedicated online forums. This interaction improves the viewing experience and encourages the creation of communities around broadcast material.

According to Johnson and Callahan (2013) these days, the public and digital media are being impacted by the elements and manipulation of all forms of broadcasting due to the proliferation of digital media and the rapid advancement of digital technologies in the broadcasting sector, which could eventually replace the traditional analog transmission with digital broadcasting. Conversely, Jones et al. (2013) note that the digital media and knowledge of the previous century can only be displayed by a small number of very influential individuals; that is, only those with high levels of access to information and the means to publicly display their beliefs, passions, and other attributes. Nonetheless, Mabweazara et. al. (2014) suggest that with the emergence of digital media, the concept and dissemination of knowledge have experienced a significant metamorphosis.

Mare (2014) claims that since its introduction around ten years ago, digital media has gained popularity and drawn the attention of both academic and industrial circles. This may be explained by the fact that digital media was introduced to promote interactive and digital broadcasting. "Digital media, new knowledge" refers to the media's innovative approach to disseminating information and knowledge (Moyo, 2009). The advent of digital television and the World Wide Web's explosive growth has fundamentally altered the old broadcasting model, which mostly consisted of radio and television (Mulokozi, 2007).

In addition, Nyamnjoh (2005) states that digital material that is widely available, regarded as multiuser and multi-event, is referred to as digital media. It invariably consists of producers who can work together to exhibit knowledge about social issues and the consequences that information has there. Compared to the previous century, traditional broadcasting is facing more problems in the 21st century due to the interaction provided by digital media and the growing popularity of digital broadcasting (Obonyo, 2011). When traditional broadcasting first began, almost a century ago, it was not as common as it is now. Beginning in the early 1920s, the idea of broadcasting completely altered peoples' daily lives (Olorunnisola & Martin, 2013). Salawu (2006) notes that over the previous few decades, broadcasting has significantly advanced and improved. Broadcasting may be defined as the process of sending a signal in one direction to a large number of receivers.

2.4.1 The importance of journalism-audience relationship

According to Goddard (2021), the relationship between journalism and its audience is an important concept. There is agreement that journalism depends mostly on its relationship with its audiences and is significant only when it interacts with them and that the audience is a "constitutive part of journalism." While Hallin and Mancini (2019) note that the journalism-audience interaction has always been an interesting issue, digitisation has increased its significance.

Journalism's relationship with its audience is complicated and multidimensional, with far-reaching ramifications for information distribution, public opinion moulding, and the general well-being of democratic societies (Harber, 2021). In an era of rapid technical breakthroughs and the growth of digital media, the relationship between the two has gone through substantial transformations, presenting new difficulties and possibilities for journalists and their audiences (Jacobs, 2020).

Jung (2003) asserts that one important part of this changing dynamic is the idea of audience participation, which has recently been the subject of substantial sociological research. While Kalyvas (2009) argues that the relationship between journalism and its audience is crucial, there are differing perspectives on the idea of audience inclusion. Kovach and Rosentstiel (2017) believe excessive audience involvement undermines the journalist's ethics and independence. Makholwa (2018) notes that when journalists place too much emphasis on audience preferences and input, it can lead to sensational and a lack of attention on significant, albeit less popular, news items.

Furthermore, Mbembe (2021) claims that pandering too much to audience preferences might perpetuate social echo chambers and biases of confirmation, in which audiences are merely exposed to material that confirms their pre-existing thoughts and attitudes. This can undermine journalism's fundamental mission of providing varied views and objective reporting. Furthermore, critics of significant audience involvement say that it may jeopardise journalists' duty as information gatekeepers. By giving the audience too much power, journalists may lose their capacity to select and prioritise the most important and impactful news pieces (McQuail, 2020). Given these contrasting opinions, journalists must carefully balance audience participation with the authenticity and impartiality of their reporting.

2.4.2 Audience participation in the professional news production practice

In the fast-changing world of media, public engagement in news production is becoming increasingly important (Makholwa, 2018). This is especially true in South Africa, where the media environment has changed dramatically since the end of apartheid as emphasised by (Mbembe, 2021). Incorporating audience engagement into news creation in South Africa has resulted in an increasingly democratic and accessible news environment, allowing a wider range of views and opinions to be heard. With the advancement of technological advances, online platforms, including Twitter, have become an important source of news, with media outlets increasingly depending on user-generated material to deliver real-time updates and breaking stories (McQuail, 2020). According to research released by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF), 75% of South Africans use social media to receive news, with 53% believing that user-generated material is more trustworthy than established news sources (SABC, 2021). This trend toward audience engagement has changed the way news is acquired, created, and consumed, with audiences not merely passive consumers but active players in the news creation process.

However, McQuail (2023) states that the incorporation has not been beyond obstacles. Concerns have been raised concerning the authenticity, veracity, and reliability of user-generated information, with certain media outlets voicing qualms about its usage in the news creation process. Netshitenzhe (2022) believes that including user-generated information may jeopardise the legitimacy and impartiality of the news, given that it may be prejudiced or wrong. Media organisations can reduce these risks by validating and fact-checking user-generated material before releasing it. Furthermore, incorporating multiple voices and viewpoints into the news creation process can improve the news's credibility and objectivity by reflecting the thoughts and experiences of a broader audience (Goddard, 2021).

The incorporation of audience engagement into news creation has altered the South African news landscape, creating a more democratic and accessible environment for news production and consumption (Hallin & Mancini, 2019). While Harber (2021) suggests that there are legitimate worries regarding the authenticity and reliability of user-generated information, media companies may reduce these risks by verifying and fact-checking. Including the participation of audiences in news creation has the potential to improve the legitimacy and impartiality of the news while also giving a platform for a variety of voices and opinions to be expressed (Jacobs, 2020).

According to Jung (2003), the incorporation of user-generated material into mainstream media production in South Africa has significantly altered the way news is produced and received. With the growth of social media as well as the internet, an increasing number of South Africans share and create news online. According to research conducted by the South African Advertising Research Foundation, 80% of South African news audiences have shared news items online, with 50% creating their news content (SABC, 2021). This tendency has resulted in a greater diversity of voices and opinions that are reported in the news, as well as more public involvement and participation.

However, the latest sort of audience engagement comes with its own set of issues. Verifying the quality and dependability of user-generated material is a major task (Kalyvas, 2009). Before using this information in their reporting, news organisations must ensure that it has been properly verified and fact-checked. According to a South African National Editors' Forum report, "Integrating user-generated content into professional news production requires a careful balance between harnessing the benefits of this new form of participation and maintaining the credibility and accuracy of the news" (SABC, 2021).

Despite these obstacles, research has demonstrated that when user-generated information is properly vetted and fact-checked, it may boost news credibility by giving a broader variety of sources and opinions. For example, Netshitenzhe (2022) discovered that when news organisations integrate user-generated content into their reporting, it increases the impression of impartiality of the news, resulting in increased trust among the audience.

Goddard (2021) claims that technology has had a tremendous influence on audience involvement in South African news creation, resulting in the growth of user-generated content and increasing public interaction. While it offers problems, competent verification, and fact-checking may improve the reliability and diversity of news. Moreover, Hallin and Mancini (2019) maintain that the impact of user-generated material in South African news creation adds to the influence of technology on audience engagement. The expansion and development of technology have enabled consumers to generate and distribute news material, which has had a huge influence on the news landscape and its operations.

The rise of user-generated content (UGC), which has become an essential component of news reporting, has expanded audience engagement in South African news creation dramatically (Harber, 2021). According to Jacobs (2020), more than half of South African news sources include user-generated content (UGC) in their reporting, offering a different angle to professional news reporting. For example, during the xenophobic assaults in South Africa in 2019, citizen journalists played an important role in giving real-time updates and first-hand descriptions of the violence, supplementing the work of professional journalists.

The usage of UGC has enabled a wider spectrum of perspectives to be heard, particularly those from underprivileged populations, resulting in an even more inclusive news landscape. However, UGC's detractors believe it can be untrustworthy and prone to manipulation, jeopardising the legitimacy of news coverage (Salawu, 2006). Nonetheless, Salawu (2013) argues that news organisations have taken steps to ensure the validity of user-generated content (UGC) and its ethical usage, such as providing correct acknowledgement to the source and gaining authorization from the content creator. Furthermore, Salawu (2015) believes that the usage of user-generated content (UGC) has improved cooperation between professional journalists and the public, resulting in a more interactive and engaging news environment.

UGC has revolutionised the role of audience engagement in South African news creation, allowing for a broad and varied spectrum of voices and opinions (Sikanku, 2011). While there are hurdles to using user-generated content, with adequate verification and ethical concerns, it may help to create a more robust and compelling news environment (Tanja, 2010). This interaction between professional journalism and UGC provides the ability to improve the news experience by making it more dynamic and sensitive to the audience's demands.

Netshitenzhe (2022) claims that the importance of audience engagement in South African news creation has shifted dramatically as technology has advanced and user-generated content has grown in popularity. This transition has resulted in a more collaborative and participative approach to news production, with the public playing an active role in defining the news environment rather than a passive consumer. Goddard (2021) asserts that the growth of audience engagement in South African news creation demonstrates its continued influence on the media environment, producing a more democratic and diversified news landscape. The dynamic character of this trend emphasises

the importance of ongoing inquiry and discovery, as the audience-news production connection evolves (Fuseini, 2021).

2.5 The Relationship between communication, language, and culture

The relationship between communication and culture, according to Kramsch (1998), can be seen in the way we interact with one another daily. The ethnic neighbourhoods near us and where we live must have had an impact on the language we speak. In this case, culture is regarded as a way of life. People learn, feel, believe, think, and seek what is suitable according to their culture (James, 1993). Kramsch (1998) also claims that language, friendship, custom, practice communication, social participation, economic activity, politics, and technology are based on cultural patterns because communicators have been born or at least raised in a culture that contains these elements. A response to cultural functions can be seen in what they do and how they behave. This means that communication and culture cannot be separated because culture not only determines who is talking to whom, what is being discussed, and where the communication occurs, but it also influences how messages are encoded their meaning, and the expectations associated with receiving, paying attention to, and interpreting them.

2.6 The democratization of Indigenous African languages in media

The democratization of indigenous African languages in media refers to the process of creating the same access, representation, and voice for these languages in media platforms (Kramsch, 1998). It seeks to dismantle linguistic obstacles, undermine linguistic hierarchies, and advance linguistic inclusion and diversity.

According to Adam e. al. (2022), it is imperative to democratise indigenous African languages in the media to advance linguistic justice, inclusion, and cultural diversity. On the other hand, Adu and Ngulube, (2016) believe that others would counter that the emphasis placed on indigenous African languages in the media might impede the development of international communication and technical advances. Some might think that giving preference to these languages over more commonly spoken ones could make it more difficult for people to communicate effectively and restrict their access to important career and educational possibilities (Aiseng, 2023). Furthermore, Austin (2019) agrees that society can contend that the widespread use of English and other foreign languages facilitates easier cross-border cooperation and idea sharing. Although these worries are legitimate, it is critical to acknowledge the worth and significance of indigenous African languages

in maintaining cultural legacy and promoting a sense of self. Democratising indigenous African languages can give a platform for many voices to be heard and for stories to be told in their true form by including these languages in the media (Beermann & Spreer, 2018). This not only enhances the media landscape's cultural tapestry but also gives people more influence who would have otherwise felt excluded or disenfranchised because of linguistic issues (Balogun & Kalusopa, 2021).

Additionally, Bird and Simons (2003) suggest that the media's promotion of indigenous African languages can help save endangered languages and revitalise others, protecting the continent's unique linguistic variety. Bird et. al. (2019) claims that this strategy is in line with the tenets of linguistic rights and backs the United Nation's initiatives to encourage multilingualism and linguistic diversity. To tackle issues related to international communication and technology development, it's critical to investigate creative solutions that strike a balance between the need for multilingual communication and the improvement of indigenous languages (Dutta et. al., 2019). This might entail the creation of technology to promote language learning, the curation of multilingual information, and the development of bilingual or multilingual competencies in people. Democratising indigenous African languages in the media can help to promote better cross-cultural communication, empathy, and cooperation, which will help to create a more diverse and integrated world community (Fuseini, 2021).

Belch (2001) attests that by putting in place language regulations that acknowledge and encourage the use of these languages in media, governments may significantly contribute to the democratization of indigenous African languages (Kotler, 2000). This means that accommodating indigenous languages on policies promotes them to be recognised. To encourage the incorporation of indigenous languages in media spaces, legislation can make sure that broadcasting guidelines, financing programs, and language quotas are in place (Mohan, 1989). Allocation of funds to support the preservation and revitalization of indigenous languages may be used for various purposes, such as language documentation, development of teaching materials, training of language teachers, and community language programs. Governments may also provide grants to institutions and organisations working on indigenous language initiatives.

Lee (2015) asserts that online media platforms offer various opportunities for the democratization of indigenous African languages while Keen (2007) believes that indigenous language content may be produced and shared through digital channels, including digital media, podcasts, blogs, and video-sharing websites. These platforms give people and groups a platform to speak up and present their viewpoints to a large audience. Digital platforms can consist of support for a wide variety of languages, including indigenous African languages, in their user interfaces. This means that users can select their preferred language from a list of alter indigenous, permitting them to navigate and interact with the platform in their indigenous language. It is significant to note that the level of support for indigenous African languages on digital platforms may differ depending on the specific platform, its target audiences, and the resources available. However, as awareness and demand for etymological diversity increase, efforts to accommodate indigenous African languages are also growing (Keen, 2007).

Community-based media channels and stations, such as local radio stations, newspapers, and online platforms, are important in democratising indigenous African languages (Kotler, 2000). These platforms can concentrate on supporting particular language groups, giving locals the chance to create, distribute, and consume material in their indigenous languages. The development of language technology tools can enable the democratization of indigenous African languages in media. Li, et al., (2012) state that African languages can be supported by automatic voice recognition, machine translation, and natural language processing technologies that can be customised and taught, making it simpler to create, translate, and distribute information in indigenous languages.

According to Sawant (1998) media literacy and collaborative partnerships in education are important in promoting media knowledge and education programs that focus on indigenous African languages are more important as this can provide participants with the knowledge and abilities needed for media literacy, critical media engagement, and the ability to produce content and media in indigenous languages.

Public broadcasters and private media companies should keenly work towards including indigenous African languages in their programming (Slater, 2003). This may entail allocating airtime to programming in other languages, such as news, radio programs, TV series, and cultural

enterprises. According to Keen (2007), indigenous language broadcasting promotes cultural representation and enables people to interact with media in their languages.

According to Milenkova and Lendzhova (2021), digital activists in Africa have pushed for inclusive ways to fast digital change as the globe becomes a global digital community. As many indigenous, minority, and low-resource languages are excluded from the advantages and prospects of the digital economy, language is one of the many elements contributing to this gap on the continent. Using the @DigiAfricanLang Twitter account, a digital campaign was started in 2019 (Milenkova & Lendzhova, 2021). The major objective of the Twitter campaign was to recognise Africans for their commitment to utilising digital and online media of all kinds to promote their languages and cultures online and increase the number of speakers. This campaign is still making an effort to represent the different languages used on the continent. By embracing the democratization of indigenous African languages in media, societies can foster linguistic diversity, cultural expression, and social inclusion. It enables people and groups to actively engage in media spaces, sculpt stories, and complement their language history.

2.7 Theoretical framework

This section discusses the theory underpinning the study. It presents and describes the theory that enlightens why the research problem under this study exists. According to Silverman (2013), theories are developed to educate, anticipate, and grasp occurrences and, in many cases, to challenge and expand the current body of knowledge within a framework of crucial limiting assumptions. The theoretical framework is the structure that supports and upholds the research study's theory (Kumar, 2014).

The German theorist Jürgen Habermas introduced the theory of the "public sphere," which means a place where people come together to converse and debate matters of public interest (Habermas, 1989). This notion has been influential and helpful in shaping modern social equality and continues to be relevant in today's digital age. According to Habermas (1989), the public sphere theory provides an advantageous framework that is thoughtful and empathetic on how digital media platforms facilitate the dissemination of information and allow individuals to participate in critical discourse, eventually leading to social and political change and the study investigated the role on digital media in a public broadcasting media entity.

The Public Sphere Theory provides a convenient framework for understanding the role of the public in determining political discourse (Habermas, 1989). This theory designates a public space where societies can engage in rational-critical discourse, free from intimidation, using motive and evidence to support their opinions. This is particularly relevant to the study findings, as it highlights the significance of open communication and the interchange of ideas in shaping public opinion. The public sphere is not a static entity but is persistently developing and adapting to new forms of communication and technology. For example, Habermas argues that the public sphere is crucial for the development of democratic societies, as it allows for the establishment of public opinion which in turn impacts government policy (Habermas, 1989).

However, Silverman (2013), argues that the public sphere is no longer appropriate in the digital age, as it has been substituted by digital media platforms. Habermas (1989), however, argues that digital media platforms have the potential to enhance the public sphere, by providing new opportunities for rational-critical discourse and developing access to information. This theory could help the researcher to make sense of the study findings by noting the importance of digital media platforms to spread information which leads to the erosion of the public sphere as the study is exploring the use of digital media to promote the indigenous African languages at SABC. The theory could also help the researcher to find out how digital media platforms have become new spaces for public discourse, allowing for a wider range of voices to be heard and for diverse perspectives to be shared on various SABC digital media platforms. In the digital age, this space has expanded beyond traditional media like newspapers and television to include the internet and social media.

Public Sphere Theory, as suggested by Jürgen Habermas, remains a relevant and valuable framework for considering modern communication changing aspects. This theory offers awareness of how public opinions are made and how they can impact society. Through this theory, it is vibrant that the Public Sphere Theory provides a valuable lens for understanding study findings and interpreting the impact of digital media on society (Habermas, 1989). As such, it is an important concept for anyone seeking to understand the multifaceted relationship between media, communication, and public discourse.

The study also adopts the Public Service Model developed for 21st-century citizen-focused public administration. According to Habermas (1989), some common tenets of the Public service model

is a framework for setting up and running governmental institutions in a way that advances good governance and serves the public interest.

The public service sector shapes our society, and the success of its operations has a substantial impact on the quality of life for all individuals. The Public Service Model, as articulated by Denhardt and Denhardt (2015), is a normative framework outlining public officials' duty to serve the public good. According to Peters (2015), this approach emphasises the need for accountability, openness, and responsiveness in the public sector. The theory is relevant to the study because the researcher examined the role of digital media in promoting the indigenous African languages at SABC to reach the study findings and demonstrate the significance of these principles for accomplishing the beneficial public mandate of SABC to give equal coverage to all indigenous African languages. The theory demonstrates that public servants who adhere to responsibility and openness are more likely to develop reliability with citizens.

Moreover, the theory emphasises the significance of public workers being open to citizens' demands and preferences. These could help the researcher provide findings that are consistent with the key concepts of the Public Service Model, which emphasise the importance of public officials being accountable and accountable to the public. Considering the Public Service Model as a framework, these findings may provide useful insights into the model's practical implications and applicability to modern public service delivery (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). The model's relevance to various situations makes it an important tool for evaluating and enhancing public service delivery.

The model is based on conventional political theory, which demonstrates the necessity of transparency, responsibility, and adaptability in the public sector. Because SABC is a state-owned entity, this theory is still relevant to assist the researcher in reaching satisfactory results because it highlights the significance of reliability, the common good, and a commitment to serving the public. According to Frederickson (2010), the advancement of public service is critical for keeping public administrators centered around the public interest. The model has been extensively employed in the study of governmental organisations, offering a distinct viewpoint on their structures, operations, and outcomes.

In this study, the Public Service Model can be particularly applicable to the motives and actions of government employees. The findings suggest a substantial link between the motivation to serve and the achievement of public organisations. The study emphasises the necessity of integrity, the benefit of society, and a willingness to serve the public. The fundamental concepts of the Public Service Model aid in explaining the findings and throw light on the actions of public officials. The Public Service Model offers a useful framework for comprehending the dynamics of public administration, despite criticism that it is unduly idealistic and ignores the institutional and political challenges that public administrators must deal with (Bourgon, 2011). The model's shortcomings don't make it any less relevant or helpful in understanding the study's conclusions.

According to Peters (2015), the tenets of Public Service Model consist of:

Impartiality: Public employees are supposed to perform their tasks impartially and equally for all citizens. They should base their choices on the facts and the law, not on their own preferences or political agendas.

Neutrality: While carrying out their official responsibilities, public employees should refrain from participating in partisan activities, expressing personal political opinions, and remaining politically neutral. By doing this, it is made sure that the public service is free from political intervention.

Merit-based employment: Public employees should be hired, chosen, and promoted based on merit, qualifications, and performance rather than political connections or nepotism. This makes it possible to guarantee that the best candidates are given important positions.

Accountability: Public employees are responsible for their deeds and choices. They are accountable to the public, elected politicians, and oversight bodies, therefore they must behave responsibly and publicly.

Professionalism: Public employees ought to demonstrate high professionalism and understanding of the subject matter. This includes continuing education and training to maintain their skills.

Rule of law: The public service ensures that every choice and step is carried out in line with the established constitutional standards and practices by operating within the bounds of the law.

Service to the public interest: Instead of pursuing individual or political goals, the public service's main goal is to advocate for the best possible interest of the general public. Implementing government programs and initiatives that benefit society at large is on the shoulders of public employees.

Transparency and openness: Public institutions should be open and honest in operating and making decisions. This entails making information accessible, participating in discussions with the public when necessary, and keeping lines of communication open with the general public.

Efficiency and effectiveness: Public employees are required to carry out their responsibilities quickly, precisely, and cost-effectively.

Ethical behavior: Public employees should act with the utmost integrity, abstaining from corruption and other unethical practices that can jeopardise public confidence.

These tenets serve as the guiding principles for how the public service model operates in different nations. However, depending on the legal and cultural framework of each country's public service system, the precise application and focus of these principles may differ.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed literature on the use of digital media to promote indigenous African Languages to situate the study in a proper context, and to help in understanding the use of digital media in language promotion in a broader context. It reviewed the literature related to the study topic. The following headings were covered: The interphase of digital media and indigenous African languages, the Use of Digital Technologies in Promoting Indigenous African Languages, Broadcasting and digital media, The relationship between the communication, language and culture, and The democratisation of indigenous African languages in media. Furthermore, it dealt with the theoretical framework where it adopted The public sphere theory developed by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas in 1962 and the Public Service Model, which was developed in the 21st century; both theories describe and enlighten why the research problem under this study exists.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology applied in this study. This chapter describes the steps that the researcher took to solve the research problems. It further outlines the type of sampling design and population in data collection. The section also outlines the ethical considerations followed in the study.

3.2 Research approach

The study adopted the qualitative research methodology since it emphasises the depth and deeper meaning of human experience, which is used to generate theoretically richer hypotheses (Silverman, 2013). Qualitative research methodology is defined as a set of interpretative approaches that are used to characterise, decode, and understand the meanings of naturally occurring events in social settings (Bandara, Fernandez & Rowlands, 2012). The non-numerical analysis of phenomena with an emphasis on the underlying meaning and patterns of relationships is known as qualitative research methodology (Kumar, 2014). This approach helps in generating hypotheses and gathers participants' experiences, perceptions, and behavior through data collection. This approach is normally used by researchers to investigate social phenomena and come up with answers for them. The nature of the study's inquiry makes a qualitative research approach necessary. The purpose of this study is to explore, evaluate, and comprehend the ways in which digital terrestrial television (DTT) platforms promote the preservation and advancement of South Africa's indigenous African languages. This study is ideally suited for a qualitative research methodology as it enables a thorough investigation of the linguistic, social, and cultural factors that affect the promotion of indigenous languages on digital media platforms. Qualitative research offers comprehensive descriptions and insights into how language promotion techniques are applied, viewed, and experienced by audiences during the semi-structured interviews and participant observation method, in contrast to quantitative methodology that concentrate on numerical data and statistical correlations.

3.3 Research design

Research design refers to an arrangement of circumstances for data collection and analysis such that they are both efficient and relevant to the research goal (Kothari, 2014). In this study, the

researcher employed an exploratory design to understand the general nature of the problem of the role of digital media in supporting African indigenous languages. Instead of relying on numerical data, qualitative research ensures that the study captures in-depth perspectives from audiences, producers, and content creators regarding the effectiveness of DTT in language promotion. This research design could help to obtain information from participants who are knowledgeable on the phenomenon under investigation. An exploratory research design was employed in this study because the research problem under consideration has not been fully investigated and has no historical data for reference. Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2010) argue that sometimes this design is informal and unstructured. It acts as a tool for preliminary investigation and offers a speculative or theoretical notion of the research problem.

3.3.1 Interpretivism

Interpretivism emphasises the personal meanings that individuals and public assign to their experiences (Schwandt, 2000). Since the study focuses on how DTT is used to promote indigenous African languages, it requires an empathetic of how different audiences perceive and interrelate with digital media. This perspective allows that reality is publically constructed and shaped by historic, social, and contextual factors (Creswell, 2013). Through qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and discourse analysis, the study can capture rich, context-specific perceptions about language preservation, ethnic identity, and media engagement (Couldry, 2003). Additionally, interpretivism allows for an in-depth examination of the inspirations, attitudes, and sentiments that influence how individuals engage with digital platforms and use them to withstand and revitalise indigenous languages (Dwyer, 2018). By prioritising lived experiences and diverse perspectives, this approach certifies a more nuanced understanding of the role of digital media in etymological and cultural sustainability.

3.3.2 Constructivism

Constructivism suggests that knowledge is socially constructed rather than objectively revealed (Phillips, 2014). In the context of this study, the role of digital media in promoting indigenous languages is not a fixed actuality but one molded by interactions between broadcasters, audiences, and scientific infrastructures (Dooly & Hohenthal, 2017). This perspective recognises that meanings and elucidations advance through negotiation, social engagement and cultural contexts

(Harris, 2019). By using qualitative methodologies like ethnographic studies, participatory research, and thematic analysis, the study can discover how different public engage with SABC's digital platforms and how media content influences linguistic practices (Bryman, 2016). Furthermore, constructivism notes the dynamic relationship concerning technology and language use, considering how digital tools shape communication models, semantic preferences, and individuality formation (Anderson, 2019). This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the means individuals and groups dynamically contribute to the conservation and adaptation of indigenous languages in the digital space (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2015).

3.4 Location of the study

A location is a place where something is occurring. The research was conducted at SABC, Auckland Park Johannesburg.

3.5 Population of the study

The population refers to people, basics, subjects, and objects that possess or meet the same criteria to be included in the study which the researcher aims to gather data from and who will participate in the research (De Vos et al., 2011). For this study, only audiences and SABC officials between the ages of 18 and 60 participated. This is because this population group is regarded as a responsible one by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Chapter 2 Bill of Rights in section 16, subsection (1) which allows everyone to have freedom of speech and expression through the press and other media (The Bill of Rights, 1996). However, for this study, only people older than the minority age were regarded for participation in the study.

3.6 Sampling strategy

The term "sampling" refers to the process of picking a small number of examples to represent a broad group of people (Kumar, 2014). Not everyone who qualifies would be included in the study because participants need to meet the standard of the study. A researcher only sampled audiences of SABC programs that are televised in indigenous African languages. Purposive sampling, a non-probability technique was employed in this study. Purposive sampling is a sampling strategy in which the researcher's judgment is utilised to determine who can supply the greatest information to meet the objectives of the study (Kumar, 2014). In qualitative research, purposive sampling is often used to select participants with relevant experience. The study would focus on individuals

such as SABC content creators, audiences of indigenous language content who engage with DTT content in indigenous languages. This methodology could be used to select participants to choose individuals who can provide the desired information and for a researcher to obtain meaningful insights. This methodology focuses on people who have specific insights or experiences, ensuring that the sample adequately answers the study questions (Kumar, 2014). The study used an adaptable, iterative purposive sampling technique to guarantee data saturation. Participants with pertinent experience in promoting indigenous African languages through digital media at SABC, such as viewers of indigenous African language programs and content creators, will be chosen. Data was collected until interviews yield no new themes, insights, or patterns, signifying that saturation has been achieved.

To keep an eye on new topics and guarantee thorough data gathering, the researcher will constantly compare and write memos. In order to guarantee a comprehensive examination of the study issue, the sample size will be increased to include more stakeholders or viewpoints if saturation is not reached after a sufficient number of participants. Audiences of indigenous languages programs are directly involved in the production and their perspectives provide insights into content creation processes, audience engagement, and language representation. These audiences make strategic decisions regarding digital media content and their input helps understand priorities and challenges on SABC DTT. In the context of this study purposive sampling involve selecting participants directly involved with or knowledgeable about the SABC DTT's initiatives meant at promoting indigenous African languages. This include audiences for indigenous African languages for SABC DTT, content creators and producers who can provide in-depth information about the approaches and usefulness of digital media in language promotion. This methodology relies on the knowledge of the researcher on the potential participants or population for the study. Therefore, for this study, a total of twenty (20) participants, 5 from SABC and 15 audiences were sampled to participate on the study.

3.7 Data collection instruments

Qualitative researchers normally adopt individual interviews with open-ended questions or a direct conversation with the participants (Silverman, 2013). As a result, the researcher has an opportunity to select the instrument which best meets the research objectives. In this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews through face-to-face interviews about how digital media is used to

support indigenous African language on DTT. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and recordings (Cliff et al., 2018).

3.7.1 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews involve a series of open-ended questions based on the topic areas the researcher wants to cover. This is a research methodology frequently used in social sciences, anthropology, psychology and other fields to gather qualitative data through in-depth dialogues between an audience and a participant (Kumar, 2014). In a semi-structured interview, the conversation between the participants is guided by the agenda to strike a balance where the audience follows a general outline or set of open-ended questions to have a more natural and dynamic exchange of ideas. The questions of semi-structured interviews encourage the participants to provide comprehensive and contextualised responses which form a deeper exploration of the research topic. It also prioritises the participant's perspective and experiences. (Kumar, 2014). This methodology serves to lessen the participants' sensitivity to the phenomena being examined by allowing the researcher to construct a scenario or study and then ask the participants questions based on that tale. To gather data for the study, the researcher had a meeting with participants one-on-one in semi-structured interviews with a list of open-ended questions derived from the research questions of this study. Qualitative research regulates the tools used for data collection, which prioritise spoken, written, and observational data over numerical metrics (Silverman, 2013). Interviews in this study are important to gather knowledge obtained from SABC DTT's audience for indigenous African languages content to understand perceptions and challenges.

3.7.2 Participant Observation Method

Participant observation is one type of data collection method by a researcher which used in qualitative research (Kumar, 2014). In participant observation, the researcher is called a participant-observer, meaning that they participate in the group's activities while also observing the group's behavior and interactions in order to gain a deep understanding of the group's culture, beliefs, and practices from an "insider" perception. The researcher became the participant and carefully observed events to explore the experience of SABC officials in utilising social media to support indigenous African languages to strive and maintain the objectives of the study. The researcher noted and documented conversations and steps that were taken in content creation. The researcher also participated to understand procedures for content disseminated through digital

media. The researcher used a recorder to record the interviews. The researcher observed different divisions using digital media incorporating of nine African language news desks, attend conferences, brainstorming meetings, and planning discussions to see how digital media approaches are developed and implemented to support indigenous African languages and notify the participants about the objectives of the study.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is defined as the act of carefully searching and organising interview transcripts, field notes, and other materials accumulated by the researcher to improve his or her comprehension of them and to enable him or her to uncover what he or she has discovered (Kumar, 2014). Qualitative research involves collecting non-numerical data in the form of written words, audiotapes, or photos. Therefore, the data analysis in qualitative research involves a thorough examination of words, either in the form of audiotapes or transcribed data rather than numbers as in quantitative studies (Anderson, 2014).

3.8.1 Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic content analysis is a research method used to systematically analyse and interpret the content from different forms of communication which may include social media posts or comments, written text, audio recordings, video clips or any other type of media (Kumar, 2014). This study has adopted this method to provide a systematic and objective approach to analyse and interpret content, facilitate data reduction, pattern identification, and contextual understanding obtained from data provided by participants on the role of digital media in supporting indigenous African languages. It also enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings of the study. Therefore, for this study, the researcher adopted content analysis to place units into categories and identify themes.

Thematic analysis operates as a qualitative research method that discovers meaningful patterns known as themes in textual information from interviews along with focus groups and unstructured survey questionnaires according to Braun & Clarke (2006). Social sciences and healthcare and psychology utilize thematic analysis extensively to examine how people perceive their surroundings and act upon them and what they experience in their life. Different types of thematic analysis exist with inductive (data-driven) methodologies as well as deductive (theory-driven) approaches and semantic (surface-level meaning) and latent (underlying assumptions) and

reflexive (subjective interpretation) (Nowell et al., 2017). The research process follows six distinct phases that begin with data familiarization then move through initial code generation followed by theme search before theme review until theme definition and naming and ends with report generation (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This analysis method offers flexible capabilities and delivers detailed results but researchers must handle subjectivity along with lengthy procedures and face challenges to establish both reliability and validity (Nowell et al., 2017). Despite its limitations the method serves as a substantial method to sense important patterns in qualitative research studies.

Thematic content analysis represents a common qualitative research method that allows experts to discover and analyze recurring themes found within written and visual information as well as audial materials. Digital media studies benefiting indigenous African language preservation and revitalization utilize thematic content analysis as a research method to evaluate multiple digital forms of content towards understanding their language promotion functions. Research efficiency is enriched through thematic content analysis because it allows researchers to reveal digital media contributions to language enhancement while uncovering obstacles to language utilisation and explaining how platforms facilitate cultural representation and community engagement (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Researchers need to gather digital media data as their initial step before implementing thematic content analysis. Facebook along with X and Youtube function as digital media sites where language-related content is dispersed by both individual users and organizational representatives and language advocates. The analysis includes assessment of video content from YouTube along with language-focused video articles especially those on indigenous African languages. The researcher explores multiple data sources which allows them to identify different viewpoints regarding how digital media influences language promotion purposes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006).

The researcher shall interact with the gathered data through multiple readings, listening sessions and viewing exercises to establish better understanding before proceeding. Being immersed in digital media content enables the researcher to comprehend indigenous language-related solutions that digital media implements. The researcher begins by applying codes to different parts of the content data according to their language promotion significance. The researcher applies codes

linked to "language preservation," "cultural representation," "community engagement," and "challenges to digital language use" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Coding the data enables the researcher to group information until patterns emerge showing how digital media affects indigenous African language promotion.

The researcher identifies major themes that appear during analysis using the already implemented coding system. A dominant theme within this analysis proves to be "digital literacy and language access" since it describes how younger populations use technology to access indigenous languages online. The analysis highlights the instructive use of YouTube as a tool for revitalising indigenous languages through global educational content creation. Digital media spaces present encounters to indigenous language use through dominant language infringement which overpowers indigenous languages from public use (Anderson, 2014).

The researcher reviews the selected themes to verify their appropriate understanding of assigned data meanings. The research process requires theme refinement whereby researchers merge similar themes and eliminate those which were found to be irrelevant (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The research question regarding digital media role in indigenous African language promotion directs interpretation of established themes. Media platforms have dual functions through their support of language education while ensuring community control of language work and through recognition of existing challenges that affect their preservation ideals.

The evaluative thematic content analysis method brings important advantages when researchers conduct this style of research. Researchers can pursue various digital content types using this approach because it supports examination of both written posts and audio-visual materials. Through this method researcher obtain deep contextualised results which explain how digital media engages with cultural interpretations and reveals linguistic practices among African communities. According to Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006), the complex strategic elements of language revitalization programs become easier to analyse with thematic analysis because this method explains digital platform effects on these initiatives. Researchers have to deal with two main challenges that stem from analysing digital content subjectively as well as managing vast data volumes. Researcher discovery of valid and reliable findings requires the application of triangulation and inter-coder reliability methods according to Creswell (2013).

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethics are rules and guiding principles developed by a professional organisation to guide research practice and explain the line between ethical and unethical behavior (Neuman, 2011). Ethical considerations include protecting people's privacy, respecting them as persons, and not submitting them to needless study, as well as ensuring that they are not exposed to any harm and not form something which may put their lives at risk. At all costs, participants were kept safe. In this study, all the participants were taken through all ethical issues before the researcher commenced with data collection. The following guidelines were communicated to the participants:

3.9.1 *Informed consent*

According to Swartz et al., (2011), each participant should be given a brief and receive a detailed explanation of what is being studied, how it will affect them, along with the possible risks and advantages of participation in the study. Participants were made aware of their right to take part in the study. Participants were told about the research's purpose, procedures to be followed during the data collection, and any advantages and drawbacks to which they may be exposed as study participants (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher explained what is involved in the study and how individuals can participate without having fear. It was also made clear that participation in the study was entirely up to them, and it was within their rights as volunteers to opt out of the study if they felt uncomfortable. Participants were required to understand the procedures followed to protect them from any unforeseen circumstances. The researcher explained what is involved in the study and how individuals can participate without meeting face to face.

3.9.2 *Voluntary participation*

Voluntary participation means that participation in the study must be voluntary, free from the promise of benefits from participation (De Vos et al., 2011). In research, participation in the study was voluntary as they were never forced or being pressed and threatened into doing so. Participants were urged to engage in the study voluntarily rather than being pressed or threatened into doing so. Participants were informed about the study's dangers to decide about their participation. Thus, participants were not compelled to participate in the study.

3.9.3 Confidentiality

According to De Vos et al. (2011), confidentiality in research means that the researcher is the only one with access to any of the information that participants submit. This means that the researcher should ensure that all data is handled with care and dealt with appropriately. The researcher handled data with confidentiality and without mentioning the names of the participants. Participants were made to feel free to give the researcher the required information. Participants were not threatened to provide the researcher with their data. In keeping with my vocation, the researcher did not disclose the identity of participants, and no personal information was disseminated. Their names were not revealed as the interviews were conducted individually. The researcher informed the participants about the recording of the interview emphasising that measures were taken to secure and protect the collected data.

3.9.4 Anonymity

Anonymity suggests that information gathered from participants must not be related anyway to their names or identities, such as name and designations (Swartz et al., 2011). Pillay (2014) defines autonomy as protecting participants by not mentioning their real names in the study. The researcher discussed the ethics of anonymity with participants and informed them that their real names or identities would not be used. Instead, the researcher referred to the participants as participants #1, #2, #3 etc.

3.9.5 Avoidance of harm and risks

The researcher must safeguard participants from danger or anything that might harm them. Human experimentation has the potential to cause harm to research subjects both physically and psychologically (De Vos et al., 2011). The researcher submitted a letter from SABC requesting permission to conduct the study and a safe location to conduct interviews. Regarding extreme safety, security officials were requested to guard the venue where interviews were conducted to avoid criminal activities. The researcher's letter to conduct the study is attached as one of the annexures.

3.9.6 Compliance with institutional guidelines

The researcher complied with the ethical guidelines and standards established forth by the university or ethics review board administration of the research. The researcher gained access to

the public broadcaster's facilities to obtain necessary permissions by requesting access to conduct the study and applying for ethical clearance. An ethical clearance letter was requested from the University of Venda Ethics Committee. This includes submitting a comprehensive research proposal for ethical review and approval before beginning the study.

3.9.7 Inform consent forms

The researcher provided consent forms and documents used in research to certify that participants were completely conscious of the nature, purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study before they agree to participate. These forms are critical for retaining ethical standards and protecting participants' rights.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed in detail the research approach, research design, sampling strategy, population and location of the study, data collection method and techniques and data analysis. This chapter revealed in detail the research approach of this study, which is qualitative; it dealt with participants between the ages of 18 and 60 years who are the audiences and officials of SABC in Johannesburg, Auckland Park. Furthermore, this chapter involved ethical considerations to protect people's privacy, respecting them as persons, and not submitting them to needless study, as well as ensuring that they are not exposed to any harm and not form something that may put their lives at risk.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore the role of digital media in promoting indigenous African languages on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Digital Terrestrial Television. This chapter is the first of two chapters devoted to the presentation, interpretation, and analysis of data collected through interviews with purposive participants who are South African Corporation (SABC) employees. The data from interviews is also complemented by data gleaned from document analysis. The chapter discusses themes that emerged from the data collected. The themes are based on the three research questions identified in Chapter 1. These are:

- (i) How are digital media technologies on SABC DTT being used to promote African languages?
- (ii) How are digital media technologies on SABC DTT enhancing audience participation?
- (iii) What are the strengths and limitations of digital media technologies in promoting indigenous African languages?

To address these questions, data is interpreted through the deductive approach, reported in narrative form, and supported verbatim through quotations obtained from the interviews. This is in line with Kumar (2014)'s contention that data presentation and analysis in qualitative studies should be based on research questions and research objectives. The chapter is organised as follows: After this introduction, the first part provides a profile of the participants interviewed for this study. The second part discusses the first how digital media technologies were used by SABC DTT to promote indigenous African languages. Part three of the chapter discusses digital media technologies and audience participation in the South African Broadcasting Corporation DTT. The chapter closes with an introduction that provides critical reflections on the data presented in the chapter.

4.2 Profile of Participants

The table below indicates the pseudonym, age and gender category of each participant. The researcher did not reveal the actual names of the participants; instead, the codes, Participant #1, Participant #2, Participant #3, etc., were used, as indicated in chapter three on ethical considerations that all participants in the study will be anonymous with pseudo-names to protect

their true identities. Data saturation was reached after the researcher interviewed the 20th participant. Out of the 20 participants who were interviewed, five of them were SABC officials working in different occupations for content and news production (input and output), while 5 audiences previously worked as interns at SABC. Out of all 15 audiences, 10 have never been to SABC premises before. Hence, they follow programs broadcasted in South African indigenous languages. 3 of 5 SABC officials were females and 2 males. Out of 15 audiences, 8 were males and 7 females. Only audiences and SABC officials between the age of 18 and 60 participated in the study.

All participants were interviewed on the above-mentioned questions. The questions were based on their experiences as SABC officials and audiences of programs broadcasted in South African indigenous languages. This was done to assist the researcher in getting in-depth knowledge and information about their experiences on the use of digital media to promote South African indigenous languages.

Table 4.2.1: Illustration of pseudonym names, age, gender and occupation of the participants

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Occupation
Participant #1	47	Male	Producer
Participant #2	52	Female	Head of news
Participant #3	37	Male	Journalist
Participant #4	35	Female	Editor
Participant #5	42	Female	Anchor
Participant #6	31	Male	Audience
Participant #7	26	Male	Audience
Participant #8	24	Female	Audience
Participant #9	28	Male	Audience
Participant #10	31	Female	Audience

Participant #11	53	Female	Audience
Participant #12	45	Male	Audience
Participant #13	38	Female	Audience
Participant #14	51	Male	Audience
Participant #15	29	Male	Audience
Participant #16	32	Female	Audience
Participant #17	27	Male	Audience
Participant #18	29	Male	Audience
Participant #19	24	Female	Audience
Participant #20	19	Female	Audience

4.3 Promotion of Indigenous African Languages through the Use of Digital Media on SABC's DTT

The ever-changing technological landscape has created an opportunity for the revitalisation of languages in the modern era, whereby users worldwide may use these materials, offering chances for language learning and practice (Bronack, 2011). The convergence of digital media with indigenous African languages also offers exceptional prospects for developing and promoting the developing world of technology (Breuer et al., 2015). Digital media and indigenous African languages coexist, providing a rare chance for the revival and preservation of these languages (Berger, 2005).

Indigenous African languages are being transformed by the promotion and resuscitation of digital media, given the historical obstacles these languages have had to overcome—such as colonialism, the rise of globalisation and the prevalence of commonly used indigenous African languages in the broadcasting fraternity and made attributes with an imperative growth (Bull, 2016). In light of this observation, the public sphere theory provides a thoughtful and empathetic framework regarding how digital media platforms facilitate the dissemination of information and allow individuals to participate in critical discourse (Habermas, 1989). This comprehensively analyses

how digital media supports this significant cultural goal (Cru, 2015). The Public Service Model is based on conventional political theory, demonstrating the necessity of transparency, responsibility, and adaptability in the public sector (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015). It is imperative to take note of all forms in which digital media platforms are used in the promotion of indigenous African languages through SABC's DTT.

4.3.1 Language-specific programming

Language-specific programming on SABC DTT platform provides an effective way to promote indigenous African languages through digital media. SABC could contribute to preserving linguistic variety and promoting cultural significance in the digital era by providing content for these various languages.

The majority of the participants solidly perceive that the language-specific programming of SABC DTT supports the promotion of African languages. The following responses emerged:

The SABC DTT platform now provides particular broadcast slots for Zulu and Xhosa television bulletins, ensuring these main indigenous languages get continuous prime-time coverage. The SABC's educational programs in Sesotho and Setswana enable students in remote areas to learn fundamental topics in their home tongue, increasing cultural significance and accessibility. SABC's DTT service established a new digital channel that conveys only in minority languages such as Tshivenda and Xitsonga, providing a forum for previously overlooked populations- (Participant#7).

Language-specific programs on SABC's DTT, such as one dedicated to IsiXhosa, have demonstrated that a focused approach to content distribution improves language preservation and audience loyalty. Indigenous languages programs, such as Izindaba in isiZulu and Ditaba-Dikgang, are now disseminated via SABC's DTT and internet streaming platforms, bringing these cultural narratives to a wider audience- (Participant #1).

By providing SABC material with optional subtitling in isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Sesotho on DTT, the broadcaster has provided multilingual access to major news programs, allowing information to reach a larger, more diversified audience. SABC's DTT service offers dubbed children's shows in a variety of indigenous languages, namely isiZulu and Sesotho, allowing younger viewers to connect with either their mother tongues and popular global media material. SABC's DTT platform, in collaboration with language specialists, has included Xhosa and Sepedi language-learning portions, allowing viewers to develop terminology and conversational abilities via digital TV material- (Participant #4).

The above responses indicate that the effective use of digital media on the SABC's DTT platform to promote African languages, notably designated time slots for Zulu and Xhosa news bulletins, guarantees that important indigenous languages are consistently represented. This approach aligns with previous studies on the relevance of media representation in language preservation. According to Laninhun (2003), digital media plays an important role in reviving indigenous languages, and frequent broadcasts in these languages increase their significance in modern

society. These responses further reveal that SABC encourages linguistic diversity and strengthens the cultural connection for millions of South Africans by featuring languages such as Zulu and Xhosa in prime time, as stressed by Participant#7. This aligns with the constitutional and legal framework for SABC to provide content in indigenous African languages (SABC, 2021).

The data which was collected from SABC's official Facebook on this link: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100085595427826> reveal that African languages content broadcast on current affairs shows and news programme on SABC shows are more regularly promoted, particularly on Facebook through hashtags, question of the day and discussions with experts. This shows that indigenous African language content is promoted through new technologies. From the data collected on the official Facebook page of SABC Izindaba, SABC Ditaba-Dikgang and SABC Mafhungo coverage in indigenous African languages receives many likes, with the majority focusing on community-based events. Isizulu is currently the leading viewership on YouTube with 95.9K subscribers <https://www.youtube.com/@SABCizindaba>, followed by Sesotho with 14.4K subscribers <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfJ6oO7RhiemsjzDuakMJKQ>, and lastly, Tshivenda with 2.71K subscribers https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=mafhungo+a+tshivenda.

These responses emphasise a known aspect which stipulates that the digital change expands accessibility, reaching previously disadvantaged audiences as believed by Grenoble and Whaley (2006), who agree that the incorporation of multimedia components like audio files, movies, and interactive exercises is made possible by digital media that improves the accessibility and engagement. This is consistent with the Public Sphere theory since it emphasises how the SABC provides a platform for inclusive, varied communication, allowing South Africans of all language and cultural backgrounds to engage in public debate (Habermas, 1989).

SABC's emphasis on educative programming in languages like Sesotho and Setswana fills a critical void in the advancement of indigenous languages. Educational content in one's mother tongue improves retention as well as comprehension, especially among young children in rural regions (SABC, 2021). By utilising digital platforms to educate basic courses in indigenous languages, SABC guarantees that students receive training that is culturally relevant and accessible. This is essential because research suggests that children acquire the best whenever

taught in their native language throughout the early stages of school, which improves their general academic achievement and connectedness to their history.

A novel aspect uncovered in this research is that the introduction of additional programs for minority languages like Tshivenda and Xitsonga to SABC's DTT platform demonstrates the broadcaster's dedication to promoting linguistic equality as minority languages are frequently underserved in mainstream media outlets, resulting in marginalisation. Moreover, these responses further reveal that by allocating airtime to these languages, SABC guarantees that these populations have a forum for expressing themselves and cultural preservation consistently with worldwide media trends, in which personalised content distribution not only boosts audience loyalty but also acts as an important instrument for revitalisation of languages.

The above responses clearly indicate that SABC's multilingual programming alternatives, including as subtitling and dubbing in isiZulu and Sesotho, enable learning a language as well as larger audience involvement. The use of alternative indigenous language subtitles reflects a knowledge of multilingualism's function in creating social cohesiveness (Keen, 2007). Furthermore, the broadcaster's partnership with language specialists to offer language-learning parts in Xhosa and Sepedi guarantees that audiences may practice and maintain their linguistic heritage. This digital innovation, along with program distribution over both DTT and internet platforms, significantly broadens indigenous languages' access to new audiences that are both young and old.

One of the novel techniques used by SABC's DTT is subtitling and dubbing in numerous indigenous languages, including isiZulu, isiXhosa, and Sesotho. The incorporation of digital media is increasingly regarded as a critical instrument for not just conserving these languages but also helping to make them accessible to a wider and audience. This helps to support the mandate of SABC to provide a variety of content in indigenous languages to ensure impartial access to information for all citizens in the country (SABC, 2021). SABC's intention to provide specific time slots for key indigenous languages such as Zulu and Xhosa throughout prime time is a big step forward for DTT in challenging English's linguistic dominance in South Africa's media environment.

4.3.2 User Interaction

Through user interaction, the SABC DTT platform significantly contributes to promoting indigenous African languages. This is in line with Breuer et al. (2015), who assert that by creating a feeling of ownership, this interaction encourages users to have the chance to interact with local content.

From the vast majority of participants' experience as audiences and staff, it emerged that the SABC DTT platform is a vital tool for linguistic variety in the digital sphere since it prioritises user interaction elements that support and maintain indigenous African languages. The following responses emerged:

SABC DTT provides a significant step forward in the participation of indigenous African languages in the digital media landscape. This platform's interactive elements not only increase the prominence and continued usage of these languages, but they also build a sense of belonging and inclusiveness within African communities. Programs like Kidz News program test users' understanding of indigenous languages and cultures through interactive Quizzes-(Participant #10).

SABC engages audiences directly in their original languages using digital media channels like social media and interactive TV features. These consist of live chats, audience surveys, and feedback systems that let audiences engage with content producers and participate in conversations in their chosen language. This interaction promotes a feeling of belonging and pride in African languages. SABC DTT's use of interactive digital media is an essential aspect in fostering African indigenous languages, as it provides an experience that engages users, empowers language speakers, and appeals to a broad audience- (Participant #5).

The SABC DTT user experience serves as a reminder of how digital technology might support language preservation initiatives. The use of digital media is effective in promoting indigenous African languages. Through the use of participation and interaction among audiences, Through. Daily topics with content posted on digital media with indigenous African languages- (Participant #3).

The above responses indicate the emphasis on user involvement in SABC DTT, making it a valuable platform for developing and preserving indigenous African languages. This supports the assertion made by Bull (2016), who notes that interaction and capacity building among indigenous people are essential to sustain traditional practices. These findings introduce a critical element, revealing that SABC DTT is vital to providing an engaging digital media environment that had not been considered in earlier studies. This insight not only broadens the scope of maintaining these languages' visibility and ongoing use in contemporary culture. The platform's interactive aspects support promoting the indigenous African language's inclusivity and a sense of belonging. In the end, the dedication of SABC DTT to this cause guarantees a bright future for linguistic diversity in the area, as SABC (2022) asserted.

Through user interaction on SABC DTT, African communities can cultivate a feeling of identity and belonging by providing indigenous languages with a visible, usable, and maintained platform. This supports the insights gathered during participant observation. The public is more aware of indigenous languages when regularly included in newscasts, entertainment, and television shows. Their increased prominence strengthens these languages' validity in the social and cultural domains. Indigenous languages become more valuable and accessible daily when information in those languages is made available on digital platforms. Maintaining consistency in language use can help sustain long-term attempts to preserve the language and keep native languages from displacing more widely used ones. Long-term access to information in indigenous languages contributes to the language's continued significance in forming individual and societal identities. This realisation is consistent with the information that the researcher learned via participant observation. The fact that digital media platforms have given audiences a sense of openness and have made them feel as though their language, culture, and identity are being respected and protected for future generations is probably what has impressed audiences. To support diversity in languages and cultures in the digital era, this strategy is crucial, as is believed by Adam et al. (2022), who note that the digital era has transformed language preservation initiatives through user interaction.

This shows that digital media technologies enhance citizens' sense of belonging, and the SABC DTT is taking advantage of user interaction on digital media. In addition to empowering speakers of these languages and appealing to a broad audience, SABC DTT promotes language diversity by offering interactive content in indigenous languages, which aligns with a tenet of the Public Service model to serve the public interest (Peters, 2015). Promoting indigenous languages on digital media platforms is essential to maintaining and advancing cultural diversity, particularly as these platforms continue to play a more significant and prominent role in our lives, as stated (Johnson & Callahan, 2013).

Users are encouraged to join in debates and express their thoughts in their home tongue through interactive elements like polls, chat rooms, and quizzes, further boosting the adoption of these languages on the platform. Reflecting on what I encountered during the participant observation, I noticed that the Kidz News program tests users' understanding of indigenous languages and

cultures through interactive quizzes, promoting interest and engagement with African indigenous languages.

Previous studies reveal how user interaction is severely hampered by infrastructure and connection problems, especially in rural or developing areas (Hallin & Mancini, 2019). User interaction is limited or impossible without dependable internet connectivity or the required gadgets, which leads to exclusion from the digital public realm. However, the findings reveal a significant departure from this, particularly in emphasising how crucial user engagement is to the advancement of these languages and the development of users' sense of their cultural heritage, suggesting that to foster linguistic variety, SABC DTT's provision of material in indigenous languages enables speakers of these languages to express their sense of culture and take part in public conversation offering a more nuanced understanding. SABC DTT can effectively promote these languages at a low cost while simultaneously improving user happiness and engagement by utilising user interaction to uphold the government's responsibility in implementing programs and initiatives that benefit society, as Peters (2015) asserts. To develop a more comprehensive platform that appeals to a varied audience, SABC DTT produces interactive material that invites audiences to interact with indigenous languages (SABC, 2021).

This study uncovers a new mechanism by which digital media plays a critical role in the relationship between producers and graphic designers within the SABC, which has not been documented in previous research. This supports the insights I gathered during participant observation. With user interaction, SABC DTT serves as a platform to support indigenous African languages. Users can interact with the content on the internet platform through user-generated content, reviews, comments, and other forms of interaction.

Another novel aspect discovered in this research is that user interaction also helps users feel more connected to one another and more like owners, which was previously underexplored. This breakthrough enhances one feature that SABC DTT provides; for example, it makes it simple for users to receive material in their favorite language by quickly switching between various indigenous languages on the SABC+ App and digital media platforms. It can potentially reshape future research and perspective on the Public Sphere theory and Public Service Model. This aligns with what I noticed during the participant observation process.

Furthermore, users of SABC DTT can choose to get alerts in the indigenous language of their choice, which increases the exposure and utilisation of these languages on the platform. These participatory aspects encourage the utilisation of indigenous languages, which also aid in their revitalisation and preservation for upcoming generations.

By making it simpler for audiences to acquire and use indigenous African languages, SABC DTT's interactive features—such as polls, quizzes, and educational games—help to promote these languages. For example, users can study languages like Tshivenda, isiXhosa, Zulu, and Sesotho while enjoying the platform's language learning activities. Axford (2011) asserts that society may learn more about the intricacy of the possibilities for these languages to flourish in the modern world and can learn more quickly because of these interactive features, which offer an immersive and captivating experience. The researcher observed that by enabling users to participate in conversations and polls in indigenous African languages, the site promotes a feeling of solidarity and community among speakers of the same tongue (Balogun & Kalusopa, 2021). Balogun and Kalusopa, (2021) assert that the use and visibility of indigenous language users can also produce and distribute material in indigenous African languages. From the responses by participants, it was noted that users of SABC DTT are using more indigenous African languages as a result of the interactive aspects of the channel.

4.3.3 Two-Way Communication

Another way of promoting indigenous African languages on SABC through digital media is two-way communication. Two-way communication technology implemented on the SABC DTT platform might provide an answer. Responses from a few participants pointed out that the indigenous African languages are promoted by SABC DTT's implementation of multiple two-way communication capabilities that enable audiences to interact meaningfully with the programming. Some of them responded as follows:

Two-way communication through SABC DTT ensures that indigenous African languages are not only broadcasted as a form of support but also actively engaged with by the audience, nurturing a more bottomless construction of cultural heritage and language preservation- (Participant #18).

By letting audiences network with content in their indigenous languages, the SABC DTT platform allows societies to keep their indigenous languages alive, ensuring a participating dialogue between the broadcaster and its various audiences- (Participant #4).

Collaborative communication is vibrant in promoting indigenous languages through SABC DTT. This collaborative approach allows real-time feedback, ensuring that language development is active and responds to the needs of the public using these languages daily- (Participant #2).

Modifying digital broadcasting through DTT has created new opportunities for promoting indigenous African languages. Two-way communication allows for the voices of speakers of these languages to be heard by public broadcaster and their content preferences to be reflected in programming choices- (Participant #1).

These responses point to the idea that by giving users a place to communicate and exchange knowledge, digital communities and forums can support preserving and promoting indigenous African languages, enhancing their linguistic and cultural value, as Bird and Simons (2003) believed. As a result, SABC DTT's two-way communication strategy gives people a forum for conveying their opinions in their original languages, raising awareness of and using indigenous African languages as one of its mandates, and exercising as a tenet of the Public Service Model. United Nations (2000) agrees that:

Professionalism in the Public Service Model is a principal value that governs how its activities will be carried out. It incorporates all other values that guide public service, such as neutrality, loyalty, diligence, punctuality, transparency, impartiality, effectiveness, and other values that may be precise to individual countries (United Nations, 2000:01).

The researcher observed that preservation and revitalisation could be approached completely new, supported by SABC DTT's ability to offer a forum for participatory discussion and the promotion of indigenous languages. In light of this proposition, a sense of pride and ownership in cultural heritage is fostered by this involvement, which also raises audience participation. Enaifoghe and Adetiba (2018) contend that:

The participation of a community through its local citizens is significant in beating a feeling of feebleness among residents. The contribution of public interest in participation exercises diminishes mental enduring or minimises psychological suffering and defeats the unresponsiveness of ordinary people in the community, and ought to be the central explanation behind asking local citizens to cooperate and, therefore, participate in the local government decision-making process (Enaifoghe & Adetiba, 2018: 28).

The data from participants reveals that audiences can comment and share ideas and suggestions for enhancements in their languages through two-way communication on SABC DTT, suggesting that the platform facilitates the sharing of cultural information through online groups and forums. Indigenous African languages are preserved and promoted by users' ability to communicate with

others who share their language. This opens up new avenues for further exploration in using digital media on SABC to promote indigenous African languages on SABC DTT. This tool enables audiences to request content in indigenous languages, voice their thoughts on topics related to language, and engage in language-related programs, as asserted by Sundani (2023), who agrees that:

The multimedia proficiencies (e.g., recording devices and digital video), storage capacity (e.g., online databases), and communication tools (e.g., the Internet and digital technologies) offered by the new technologies provide new opportunities to preserve and revitalise indigenous cultures and languages (Sundani, 2023:47)

In the course of this study, the researcher noted that active audience engagement and involvement are made possible by the two-way communication on SABC DTT, which provides an opportunity for the advancement and upkeep of indigenous African languages, which had not been previously explored in the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages. This discovery is significant because it shows how various SABC's official media promote these languages and fills a gap in the literature concerning the study's topic. This shows that the bidirectional transmission of the SABC DTT facilitates the provision of customised content to various language groups, encouraging the proactive utilisation and conservation of these languages. This characteristic fosters camaraderie and inclusion within linguistic communities, encouraging cultural identity and conservation.

While Scholze-Irrlitz and Strus (2017) found that the facilitation of communication within communities creates opportunities for cultural enrichment and exchange, the findings from this study reveal a significant deviation from these responses, suggesting that by enabling language groups to interact as well as exchange cultural practices, the two-way communication on SABC DTT can promote cultural diversity and social cohesion. This supports the notion by UNESCO (2003), which emphasises that language groups can interact with their languages thanks to this feature, which is essential for linguistic preservation. Thus, by fully utilising the two-way communication function of the SABC DTT, cultural diversity and social cohesion may be promoted, and indigenous African languages can be preserved and promoted. Similarly, Adu and Ngulube (2016) found that two-way communication enables targeted information, active audience engagement, and a feeling of belonging and community among different languages. This statement highlights and agrees with the current findings, which note that an indispensable platform for

advancing and assisting indigenous African languages is provided by the two-way digital communication on digital media offered by the SABC DTT through the utilisation of the feature to its fullest extent as it is crucial in maintaining and advancing these languages.

The responses from participants refine prior conclusions by showing that the SABC DTT may greatly aid in the development and preservation of indigenous African languages, promoting cultural variety and social cohesion as we investigate the possibilities of two-way communication. This builds on earlier work by introducing an additional communication factor between audiences and presenters that refines the innovative ways SABC DTT promotes indigenous African languages through two-way communication on digital media. The website promotes a feeling of community and raises awareness and utilisation of these languages by allowing users to interact with the information in their languages. This is also supported by the Public Sphere Theory, which provides a convenient framework for understanding the role of the public in determining social discourse (Habermas, 1989). These findings indicate that two-way communication brings hope for the revival and conservation of indigenous African languages through digital media.

4.3.4 User-Generated Content

User-generated content has also been noted as one of the ways to support indigenous African languages through digital media because the SABC has started integrating user-generated content into its DTT programming to support and promote indigenous languages, making this a viable path.

Many changes have occurred in the official media platforms and SABC+ App version, integrating user-generated content into its DTT programming to support and promote indigenous languages, making this a viable path. This has been indicated by most of the participants, who shared the following:

User-generated content on SABC DTT could be able to serve as a commanding tool for the promotion of indigenous African languages, tolerating people to contribute stories, understandings, and traditional knowledge in their indigenous languages, thereby fostering a sense of pride and ownership in their heritage- (Participant #11).

SABC DTT encourages user-generated content as a way for audiences to determine the content they consume. By submitting comments, videos, and suggestions in indigenous languages, audiences can directly impact how their language is represented and preserved on national broadcaster and platform- (Participant #3).

Permitting user-generated content on SABC DTT generates a precious space for the public to engage with their languages genuinely. It changes the audience from passive receivers into active creators, assisting to reinforce language use across different official media platforms- (Participant #19).

The above responses indicate that integrating User-Generated Content by the SABC DTT has dramatically enhanced the digital landscape's promotion and conservation of indigenous African languages. This strategy has made these languages more viable and widely accessible, guaranteeing their continued existence in the future. Indigenous African languages are now more widely known through the power of digital media and user-generated content, which has helped to ensure their survival and revival. During participant observation, the researcher observed that the SABC DTT's use of user-generated content was an essential step in protecting and advancing Africa's rich language variety online. Indigenous African languages now have a place to flourish because of the incorporation of UGC in SABC DTT, which encourages inclusivity and cultural variety on digital platforms. Considering this, the rise of UGC, which has become an essential component of news reporting, has dramatically expanded audience engagement in South African news creation, as Harber (2021) contends.

Previous studies posit that UGC's detractors believe it can be untrustworthy and prone to manipulation, jeopardising the legitimacy of news coverage (Salawu, 2006). However, the findings reveal a significant departure from this, particularly in suggesting that incorporating UGC in SABC DTT has dramatically aided the promotion and development of indigenous African languages. Users may express themselves in their indigenous languages on SABC DTT through UGC, which promotes the usage and preservation of these languages. This exercise is the tenet of the Public Service Model of neutrality. It attests that employees should refrain from participating in partisan activities, expressing personal political opinions, and remaining politically neutral (Peters, 2015). Findings from this study revealed that audiences were encouraged to contribute stories in their indigenous languages for the SABC's current affairs shows, including *Ngula Ya Vutivi Leitlho la Sechaba* and *Zwamaramani*, which are aired on SABC DTT. This initiative has effectively raised awareness of indigenous languages and provided a voice to underrepresented populations on digital media to accomplish the beneficial public mandate of SABC to give equal coverage to all indigenous African languages (SABC, 2021).

This study's findings align with previous studies wherein it has been noted that using UGC has improved cooperation between professional journalists and the public, resulting in a more interactive and engaging news environment (Salawu, 2015). Similarly, Netshitenzhe (2022) argues that the importance of UGC in South African news creation has shifted dramatically as technology

has advanced and user-generated content has grown in popularity. This statement highlights how audiences who share a language and culture might feel connected and belong through the user-generated SABC DTT content, as it gives people a place to communicate, network, and share their experiences in their indigenous languages. This is supported by the Public Sphere theory, which allows individuals to participate in critical discourse, eventually leading to social and political change (Habermas, 1989).

The study revealed that the SABC DTT used UGC on digital media to support and advance African indigenous languages by enabling users to produce and distribute material in their indigenous languages. This platform promotes the usage and preservation of indigenous languages while offering a venue for various cultural expressions (Goddard, 2021). The growth of audience engagement in South African news creation demonstrates its continued influence on the media environment, producing a more democratic and diversified news landscape. The study revealed that if languages are not given an equal platform, UGC is essential for language preservation because SABC DTT is using UGC as a valuable instrument to assist indigenous African languages since it plays a significant role in preserving and promoting these languages. This is supported by Kant (2012), who agrees that UGC provides fresh opportunities for promoting, reviving, and preserving indigenous African languages. Moreover, UGC enables the audience on SABC to produce and disseminate material in their indigenous languages, boosting its usage and exposure. This is especially crucial for indigenous languages, which are frequently at risk of extinction and are rarely featured in the media.

The researcher noted that indigenous languages were being used more frequently due to SABC DTT's incorporation of UGC platforms, which has also led to the development of new linguistic resources. As a result, UGC is an effective instrument for supporting and preserving indigenous languages, and SABC DTT is leading the way in this area.

4.3.5 Broadcasting and Streaming Services

Digital media to promote indigenous African languages provides content that can be accessed through streaming with the availability of the material in many languages on SABC's streaming services, including SABC Plus, where users may watch episodes in their favorite language whenever they choose.

The majority of participants in this study noted the following the following:

Broadcasting and streaming services through SABC DTT empower us to reach a wider audience of indigenous African languages and help ensure that these languages are preserved and reachable to the younger generation. Ditaba_Dikgang YouTube has shown how indigenous African languages are digitised and easily accessible- (Participant #8).

The integration of broadcasting and streaming on SABC DTT offers an exceptional opportunity to promote indigenous languages through multiple digital platforms, forming an immersive experience where old and modern forms of communication converge. Various YouTube and Facebook pages for indigenous African bulletins offer content in indigenous languages, reaching audiences who are unlikely to access traditional media- (Participant #20).

By merging traditional broadcasting with streaming services, SABC DTT ensures that indigenous languages are accessible on-demand, allowing audiences to access content in their language of choice at any time or any place, thus enhancing language usage and visibility accessed on the SABC+ application- (Participant #6).

From the above responses from participants, it can be noted that the responsibility of SABC to serve the public with independent and impartial content aligns with the Public Service Model, which stresses the media's responsibility to serve the greater good by assuring accessibility of content, inclusion, and cultural representation as suggested by Peters (2015). The Public Sphere Theory is also essential in this context as it offers an awareness of how public opinions are made and how they can impact society, interpreting the impact of digital media on society (Habermas, 1989).

This study reveals that South Africa's shift to DTT and the introduction of video streaming services through the SABC are consistent with this approach in that they prioritise portraying indigenous African languages as a new mechanism by which digital media play a critical role in broadcasting and streaming services, which has not been documented in previous research. This provides a novel dimension to the understanding of broadcasting in different indigenous languages, protects them, and makes them more accessible to a broader audience.

Through the collected data, the researcher observed an unexpected relationship between broadcasting and streaming services where this method demonstrates a dedication to serving varied linguistic communities, facilitating the inclusion and cultural advancement of formerly oppressed groups (Accone, 2000). Accone (2000) asserts that the traditional linguistic and cultural activities are the confluence of digital media and indigenous African languages. This discovery suggests that the confluence of conventional broadcasting and streaming technologies, such as on-demand services, allows for more flexible access to indigenous language programming, addressing the

demands of today's digitally connected audiences. The accessible nature of such information anytime and anywhere boosts visibility and consumption, encouraging cultural pride and etymological preservation.

During participant observation, the researcher noted that indigenous African speakers could now access media content created especially for them through digital broadcasting using various YouTube and Facebook pages for bulletins broadcast in indigenous African languages that offer content with unlimited access reaching audiences who are unlikely to have access it on traditional media. This expands the scope and availability of content in indigenous languages as observed by Bosch (2014), who asserts that the digital content accessibility in these languages, is one of the main achievements in the digital era.

These findings introduce new dimensions to existing literature whereby streaming services enable users to choose the language of their choice for subtitles or audio tracks, making content obtainable to a more significant number of people which had not been considered in earlier studies. This promotes the official SABC Ditaba_Dikgang YouTube page as a source of content which disseminates news information that belongs to the Bapedi, Batswana, and Basotho populations. Streaming African-language video content is being included more frequently on digital streaming sites like YouTube and YouTube, which makes it available to a wider audience and promotes the creation of additional content in these languages as noted by McQuail (2020). McQuail (2020) further notes that with the advancement of technological advances, online platforms, including Twitter, have become an important source of news to deliver real-time updates and breaking stories that allow a wider range of views and opinions to be heard.

SABC's usage of DTT and streaming services expands the public realm and encourages indigenous languages to thrive in a digital media context as the mandate of the public broadcaster and aligns with the impartiality as a tenet of Public Service Model which emphasises that public employees are supposed to perform their tasks impartially and equally without being bias (Peters, 2015).

During participant observation, the researcher observed that the SABC DTT streaming services allowed speakers of indigenous languages to interact with their languages and culture in new and dynamic ways and also allowed future generations to share experiences with their cultural legacy,

which promotes knowledge transfer across generations (Whitten-Woodring, 2009). Grenoble (2019) asserts that:

Speaking the language of one's ancestors is one obvious way to make a connection with the past, with cultural heritage and linguistics. In some instances, this can mean being able to speak directly with living relatives, elders, or other people. Speaking to them in their indigenous language, your ancestral tongue, is rewarding for both sides, and opens windows to a closer understanding of your heritage (Grenoble, 2019:12).

From the above this, one can conclude that this method promotes a more inclusive public sphere where the perspectives and traditions of South Africa's indigenous groups are heard, hence promoting democratic engagement and cultural adaptability in the digital age.

4.3.6 Digital media integration

Through technology, digital media integration makes indigenous African languages more accessible on digital platforms, which plays a critical role in language promotion. These languages may reach a broader audience through various venues, including online media, mobile applications, and online learning tools (Li, Helou, & Gillet, 2012). Dhiman (2023) notes that:

Digitalisation has paved the way for time-shifting and on-demand services. Audiences can record programs digitally and access content on-demand through digital video recorders and streaming platforms. Digital technology has made it easy for television content to be distributed globally. Broadcasters can reach audiences via internet-based platforms, breaking geographical barriers (Dhiman, 2023:04).

This promotes linguistic diversity and cultural preservation in the digital era. The following responses emerged:

SABC utilises its multiple digital platforms, such as websites, social media, and mobile applications, to provide content in various African languages, ensuring a broader reach to communities that speak indigenous languages and through platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the SABC actively shares news, entertainment, and educational content in languages such as Zulu, Xhosa, and Tswana, embracing digital media to promote linguistic diversity- (Participant #6).

"Siyakha Isizwe," a well-known current affairs program on SABC that is delivered in IsiZulu, focuses on talking about current events, politics, and local tales. In addition to airing on SABC 1, the program is widely available online. IsiZulu-language versions of episode recaps, interview excerpts, and conversation starters may be found on sites including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. This encourages the use of IsiZulu in the context of significant national conversations and aids in engaging the audience in their own tongue. Using social media to promote IsiZulu and IsiXhosa is The Legacy. Indigenous languages are more prominent online because to the sharing of clips, memes, and episode highlights in these languages on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube- (Participant #4).

*SABC extensively promotes Setswana, Sesotho, and Tshivenda on Facebook and Twitter with series like Ditaba and Mafhungo. SABC makes sure that younger audiences join in the continuing discourse by developing interactive posts and hashtags in these languages, which eventually normalises the use of indigenous languages online (**Participant #3**).*

*Xitsonga and isiNdebele are still present in digital areas because of the news show Ngula Ya Vutivi in Xitsonga and Ndebele News. By providing frequent updates and digital media video segments, SABC fosters user engagement in their native tongues, fortifying our viewership's cultural identity (**Participant #16**).*

*Sesotho sa Leboa, isiSwati, and other languages have been effectively included in the digital outreach of Takalani Sesame, a SABC education series, and YoTV. Through disseminating instructional materials in these languages on social media sites like Facebook and YouTube, SABC encourages young people to learn while advancing indigenous languages' long-term viability in the digital era- (**Participant #14**).*

From the above responses, it can be noted that SABC's utilisation of digital channels to offer information in several African languages is a crucial aspect of promoting linguistic diversity. Adam, Othman and Halim (2022) argue that it is imperative to democratise indigenous African languages in the media to advance linguistic justice, inclusion, and cultural diversity. These responses indicate that the SABC disseminates news, entertainment, and instructional content in Zulu, Xhosa, and Tswana languages through websites, mobile applications, and social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. This aligns with Jones, Cunliffe, and Honeycutt (2013)'s assertion that this method not only promotes the readily available media information to indigenous populations but also encourages the preservation of culture through digital media. This revealed a novel aspect uncovered in this research, which emphasises that the importance of inclusion is emphasised by SABC's promotion of linguistic variety, which guarantees that African languages will continue to be important and commonly understood in the digital era.

A prime example of this initiative is the IsiZulu-delivered and extensively accessible web program "Siyakha Isizwe" from SABC. On digital media sites like Twitter and YouTube, SABC provides episode recaps, interview snippets, and ideas for discussions in IsiZulu, allowing audiences to participate in significant national dialogues in their own language. This complements the SABC's mandate to give relevant content to the audience in a preferable language (SABC, 2021). By encouraging the use of IsiZulu and IsiXhosa in modern discourse through digital media, communities are empowered to voice their opinions in their preferred languages complementing professionalism as a tenet of Public Service theory (Peters, 2015). The integration of memes and clips broadens their online presence and closes the divide between old and new. During the participant observation, the researcher noted that indigenous African languages were amplified

through digital media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. The researcher also noted how quickly indigenous language videos, memes, and hashtags spread among audiences with knowledge about technology. These platforms encourage audience interaction and participation beyond traditional media by providing a forum for sharing, interacting, and commenting on material. Chari (2018) argues that:

The interactive and participatory affordances of online news have unlocked opportunities for online news readers and commentators to challenge journalists and other producers of media content in their mother languages. Using their mother languages enabled participants to effectively communicate their feelings, invoking popular cultural images (Chari, 2018:108).

Findings from the present study reveal that through programs like Ditaba and Mafhungo, SABC expands its language reach to Setswana, Sesotho, and Tshivenda and allows audiences to participate in digital debates. This strategy creates a vibrant atmosphere in digital media where indigenous languages are accepted, especially among young people. The broadcaster's dedication to transforming indigenous languages into a vibrant component of digital communication rather than just a cultural artefact, is demonstrated by the participatory methods used to promote these languages.

Programs like Ndebele News and Ngula Ya Vutivi in Xitsonga emphasise the SABC's role in fostering language inclusion in news coverage. Salawu (2006) asserts that producing relevant content in the spoken language of audiences will always be legitimate news coverage for in fostering cultural variety and overcoming linguistic marginalisation. Regular updates and video segments in these languages preserve their relevance in contemporary digital environments while strengthening the audience's cultural identification. SABC notes that Xitsonga and IsiNdebele, which are marginalised in mainstream media, have a place in the digital sphere by guaranteeing their representation in these domains. The deliberate use of these languages in newscasts guarantees that language variety is included in educational and entertaining material.

Channels on SABC DTT are devoted to televising programs in various South African languages, including Setswana, Sesotho, isiZulu, and isiXhosa. Through uploading episodes and snippets to YouTube, SABC reaches a worldwide audience in addition to traditional television. This encourages the usage of indigenous languages and helps to increase awareness of them. This can be accessed at www.youtube.com/@SABCDitaba. Some materials may have subtitles in indigenous

languages, enabling indigenous speakers and learners to connect with the information. Additionally, this enhances language visibility and appreciation by helping non-speakers better grasp the languages.

The SABC's digital approach also promotes educational content. Languages like *IsiSwati* and *Sesotho sa Leboa* are integrated by programs like YoTV and Takalani Sesame, and educational resources are shared in these languages on Facebook and YouTube. This enhances not just the educational experience of young audiences but also the ongoing viability of indigenous languages throughout the age of digital media. By incorporating them into young learners' daily experiences, SABC's initiatives show how media can revitalise indigenous languages and ensure they are relevant for future generations.

4.4 Enhancement of audience participation

The second research question sought to ascertain how digital media technologies on SABC DTT enhanced audience participation. The assumption underlying this research question was that in the rapidly evolving context of digital media, broadcasters must remain relevant and prioritise audience engagement, as the relationship between communication and culture can be seen in how we interact daily (Kramsch, 1998). The study revealed that SABC DTT offered a distinctive venue for leveraging cutting-edge digital media technology to increase audience engagement (SABC, 2021). How audiences interact with content has been completely transformed by digital media technology, such as social media integration, interactive apps, and real-time feedback mechanisms, because every population can fully benefit from the digital revolution (Tovar & Simon, 2019).

4.4.1 Audience engagement and Live interactivity

SABC DTT has integrated digital media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram into its programming, enabling audiences to engage with the material and share their thoughts on current affairs. This allows the audience to comment or interact in their indigenous African languages on various digital media platforms. Participants in this study were asked: “How are digital media technologies on SABC DTT being used to promote African languages?”. Below are some of the responses that emerged:

By adding live interactive elements to its programs, SABC actively engages its audience by enabling audiences to voice their thoughts and take part in conversations in real-time. In order to promote a feeling of community and enable real-time audience input, SABC invites audiences to participate in discussions

during live broadcasts on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter because live chats promote the enhancement of the audience through technological communication tools. By incorporating X marketing and hashtag strategies into Facebook live events and other platforms, SABC has effectively expanded its audience reach- (Participant#6).

In order to provide audiences with a forum to express their opinions and shape the course of debates, SABC uses polls questions, and answers sessions during live programming. SABC uses digital media to establish a forum for conversation in addition to broadcasting content. This allows audiences to engage with presenters and guests during live shows. The instant response and customised involvement enabled by live chat assistance have shifted the audience's experience from passive watching to active participation, representing a considerable departure from traditional broadcasting techniques- (Participant #9).

The audience's experience is improved and made more inclusive and community-responsive when audience comments and inquiries are included in live portions. The way the SABC uses SMS voting and live call-ins to allow audiences to affect the results of different segments and shows directly is a testament to its dedication to audience involvement. Audiences are invited to contribute their experiences and tales through the SABC's creative use of technologies in its broadcasts, making for a more engaging and customised viewing experience- (Participant #2).

SABC effectively engages its audiences in national discourses by implementing initiatives like hashtag campaigns during live events, guaranteeing that various viewpoints are heard. The deliberate utilisation of Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp, live chat, DMNG, online promotion, and Facebook live events by SABC has increased audience participation- (Participant #13).

The responses present a perceptive analysis of the SABC's strategy to improve audience engagement through interactive live programming. This alludes to the notion by Moyo (2009), who states that digital media was introduced to promote interactive and digital broadcasting. This approach profoundly shifts the dynamics of broadcasting from a traditional one-way communication model to a more comprehensive, participatory experience. Through providing digital media channels for audiences to express their opinions and participate in live debates, SABC not only cultivates a feeling of community but also promotes a dialogue culture, both of which are necessary in a democracy. This aligns with the Public Sphere theory, allowing individuals to participate in critical discourse (Habermas, 1989). This suggests that the audience is acknowledged as active contributors rather than passive consumers, which may result in a livelier public conversation.

In order to provide a more engaging viewing experience, SABC DTT leverages X as a dynamic medium for audience interaction. It does this by fusing interactive digital material with the immediateness of live transmission. This can be accessed on the official X page for SABC Ditaba-Dikgang at https://x.com/SABC_Ditaba.

Xhosa news reports highlight cultural pride, especially during national holidays, whereas Zulu news reports concentrate on rural development. Zulu news items significantly increase user engagement, mainly when they discuss local government and community initiatives. Tswana stories often include English vocabulary in discussions of economic matters, indicating the need to balance cultural comprehensibility and technical vocabulary. Sesotho stories focus on rural topics like healthcare and agriculture, whereas English stories focus more on urban issues like infrastructure and jobs <https://sabc-plus.com/news>.

Another novel aspect discovered in this research is that X campaigns and hashtag usage on social media platforms like X and Facebook live events have allowed SABC to reach a wider audience and create trending discussions around its content, as stated by Participant #6. The real-time interaction and feedback from Facebook live events have also enabled SABC to customise its content based on audience preferences. Live chat support has enhanced the audience experience by providing immediate and personalised engagement. These technological tools have empowered SABC to transition from traditional broadcasting to a more communicative and immersive audience experience, as indicated by Participant#6. This is supported by Johnson and Callahan (2013), who agree that interaction improves the viewing experience and encourages creating communities around broadcast material.

The findings from this study significantly contribute to our understanding of the role of digital media in promoting indigenous African languages by revealing that the inclusion of interactive features in live broadcasts, such as polls and questions and answers, demonstrates SABC's dedication to fostering an inclusive conversation space. This participatory model empowers the audience by providing a forum for audiences to voice their thoughts and shape the programming that is presented. By doing this, SABC raises the relevance of its programs while also improving audience engagement. According to Kumar, Madhuri, and Mancham (2024), this kind of involvement is essential in a media context where consumers are increasingly looking for authenticity and a connection to the information they read. Furthermore, Kumar et al. (2024) argue that:

By leveraging influencers' authenticity, reach, and community-building capabilities, brands can enhance audience engagement and foster long-term brand loyalty (Kumar et al., 2024:04).

This suggests that media companies need to adjust to the changing needs of their audiences, stressing the need for immediate input and involvement. Technology integration, such as live call-ins and SMS voting, is an example of SABC's creative audience interaction strategy. The responses further reveal that SABC improves the viewing experience using these tools, giving it a more customised and participatory feel. According to Smith (2023), this tactic is part of a more significant media industry trend where companies are trying to use technology to increase audience engagement and give them a sense of control over the material. Smith (2023) further argues that:

The inference is that media companies need to continuously research and apply new technology in order to stay relevant and appealing to audiences who are growing increasingly tech-savvy (Smith, 2023: 45).

Furthermore, SABC's focus on hashtag campaigns during live events shows that it understands the importance of social media in today's conversation. Through these efforts, which encourage audience participation in national conversations, SABC ensures that various viewpoints are recognised and given voice. In order to create a democratic atmosphere where many points of view may coexist and influence national narratives, inclusion is essential.

The way the SABC incorporates live interactive aspects into its programs signifies a significant change in the way that broadcasting is done because through emphasising audience engagement and utilising technology, SABC not only improves the quality of the viewing experience but also cultivates a feeling of inclusivity and community. According to Jacobs (2020), the viewing experience in an era of rapid technical growth of digital media has gone through substantial transformations, presenting new possibilities for journalists and audiences. Alzub (2023) argues that:

Conventional media outlets need to maintain adaptability, forward thinking, and vigilance to successfully traverse the problems posed by digital media and capitalise on the possibilities it presents as the media landscape continues to shift in this era of digitalisation (Alzub, 2023:47).

This strategy emphasises the need to support a range of opinions in public debate and the necessity of adjusting to audience expectations, which has wider ramifications for the media sector. SABC's efforts are an excellent example of how broadcasting companies may interact with their audiences and promote a more participatory democracy as the media changes. Incorporating audience engagement into news creation has altered the South African news landscape, creating a more

democratic and accessible environment for news production and consumption (Hallin & Mancini, 2019).

The researcher observed that users were encouraged to post in their indigenous languages via hashtags and initiatives like #AfricanLanguageMatters and #MotherTongueDay, which promote linguistic variety and a sense of community. This aligns with the Public Sphere Theory, which speaks to how public opinions are made and how they can impact society and proposes media venues that promote public conversation and involvement. This confirms that using digital media increases public engagement (Silverman, 2013). This shows the importance of the Public Service Model in emphasising the need for accountability, openness, and responsiveness in the public sector (Habermas, 1989).

The researcher observed that the coverage of breaking news in some parts of the world using indigenous African languages is essential because the information is usually fresh and directly impacts the next cause of action for the targeted audiences, which had not been previously explored in the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages. SABC's live coverage can lead to momentum that is usually unstoppable as audiences receive information in their language, which usually gives audiences firsthand information on the actual incidence of events. On the other hand, about the genocide that happened in Hamas, pre-recorded news may not be able to disseminate the information with the true magnitude of the situation at hand since it is not possible to capture the reaction of people in real-time.

One of the most innovative discoveries from participants is that live coverage in IsiZulu made a huge impact because of the practicality of pictures and audio. The actuality of the information was felt through the reactions on SABC's social media platforms. This contradicts Austin's (2019) observation that the widespread use of English and other foreign languages facilitates easier cross-border cooperation and idea sharing.

4.4.2 Grassroots-Level Communication and Inclusion of Indigenous Speakers in Programming

Community-level communication and including indigenous speakers in programs are critical for increasing audience involvement in SABC DTT. These efforts, which use technological advances in digital media, have the potential to overcome cultural divides, ensure different views are heard, and promote a more inclusive media ecosystem as noted by Reyhner and Lockard (2009) who

indicate that indigenous African languages and digital media coexist in a way that offers exceptional potential for the development and preservation of these rich linguistic legacies.

Responses from the larger portion of participants revealed that through digital media technology, SABC DTT is a platform for digital media that has had a major influence on indigenous voices and grassroots communication, enabling users to participate in national discourses through SABC DTT. The following responses emerged:

Grassroots-level communication is essential for the victory of SABC DTT's promotion of indigenous languages. By comprising speakers of local indigenous languages in programming and content creation, we ensure the content is dependable and echoes with the societies we aim to serve- (Participant #5).

Integrating indigenous speakers in SABC DTT programming passes language promotion to the grassroots level. It enables societies to take ownership of their languages and provides a platform for speakers of these languages to showcase their rich linguistic and social heritage- (Participant #10).

Our main goal is to encompass indigenous speakers at each stage of production. Their inclusion in SABC DTT programming helps us to create content that reproduces the true linguistic diversity of South Africa, adopting a sense of self-importance and belonging in indigenous African language speakers- (Participant #7).

These responses point to the idea that the Public Service Model is based on the notion of inclusion, which ensures that media meets the different demands of society by delivering material that represents its cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic reality (Habermas, 1989). SABC DTT's promotion of indigenous languages using grassroots communication exemplifies this paradigm by including local speakers in programming and content development. The responses from participants refine prior conclusions by showing that this strategy assures that content is original and reliable and resonates intimately with the people it intends to serve (SABC, 2021). SABC DTT develops a sense of belonging and agency among indigenous language speakers through the media creation process, which aligns with the Public Service Model's aims of inclusion and development (Habermas, 1989). In addition, it overcomes the gap between national broadcasting and grassroots communication, ensuring indigenous languages are aired and integrated into the very basis of programming, enhancing their presence and importance.

According to the public sphere theory, including speakers of indigenous languages in SABC DTT programming democratises broadcasting by providing marginalised linguistic groups with a voice. Jürgen Habermas' concept of the Public Sphere stresses the necessity of inclusive communication venues that allow all social members to engage in conversation. By engaging grassroots speakers in content development, SABC DTT fosters a more diverse and democratic media environment.

This engagement enables indigenous language speakers to demonstrate their linguistic and cultural legacy, providing a platform promoting the preservation and appreciation of South Africa's unique variety. This supports the findings by Kant (2012), who revealed that digital media provides fresh opportunities for promoting, reviving, and preserving indigenous African languages. The researcher observed that this inclusive approach develops a shared sense of belonging and identity, allowing indigenous populations to actively contribute to public debate which had not been previously explored in the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages. This discovery is significant because it shows that SABC DTT enhances the public realm by making indigenous voices heard, creating cultural resilience, and increasing language variety across the country. In addition, the researcher also noted that SABC sent an international political analyst to Palestine amid the court hearing. This came after South Africa took the exceptional step of bringing another country, Israel, before the ICJ.

On the 29th of December, 2023, South Africa filed an application instituting actions against Israel for the violence it unleashed on the people of the Gaza Strip. South Africa claimed that Israel breached its commitments under the convention. This story made headlines with many audiences as the reporter spoke in an indigenous African language (IsiZulu), which is currently leading audience-wise at SABC. The coverage was brought live through the use of Digital Mobile News Gathering (DMNG) which captures and transmits news content using digital technology and mobile devices where a journalist quickly reports events from the field, enabling real-time news coverage. This story was covered by the political editor of SABC, Mzwandile Mbeje. This shows the importance of broadcasting in indigenous African languages on SABC DTT using DMNG to enhance audience participation through grassroots-level communication and inclusion of indigenous speakers in programming to participate, which was previously underexplored.

SABC DTT's indigenous language programs have made it possible for a larger audience to receive information in their home tongue by offering customised material in various indigenous languages. This has improved the public's engagement in the democratic process as revealed by UNESCO (2003). Consequently, the media environment has become more diversified and inclusive as a result of SABC DTT's emphasis on developing opportunities for constructive participation and interaction. Digital media technology has advanced to the point that audience grassroots communication and the incorporation of indigenous speakers in programming have greatly

improved to serve the mandate of the public broadcaster, as demonstrated by SABC (2022). This study uncovers a new dimension whereby digital media play by offering participatory platforms, localised information, and fostering inclusion and a sense of ownership; SABC DTT is assisting in overcoming the communication gap that exists between the dominant media and grassroots groups, which has not been documented in previous research.

Through digital media technology, SABC DTT has had a major influence on indigenous voices and grassroots communication. With the use of this platform, community members and indigenous speakers may actively engage in the dominant media by accessing free-to-air television, including those in their indigenous languages, as supported by Hinton et al., (2016:76), who note that “Digital technology has helped to preserve several languages”.

From what the researcher observed during the process of participant observation, the use of digital media technology including high-quality audio and video, SABC DTT has significantly raised the quality of programming, increasing audiences’ accessibility and engagement. Indigenous speakers now have the chance to communicate their culture and promote their language and identity on television because of stations that broadcast in indigenous languages, including IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, and Sepedi. These findings introduce a new perspective regarding a critical determinant for grassroots communication in including indigenous languages in programming by giving grassroots communities a forum to communicate their tales, struggles, and successes, which had not been considered in earlier studies. This insight not only broadens the scope of social cohesiveness. SABC DTT understands that to produce and market programming in African languages, it is critical to interact with local communities via digital media channels. This is supported by Keen (2007), who agrees that involving indigenous languages in content creation and dissemination promotes these languages. They may make sure the material speaks to the target audience and meets their unique wants and preferences by doing this. According to Jang and Mennis, (2021), this shows a dedication to portraying and honoring the local communities' cultural history; this method enables a higher degree of relationship between SABC DTT and the communities it serves. Jang and Mennis (2021) further argue that:

The greater concern is based on honouring the local communities and the impact of the conservation of natural or cultural heritage sites on local communities (Jang & Mennis, 2021:07).

While McQuail (2020) found that the advancement of technological media has become an important source of breaking stories, the present study revealed that SABC DTT could provide community members with a space to share their stories, traditions, and experiences in their own languages, amplifying their voices and promoting inclusivity. By actively involving the local communities in the process of content creation, SABC DTT ensures that their perspectives and cultural distinctions are precisely represented to support the view of SABC (2021) which emphasises that the broadcaster produces and broadcasts programs that reflect the societies, history, and principles of South Africa's various cultural groups.

This analysis shows that the relationship between SABC DTT and local communities reinforces cultural identity and nurtures a sense of belonging within these communities as the emergence of digital media has provided a platform for SABC DTT to effectively connect with local communities.

From the researcher's observation during the participant observation process, it was perceived that SABC DTT has been able to engage with diverse cultural groups and reach a wider audience supporting Li et al. (2012) who agree that digital media channels reach wider audiences and engage with audiences beyond traditional broadcasting methods. Keen (2007) emphasises that indigenous language broadcasting promotes cultural representation and enables people to interact with media in their languages because this has fostered a sense of inclusivity and representation among different communities. In addition to revolutionising local community participation, SABC DTT's use of digital media has made it easier to preserve and promote African languages, fulfilling its role in producing local content (SABC, 2021). This establishes the framework for more conversation about SABC DTT's function in advancing African languages in digital media.

According to SABC (2022), indigenous speakers can participate in national discourses through SABC DTT, which promotes inclusion and an awareness of participation. Furthermore, by offering locally relevant information and programming, SABC DTT has assisted in closing the communication gap between the dominant media and grassroots populations (SABC, 2011). With the ability to create and distribute their own material, community broadcasters may now cover local stories and occurrences important to their communities. According to Goddard (2021), this locally relevant information encourages growth, empowerment, and community involvement. By giving local populations and indigenous speakers a platform to engage in mainstream media

actively, SABC DTT is fostering unity among communities, inclusion, and inclusiveness and positive social transformation has been facilitated by SABC DTT's digital media technologies, which has transformed the way indigenous speakers and ordinary people interact. Moreover, Diko (2023) contends that:

While much work still needs to be done, the South African government has made significant efforts to promote and retain indigenous languages (Diko, 2023:311).

This statement acknowledges the complexity and difficulties plaguing the South African government's attempts to promote indigenous languages while expressing a critical opinion of such efforts. It provides a starting point for conversations on cultural identity, language policy, and the significance of continuous support for linguistic variety.

4.4.4 Real-Time Interaction, Supplementary Content Access, and Personalised Content Recommendations

Real-time interactivity, extra material access, and personalised content suggestions on the SABC DTT platform increase audience involvement by providing more engaging, targeted, and dynamic watching experiences using digital media technologies.

All the participants solidly perceive that incorporating supplemental information is especially advantageous for educational programs, since it may offer a more profound understanding and improve the educational process. The responses below arose:

Real-time interaction on the SABC DTT platform ensures that audiences engage directly with indigenous African language content, seek relevancy through questions, and provide feedback to create an interactive environment that enhances cultural exchange and language learning- (Participant #18).

With additional accessible content, audiences can dive deeper into indigenous African language programming, accessing educational resources or documentaries and cultural content that improve their understanding of the African indigenous languages and the societies that speak them- (Participant #11).

Through tailored content recommendations, SABC DTT offers users tailored programming in the African preferred indigenous languages of audiences by ensuring that they are consistently exposed to content that echoes their cultural and linguistic experiences- (Participant #8).

From the above responses, one can conclude that SABC DTT's major methods for increasing audience involvement through digital media technologies include real-time interaction, supplementary content access, and personalised content recommendations. The platform's real-time interactivity allows audiences to connect directly with indigenous African language material,

creating a dynamic setting for cultural exchange and language study. This motivates users to pose questions and provide comments, making the overall experience more meaningful and interactive. In addition, extra content access allows audiences to explore indigenous African language programs further. SABC DTT promotes a better knowledge of both languages and the populations that speak them by offering extra resources such as educational content, documentaries, and cultural programming. Furthermore, this alludes to the Public Sphere theory, which asserts that the public sector should allow people to come together to converse and debate matters of public interest (Habermas, 1989). In addition, this notion has been influential and helpful in shaping modern social equality and continues to be relevant in today's digital age.

The researcher identified personalised content suggestions guarantee that consumers become privy to programming in their favorite indigenous African languages, resulting in a customised watching experience that is relevant to their cultural and linguistic origins which had not been previously explored in the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages. This discovery is significant because it shows does not only increases audience participation, but it also encourages the preservation and respect of African languages and traditions.

By enabling its audiences to create their content, SABC is promoting a more dynamic and interactive media landscape through the DTT platform. Through this connection, varied groups around South Africa are given a voice and allowed to offer their stories, viewpoints, and artistic expressions on a national platform, which enhances the pool of material. The findings suggest the SABC is strengthening its relationship with the public and encouraging a more involved and active viewing base by integrating audience-generated content (Hallin & Mancini, 2019).

The researcher observed that DTT was being used by the SABC to improve audience engagement in real time. With the use of DTT, audiences may participate more in live broadcasts by taking part in live polls, quizzes, and even social network integrations right through their TVs. By transforming traditional passive watching into an engaged and active experience, this real-time contact strengthens the bond that exists between the broadcaster and its audience. Ezumah (2013) notes that indigenous groups may use digital media as a platform to share their knowledge, experiences, and tales with the world. This feature not only increases audience engagement but also gives the SABC insightful feedback that helps them better customise programming. DTT makes it simpler for audiences to obtain supplemental content, which allows them to learn more

about the shows they watch. Audiences may access behind-the-scenes videos, interviews, and relevant articles straight from their TV screen while watching SABC content. By providing additional material via DTT, the SABC can provide a more engaging and educational viewing experience that entices audiences to interact with the show on a deeper level.

This builds on earlier work by introducing tailored content recommendations, and the SABC may customise the watching experience to suit individual interests through the use of DTT to provide more individualised and pertinent programming by using information gleaned from interactions and watching patterns to recommend shows that correspond with the preferences of individual audiences. The SABC's usage of digital media technology not only improves audience happiness but also grows and retains its audience by facilitating more accessible and more pleasurable content discovery, as posited by Montero, Dénommé-Welch, and Henry (2022), who suggests that the real-time interaction has served an essential role in reviving endangered languages by empower both speakers and sources disseminating the content. SABC is improving audience interaction with media by offering more individualised entertainment choices and broader content experiences through DTT.

4.4.5 Audience-Generated Content and Multilingual Engagement

Audience-generated content and Multilingual Engagement is an unconventional approach that uses digital media technologies on SABC DTT to increase audience participation by promoting varied language contributions and proactive content development.

The majority of respondents believe that with DTT, audiences may directly submit videos, images, and comments to broadcasts, resulting in audience-generated material that makes the media landscape more diverse and comprehensive. The following responses surfaced:

Audience-generated content on SABC DTT is a life-changer for multiple language engagement. It enables the public to share their stories in their indigenous African languages, nurturing a vibrant community where languages prosper and progress through the active involvement of audiences- (Participant #19).

By encouraging audience-generated content, SABC DTT forms a platform where multiple languages can blossom. This platform enables audiences to contribute to their indigenous African languages and nurtures mutual understanding among speakers of diverse languages- (Participant #4).

Multilingual engagement is a significant aspect of inclusivity on SABC DTT because it allows audiences to produce content in multiple languages to ensure that different linguistic groups feel well-represented, building an environment where all South Africans can interact and have a good time for their linguistic heritage- (Participant #12).

The above responses indicate that some audience-generated content on SABC DTT has a revolutionary impact on boosting multilingual engagement and increasing audience involvement via digital media technologies. SABC DTT fosters a lively multicultural community in which languages may thrive and advance via active audience participation, as suggested by Warschauer (2003), who notes that audience-generated content and multilingual engagement provide communication features that allow audience participation and engagement. The researcher observed that this platform allows for linguistic expression and promotes mutual understanding among speakers of various languages. This ensures that all linguistic groups feel represented, which had not been previously explored. This discovery is significant because it shows that multilingual involvement promotes diversity by providing a digital platform for South Africans to converse, celebrate, and protect their language history. The researcher also observed that the SABC was utilising DTT in analog with audience-generated content to improve multilingual participation, which reflects the wide language variety of South Africa. McQuail, (2020) agrees that advancement of technological advances have become an important source of news, with media outlets increasingly depending on audience-generated content to deliver updates and breaking stories.

In alignment with Public Sphere Theory, which offers awareness of how public opinions are made and how they can impact society and proposes media venues that promote public conversation and involvement, DTT helps the SABC to reach a wider audience, including people who speak indigenous languages, by allowing it to transmit several audio tracks and subtitles in other languages (Habermas,1989). Adut (2019) argues that:

Like most significant social practices, politics, art, and justice take effect partially in the public sphere, with varying levels of publicity (Adut, 2019:247).

According to SABC (2022), this feature encourages diversity and the preservation of culture by making sure that information is understandable and accessible to audiences from all language backgrounds. On the same note, this data reveals the importance of the Public Service Model in emphasising the need for the public broadcaster as framework for setting up and running governmental institutions in a way that advances good governance and serves the public interest, the SABC plays a more important role in meeting the entertainment requirements of all South Africans, regardless of language, by providing programs in a variety of languages (Adut, 2019).

Additionally, the researcher also observed that more specialised and culturally appropriate information is made possible via multilingual participation through DTT, improving the watching experience for many language communities which had not been previously explored in the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages. This discovery is significant because it shows how SABC can satisfy the varied demands of its audience by providing material in several languages, whether it be broadcasts of news, educational programs, or entertainment acts. This strategy helps to promote South Africa's linguistic legacy while also giving audiences a feeling of community. The SABC is advancing efforts to create a broadcasting environment that is more inclusive, participative, and culturally lively by incorporating audience-generated content and multilingual participation into its DTT services.

4.4.6 Interactive Activities Through Mobile App Integration

Interactive Activities Through Mobile App Integration is another way to enhance audience participation in SABC DTT by leveraging digital media for real-time engagement and interactivity. By adding interactive features through mobile application integration, the SABC is improving the audience's experience and reducing the divide between traditional TV viewing and the digital, mobile-first era. This supports Adam et al. (2022)'s view that language preservation initiatives have been transformed by the digital era, allowing audiences to engage in actual programs, quizzes, and sports content relevant to the programming they are viewing on their smartphone screen when the SABC synchronises the DTT service with a mobile application.

Responses from most participants suggest by adding interactive features through mobile application integration, the SABC is improving the audience's experience and reducing the divide between traditional TV viewing and the digital, mobile-first era. The following are the responses that emerged:

The integration of mobile applications with SABC DTT content offers a distinctive platform for interactive activities, where audiences can participate in language competitions, interviews, and live dialogues in indigenous African languages, hence enhancing engagement and language education. SABC+ application has also simplified the process of content accessibility- (Participant #15).

Via mobile application integration, SABC DTT permits audiences to have equal access to interactive content such as language programs and cultural storytelling, helping in the promotion of indigenous African languages with more accessible and engaging for younger audiences- (Participant #11).

Interactive activities through SABC's mobile application offer a unified connection between audiences and SABC's content of indigenous African language. This application allows audiences to provide feedback,

participate in live interviews, and even engage in societal discussions, all in their preferred African language- (Participant #1).

Mobile application integration with SABC DTT offers real-time interaction, where audiences can not only watch content in an indigenous African language but also take part in interactive learning programs, and share their ideas democratising content creation- (Participant #14).

These findings indicate that the integration of mobile applications with SABC DTT content creates a dynamic platform for interactive activities, significantly enhancing audience participation and equal access to the content through SABC+ application. The researcher, through the participant observation process, perceived that, through these digital media technologies, audiences can engage in language competitions, live dialogues, and interviews, all in indigenous African languages. This interactive approach through mobile not only fosters higher levels of engagement through mobile interaction but also strengthens language education, as audiences can learn and participate using their smartphones.

The findings of this study significantly contribute to the understanding of the role played by digital media in promoting indigenous African languages. By demonstrating that this relationship is more pronounced on SABC DTT than previously identified, the study introduces a new linguistic context of digital media usage in language promotion, thereby expanding the existing research.

While Akinfemisoye (2014) found interaction through mobile applications restricts participation, the analysis of this study shows a significant deviation from these results, suggesting that through the integration of mobile apps, passive viewing is transformed into a dynamic, multi-platform experience that invites audiences to engage in novel and interesting interactions with the material. In light of these propositions, Gwerevende and Mthombeni (2023), agree that the digital era has created new opportunities for languages that are endangered to be revived and used in daily situations. Similarly, Reijerkerk and Nyitray (2023) note that the advent of technology can bring these languages to the forefront of the digital era and ensure their survival and vibrancy for future generations by utilising the power of digital media.

Furthermore, SABC DTT's application for smartphones expands the reach of multimedia programming to a larger audience, especially younger audiences, to share their ideas democratising content creation. This reveals that this technology allows audiences to participate in cultural storytelling and language programs, which promotes the conservation of indigenous African languages in a more engaging manner. Public opinion is significant in moulding the general well-

being of democratic societies (Harber, 2021). This further reveals the role of SABC in informing, educating and entertaining the audiences through content that is fair and impartial (SABC, 2021). The platform democratises content production by enabling immediate input and debates, allowing users to participate in social conversations in their chosen African languages. This seamless link between the audience and SABC programming creates an inclusive atmosphere. The Public Sphere theory designates a public space where societies can engage in rational-critical discourse, free from intimidation, using motive and evidence to support their opinions (Habermas, 1989) while the Public Service Model emphasises that this entails making information accessible, participating in discussions with the public when necessary, and keeping lines of communication open with the general public (Peters, 2015).

The above responses point to the idea that audiences may also use the mobile application as a platform to obtain supplemental content and more information while they watch their favorite shows. To strengthen their bond with the material, customers may examine in-depth actor biographies, exclusive interviews, and behind-the-scenes videos straight from the app. In addition to improving the viewing experience, this degree of interaction increases audience engagement by offering them individualised, pertinent material that enhances the main broadcast. Thus, one can conclude that the experience of watching is enhanced by the SABC's mobile app integration, which makes it more personalised and immersive.

In addition, the application facilitates social sharing and community building by enabling users to instantly share their ideas and experiences with others. This is supported by Ezumah (2013) who agrees that indigenous groups may use digital media as a platform to share their knowledge, experiences, and tales with the world. Audiences may debate episodes, exchange ideas, and interact with other fans using features like official digital media platform integration, creating a more social watching experience.

To strengthen the relationship between the SABC and its audience, this interactive involvement through mobile app integration creates a feeling of community among audiences. The SABC is successfully upgrading its broadcasting strategy by utilising mobile technology, guaranteeing that its content stays interesting and relevant in a quickly changing digital environment.

4.4.7 Live Streaming of Significant Ceremonies

Live streaming of significant ceremonies creates a platform for audiences to virtually join important events virtually irrespective of location, making them more accessible to inclusive audience.

The majority of the participants pointed out that through live streaming of big ceremonies, the SABC was improving its DTT services and giving audiences instant access to crucial national and cultural events. The following subsequent replies were observed:

Live streaming of important ceremonies on SABC DTT offers a priceless opportunity to showcase and preserve cultural practices and content for indigenous African languages, allowing audiences to experience, participate and consume content from these events from anywhere- (Participant #14).

By broadcasting major ceremonies live, SABC DTT ties geographical gaps, posing audiences a front-row seat to cultural events in their indigenous languages and fostering an understanding of diverse traditions and greater gratitude- (Participant #9).

The live streaming of cultural events on SABC DTT ensures that indigenous African languages are notable and preserved in real-time, bringing together societies and empowering global audiences to eyewitness and engage with these rich traditions- (Participant #13).

Through live streaming ceremonies, SABC DTT does not only offer a platform for the vibrant expression of indigenous African languages but also upholds cross-cultural discourse and education by constructing these cultural practices accessible to a wider audience through the use of digital media platforms- (Participant #17).

The above responses indicate that the SABC DTT's live broadcasting of major ceremonies marks a fundamental shift in how information is received in the digital era. In light of these proposition, UNESCO (2023), agrees that:

In the end, the digital era offers us a special chance to recognise and protect the world's varied linguistic environment, making sure that no language is ever lost (UNESCO, 2023:12).

According to SABC (2022), as traditional television viewership fluctuates, streaming allows the SABC to reach a larger audience, both domestically and globally. Haleema et al., (2022) agree that:

With smartphones and other wireless technology devices becoming popular among the general public, it only makes sense that broadcasters and government institutions make efficient use of them to watch significant events (Haleema et al., 2022: 01)

This is especially important for culturally and socially significant events like state funeral ceremonies, political inaugurations, and sporting wins when real-time access is critical for sustaining public involvement and creating national unity.

From what the researcher observed during participant observation, broadcasting live provided an interactive platform that allowed people to contribute in real-time, boosting the feeling of communal experience. Furthermore, the SABC DTT's participation in live streaming these events promote equal access to information, especially for the real-time who do not have cable television but do have a connection to the internet. This democratisation of media consumption mirrors worldwide trends in which state broadcasters vary their content distribution options to remain relevant. Democratising indigenous African languages in the media can help to promote better cross-cultural communication, empathy, and cooperation, which will help to create a more diverse and integrated world community (Fuseini, 2021). On the same note, Adam et al. (2022), assert that it is imperative to democratise indigenous African languages in the media to advance linguistic justice, inclusion, and cultural diversity. On the contrary, Adu and Ngulube (2016) argue that the emphasis on indigenous African languages in the media might impede the development of international communication and technical advances. However, the findings reveal a significant departure from this, particularly in live streaming of significant ceremonies suggesting that the development of SABC's live-streaming activities brings new encounters, including showcasing and preserving cultural practices and content for indigenous African languages, allowing audiences to experience, participate and consume content from these events from anywhere.

The researcher observed that the SABC made sure that people could watch important events, such as state burials, national holidays, and cultural events, live across the nation by airing these live. The SABC is required to cover events of national importance, including government meetings, cultural and religious activities, and national holidays (SABC, 2021). Not many South Africans can physically attend these occasions in person, making this live-streaming feature more crucial in this varied and large country. It fortifies the SABC's position as a national broadcaster dedicated to bringing the country together via shared experiences. Furthermore, throughout the participant observation process, the researcher noted that Amabutho was seen paying tribute through a traditional dance during Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi's memorial service in Ulundi on 13 September 2023.

Major celebrations can also be streamed live by the SABC to reach a worldwide audience and keep South Africans living abroad informed about the country's happenings. The SABC makes these events available to everyone with an internet connection, wherever they may be, by utilising digital media technology. According to Axford (2011), it is critical to offer technology, software, and internet connectivity to access this content.

In addition to increasing the broadcaster's influence, this worldwide reach helps to raise awareness of South African culture and history among audiences worldwide, as emphasised by Dolowy-Rybinska (2013) who notes that providing live streaming is one of the main benefits of utilising digital technologies to promote indigenous African languages. It was further revealed that these significant events are preserved as a part of the national record by being able to be streamed live, which guarantees that they are recorded and accessible for future viewing.

Important events that the SABC streams live frequently have multilingual commentary to ensure that audiences with varying language backgrounds can comprehend and enjoy the events to the fullest. The SABC's dedication to supporting all South Africans and promoting a feeling of togetherness and national pride is further reinforced by this inclusion (SABC, 2021). This aligns with the researcher's observations during the participant observation process. The SABC enhances its position as a vital cultural and educational resource by providing real-time and multilingual access to major events, uniting the country at moments of historical importance.

CHAPTER FIVE: STRENGTHS OF DIGITAL MEDIA IN PROMOTING INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES ON SABC DTT

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 provided the first part of the presentation, interpretation and analysis of data collected through interviews with purposively participants who are employees of the South African Corporation (SABC). This chapter presents the second part of the research findings based on data collected through in-depth interviews with purposively selected participants, who are staff members of the SABC. The chapter addresses the third research question, identified in Chapter 1 which focuses on the strengths and limitations of using digital media technologies in promoting indigenous African languages on SABC DTT. The specific research question is “**What are the**

strengths and weaknesses encountered by SABC DTT in the use of digital media technologies in promoting indigenous African languages?

While the SABC DTT provided an exceptional opportunity to promote indigenous African languages (SABC, 2021) with its broad reach and accessibility contributing to the preservation and revitalisation of endangered languages (Bird and Simon, 2019) the corporation faced numerous constraints. These include access to technology, knowledge of technology gaps, and a lack of content development in lesser-known languages (Bird and Simon, 2019). Furthermore, commercial interests frequently preferred more commonly spoken languages, potentially overshadowing minor indigenous languages on DTT platforms (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). The strengths and constraints associated with SABC DTT's use of digital media technologies in promoting indigenous African languages are discussed in subsequent sections of this chapter.

5.2 Strengths

5.2.1 Effectiveness of Video Content in Audience Engagement

Video engagement attracts audiences more than text or photographs because of visual and aural elements. Video material for SABC highlights the depth and diversity of African languages via storytelling, drama, and music, which will help them become more approachable and appealing to a wider audience and local speakers. These languages may be emphasised in a way that speaks to audiences by adding cultural components and customs into video forms, which will promote a better understanding and appreciation (El Gody, 2014).

Many participants cited the effectiveness of video content in audience engagement as a material that enables interactive and dynamic interaction. Below are some of their experiences:

Video content has become a potent tool for educating audiences and promoting indigenous African languages. By combining audio and visual components, producers may create immersive learning environments that captivate audiences- (Participant #19).

The promotion of indigenous African languages through the use of video material not only aids in their preservation but also expands their audience, which promotes greater respect and understanding among various groups- (Participant #8).

Effective video material may make language preservation initiatives more dynamic and powerful by offering engaging and accessible opportunities to learn about and practice indigenous African languages. This can greatly increase audience engagement- (Participant #20).

The above responses clearly indicate the promotion of indigenous languages can be aided by overcoming cultural and geographical challenges through the use of video on platforms such as SABC DTT. The data from participants reveals a previously known usage of digital media in language promotion, suggesting that video content has become a potent tool for educating audiences and promoting indigenous African languages. In light of this proposition, digital media has the potential to reach a large audience in many geographical areas, giving lesser-known languages a chance to become more visible and recognised, as noted by Reyhner and Lockard (2009), who state that indigenous African languages and digital media coexist in a way that offers exceptional potential for the effective engagement through videos.

These findings introduce an interesting perspective with regard to the fact that transmitting content using videos and presenting cultural stories to a wide range of audiences may result in more understanding and admiration, which may eventually help indigenous African languages thrive and survive in the digital era (Hinton, 2014). Hinton (2014) further argues that:

The internet has contributed to raising the visibility and significance of these languages in the modern world. As a consequence, minority languages are not anymore in fear of extinction, but rather thrive and evolve in the digital era (Hinton, 2014:176).

These findings reveal that, with SABC DTT content shared through videos across various digital media platforms, it is possible to actively engage audiences in educational programs, language programs, and cultural documentary films, enticing them to partake in language acquisition and cultural activities (Cunliffe et al., 2013). This further highlights the tenant of the Public Service Model to advocate for the best possible interest of the general public (Peters, 2015). It was also observed that interviews and live chats were interactive elements that can increase engagement and improve the effectiveness and enjoyment of learning. This method aids in developing a lively online community where speakers of indigenous languages may interact, exchange ideas, and provide mutual support for preserving and advancing their linguistic legacy.

5.2.2 Interactive Nature of Current Affairs Shows and SABC's Commitment to Audience Connection

Current affairs and news programs for SABC DTT shows frequently include interactive elements that actively involve audiences, such as audience opinions, live chats, and real-time feedback

systems. The integration of indigenous languages into interactive forms promotes more inclusion and engagement from audiences who are proficient in these languages.

Most respondents indicate that a major factor in the promotion of indigenous African languages on digital media platforms such as SABC's DTT is the interactive element of current affairs broadcasts. The following responses emerged:

I think the reason is that indigenous languages should be acknowledged and used in media to support speakers and promote pride and self-worth as digital media is being used frequently. Incorporating interactive elements into its current affairs programming enhances the audience's involvement and fortifies SABC's position as a forum for significant public participation and discourse. SABC is Commitment to Audience Connection- (Participant #5).

In order to make sure that audiences feel heard and involved in the continuous discussion of national and international issues, SABC promotes interactive features in its current affairs programming, demonstrating its dedication to building strong audience relationships. Because programs speak to audiences on their daily encounters, programs that touch on grassroots-level topics. This includes service delivery issues and lifestyle or health topics in the spoken languages of the audiences- (Participant #16).

The reason is that it ensures that everyone in society has access to important stories and content, not only those who speak the dominant or colonial languages. Interactive formats, which allow audiences to actively engage in conversations and offer real-time comments, are becoming increasingly popular in current affairs broadcasts. This enhances the relevancy and immediacy of the material presented- (Participant #6).

These responses point to the idea that the relationship between indigenous languages and current affairs programs highlights the larger objective of digital media: promoting inclusion and preservation of culture. Through the utilisation of interactive digital platforms, SABC DTT can provide material that is both culturally and linguistically relevant to the communities it serves, as believed by Jones et al. (2013), who state that digital media and digital communication tools may be used to build online communities for speakers of indigenous African languages, encouraging language usage and offering a forum for the expression and exchange of cultural ideas.

The data from participants echo a previously known advantage of using digital media in language promotion whereby users from different parts of the world may access resources for learning languages that might not be commonly spoken outside of their local communities by using Internet platforms (El Gody, 2014), suggesting that by enabling communities to interact with media in their original languages, this approach not only promotes the preservation of indigenous languages but also highlights the importance of these languages and customs in a quickly changing digital environment. This encourages a larger audience to value and utilise these languages while simultaneously increasing audience engagement and bringing attention to Africa's linguistic

variety. This emphasises that indigenous linguistic groups exchange their languages and interact with one another, so encouraging linguistic variety (Fuseini, 2021). These findings highlight the significance of the Public Sphere theory which provides an advantageous framework that is thoughtful and empathetic on how digital media platforms facilitate the dissemination of information and allow individuals to participate in critical discourse (Habermas, 1989).

This study uncovers a new mechanism by which the network ensures that different indigenous languages are given a voice by emphasising local problems and reflecting varied populations in its programming (Vilanilam, 2005). According to SABC (2022), by integrating these languages with current affairs programming, SABC DTT offers speakers a forum to express their viewpoints and engage in national dialogues. From these findings, one could conclude that SABC's dedication to building connections with its audiences further strengthens the promotion of indigenous languages. By normalising the use of indigenous languages in mainstream media, this commitment demonstrates a commitment to cultural representations and supports the languages' continuing significance and use, as observed by Keen (2007), who notes that indigenous language broadcasting promotes cultural representation and enables people to interact with media in their languages.

5.2.3 Growth in Viewership through Digital Media and Enhancement of Content Quality

The use of digital platforms by SABC DTT to preserve and promote African languages in local communities is noteworthy.

One major benefit of using digital media to promote indigenous African languages on platforms such as SABC's DTT is the increase in audience it offers. when the one incite adverse emotions by. The following responses are what the participants said:

I think the development of digital media platforms has led to a significant growth in audience, presenting audiences with more easily accessible and varied programming while driving media producers to improve the quality of their offerings further they provide in order to remain competitive. SABC has reporters who go out to communities to find out or investigate stories that need media intervention and attention to expose perpetrators. Content is quite relevant to African language speakers as it televises stories in a language spoken by audiences- (Participant #3).

The ability to broadcast content televised in indigenous African languages and share it across digital media has allowed SABC to offer more ways to give audiences a broader range of content, not forgetting to mention local programming. Digital media has not just expanded the reach of programming but also elevated its level of excellence since platforms compete for viewership by investing in innovative formats and high-production qualities that cater to evolving audience expectations- (Participant #5).

As audiences continue to grow across digital channels, there is increased attention to the excellence of content, with producers focusing on producing engaging, well-produced content that fulfills the high-quality demands of modern audiences. Comments and responses from experts and audiences aired on television during the interviews meet the language standard. These are more successful dominant successes on SABC DTT. Collaborative communication is vibrant in promoting indigenous languages through SABC DTT. This collaborative approach allows real-time feedback, ensuring that language development is active and responds to the needs of the public using these languages daily- (Participant #14).

The above responses indicate that a broader and more varied audience may be reached by comparing digital media to traditional broadcasting techniques. Thanks to this increased reach, indigenous languages may now reach a broader range of audiences, especially younger generations who consume more information online. Whitten-Woodring (2009) asserts that younger generations may feel more connected to their linguistic and cultural roots due to giving languages the same and equal treatment on digital media. Consequently, these findings reveal that these languages have an increased chance of becoming more visible and relevant, creating an atmosphere where they can flourish and be accepted by a larger group.

The company has been instrumental in promoting the representation and empowerment of African languages using these platforms, including social media and online streaming services. According to Keen (2007), indigenous language broadcasting promotes cultural representation and enables people to interact with media in their languages. The company creates and curates content in several African languages, including isiZulu and isiXhosa. This has increased the visibility of these languages and promoted cultural exchange and understanding within local communities. In addition, the Public Sphere theory suggests this notion has been influential and helpful in shaping modern social equality and continues to be relevant in today's digital age (Habermas, 1989).

A novel aspect uncovered in this research is that SABC DTT had also aided in the revival of languages and allowed younger generations to establish connections with their linguistic and cultural roots, which were previously underexplored. Milenkova and Lendzhova (2021), contend that dominant global languages take precedence over the digital development of African languages. Findings from the participant observation process revealed that there was an increasing need for various linguistic representations and material, as seen by the rising popularity and accessibility of digital content in African languages and the deliberate use of digital media by SABC DTT fosters intercultural dialogue and cultural preservation in the surrounding areas while also empowering African languages. Findings further reveal that African languages have great potential to be promoted online through digital channels like digital media and streaming.

Additionally, the collaboration between SABC DTT and regional influencers has made it possible to produce audience-resonant material that is culturally meaningful, and empathy for cultural variety in digital media promotes inclusion and community empowerment. Ultimately, SABC DTT's connection with local communities and development of a more culturally diverse digital landscape depends heavily on the potential and difficulties presented by producing and promoting programming in African languages.

From the above findings, one can conclude that a deeper connection with local communities is fostered by the representation of diverse cultural identities in digital content, which is why SABC DTT's commitment to incorporating African languages in its digital content indicates the impact of culturally representative content on digital engagement, as observed by SABC. Their use of indigenous languages in storytelling and programming preserves cultural heritage and fortifies their bond with the local audience, as observed by Boczkowski (2002), who notes that African indigenous languages are being preserved and given new life through digital media, which is a complex process including cultural, linguistic, and technological elements. Furthermore, their use of local artists and musicians in digital campaigns indicates their commitment to authentic cultural representation.

The above responses clearly indicate that African languages and cultural representation have benefited greatly from SABC DTT's digital interaction with local communities through a variety of digital media. Since digital media has made it possible to represent a variety of cultures, its influence on local community participation cannot be overstated. Cultural representation is crucial for digital content development, even with the difficulties associated with producing and disseminating material in African languages. In addition to enhancing the visibility of African languages, the confluence of digital media and local community involvement has promoted a feeling of cultural variety and inclusion. In light of these propositions, Breuer et al. (2015) agree that this involvement encourages community people to actively participate in language revitalisation and makes sure that preservation initiatives reflect local needs and cultural values.

5.2.4 Broadening Content Engagement Range with Indigenous Languages through Digital Media Technologies

Digital media platforms offered by SABC DTT make it possible to produce and disseminate a wide range of material, including social media postings, interactive apps, and films, all of which may be tailored to various language groups' unique requirements and tastes.

The majority of participants suggest using digital media technology to increase the spectrum of content interaction with indigenous languages, which presents revolutionary prospects for language promotion and cultural preservation. Below are some of the responses that emerged:

SABC DTT has a 24-hour news channel with content that supports indigenous African languages. Indigenous African languages are being presented and interacted with in a whole new way thanks to digital media technologies. These tools preserve cultural legacy while expanding the scope of information and improving accessibility for a worldwide audience- (Participant #3).

The incorporation of indigenous languages into digital media platforms broadens their audience and significance, enabling a more varied and engaging interaction that promotes a deeper comprehension and admiration of these languages. SABC has various platforms including X. WhatsApp. Twitter. Facebook and YouTube allow audiences to participate in their indigenous African languages- (Participant #9).

I can say content makers may successfully increase the involvement range of indigenous languages by utilising digital media technology. They can do this by creating unique and engaging experiences that appeal to both local and global audiences by incorporating interactive elements such as quizzes, polls, questions of the day and live charts during the broadcast- (Participant #13).

From the above responses from participants, it can be noted the influence of SABC's technology tools on audience engagement has been emphasised in the book, amplifying audience engagement on the Impact of SABC's technological tools with 24-hour content. Incorporating social media platforms with live chat assistance has fundamentally transformed audience engagement and correspondence. In the digital age, SABC has established a standard for using technology to create deep connections with its audience. This is opposed to findings by Bird and Simons (2003), who noted that interactive content can cause a person to feel distracted and cut off from reality, which may harm their mental health and interpersonal connections.

These findings reveal that content creators may better fulfill the demands of their audience by customising their programming based on feedback, interaction patterns, and audience preferences. This expands on previous research by addressing a gap in the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages to the public broadcaster, as these findings suggest that digital media

technologies improve the quantity and calibre of content interaction and are vital to the preservation and advancement of indigenous African languages in a digital environment that is changing quickly (García-Peñalvo and Conde, 2020). García-Peñalvo et al., (2020) state that this technological adaptability makes it feasible to reach and interact with a broader audience than conventional media independently, enabling creative methods for language instruction and cultural expression. Indigenous languages may be made more visible and accessible by utilising digital tools to include them in various content formats, including audio files, participatory storytelling, and virtual reality adventures.

Furthermore, the responses from participants suggest that digital media technologies also make it possible for users to interact and customise their material. This aligns with Bosch (2014)'s observation that audiences can actively engage in and participate in language-related programming through features including user-generated material, online forums, and social media interactions. In addition, Breuer et al. (2015) assert that this degree of interaction gives learners and speakers of indigenous languages the ability to express their opinions and experiences. Digital media supports the usage and advancement of indigenous languages in daily situations by creating a participative atmosphere that strengthens the feeling of community surrounding these languages.

During the participant observation process, the researcher noted that SABC used X campaigns to engage its audiences with interactive content and X promotions featuring live tweets, Q & A sessions with cast members during program debuts, and behind-the-scenes looks at their programs and productions have generated significant engagement and curiosity from the public. Findings indicate that X participation is widespread across age and demographic groups, making it a useful and inclusive platform for audience engagement with a wide range of demographics. SABC has demonstrated its dedication to audience engagement and creating a more participatory viewing experience through the effective use of X campaigns. This has opened up prospects for the use of other technical platforms for interaction, such as Facebook live events.

5.2.5 Success of Language Standards in Expert, Audience Comments and Multilingual Translations and Subtitles for Inclusivity

Expert input guarantees the intended audience's accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and relevance to language standards.

The majority of participants suggest professional criticism, audience comments, multilingual interpretations, and subtitles may all greatly contribute to the accomplishment of language standards in digital media. The responses that follow were indicated:

Basically, I can attest that strict linguistic guidelines have been successfully applied in expert assessments and audience comments to promote factual and courteous discourse; multilingual translations and subtitles are essential for increasing accessibility and advancing diversity. Posting on digital media platforms helps in engaging with the public as a key to understanding what the public needs. Communicating through digital platforms requires the use of catchy captions. Promoting and broadcasting go hand in hand. This would suggest altering indigenous ways of accessing content using modern technologies such as digital media- (Participant #2).

When used in accordance with accepted language standards, multilingual translations and subtitles greatly enhance the success of material by making it interesting and approachable for a larger audience, supporting diversity and inclusiveness. SABC DTT is doing a very good job as compared to other broadcasters as it covers all official languages in the content digitally. Questions of the day are posted on different platforms and later read audience's views or comments on air so that their voices can be heard. It covers a huge variety of what's happening in local communities. The challenges they face and the government is responding to them- (Participant #3).

SABC recognises the importance of connecting its audiences. Therefore, it goes to an extent through digital media, online campaigns and live streaming. It has done a sterling job by giving programs broadcasting in indigenous African communities unlimited hours and various digital media platforms for various programs. The success of maintaining strict linguistic guidelines is demonstrated by the audience's and experts' remarks, which are clear and effective. This is further improved by using subtitles and multilingual translations to guarantee inclusiveness among various linguistic groups- (Participant #5).

From the above responses from participants, it can be noted that to promote inclusion and extend the audience of indigenous languages, linguistic translations, and subtitles are vital. Digital media platforms may ensure information and entertainment are accessible to those who speak various languages or dialects by offering material in several languages this supports the notion of the Public Service Model, which notes that by encouraging a more inclusive social experience, this strategy makes it possible for a larger audience to interact with and recognise the diversity of indigenous languages (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2015). These data further suggest that subtitles and translations also make learning and comprehension easier for those who might not speak the indigenous languages represented in the video fluently. A novel aspect uncovered in this research is the effectiveness and influence of linguistic standards in digital media are enhanced by incorporating professional advice, user feedback, and multilingual assistance, which was previously underexplored. From the above responses from participants, it can be noted that SABC DTT may guarantee that their material not only conforms to strict linguistic quality requirements but also preserves linguistics traditions by implementing this professional advice.

Vilanilam (2005) notes that in improving content relevancy and linguistic standards, audience feedback is also quite important. It is possible to determine places where language use might require to be adjusted or where further support is needed by interacting with audiences and considering their input. It can be concluded that by addressing any concerns regarding language usefulness and accessibility directly, content makers may make sure that their programming is suitable for a wide range of audiences. In addition, user input might indicate preferences for particular language characteristics or content formats, which can inform prospective programming choices and promote a more diverse media landscape. This emphasises the tenant of impartiality which notes that public employees are supposed to perform their tasks impartially (Peters, 2015).

5.2.6 Community Outreach and Content Promotion

Community involvement and content marketing are essential to successfully promote indigenous languages using digital media platforms like SABC DTT official platforms.

From the majority of the participant's experiences with the phenomenon under this study, it emerged that media companies might establish trust, comprehend particular language requirements, and customise material to better represent cultural values and interests by interacting directly with local populations. Below are some of the responses that emerged:

Good community outreach tactics are crucial for promoting content because they create communities that are more supportive and engaged with the content by fostering a deeper relationship with the audience and establishing trust- (Participant #2).

Community outreach plays a significant role in bolstering content marketing efforts as it facilitates more effective targeting of target audiences through local networks and personalised interaction, resulting in increased exposure and impact- (Participant #10).

Comprehensive community outreach strategies that involve face-to-face connection with the audience are essential to the success of content promotion because they foster active involvement and word-of-mouth recommendations that increase the material's reach and impact- (Participant #7).

These responses point to the idea that content marketing tactics might benefit from using outreach to communities' comments and insights to create more powerful and customised messaging. Producing more interesting and pertinent advertising materials is made possible by having an in-depth knowledge of community interests and concerns. This supports Bird et al. (2019)'s view that digital media platforms may establish a closer relationship with their audience and promote

ongoing participation and backing in culturally appropriate programming by coordinating marketing strategies with community priorities and needs. This strategy aids in accomplishing more general cultural and educational objectives pertaining to the promotion and preservation of indigenous languages in addition to sustaining audience attention. Similarly, García-Peñalvo et al. (2020) point out that outreach programs may involve working with indigenous language encourages, cultural institutions, and educational facilities. Language festivals, seminars, and community activities may increase awareness and provide community members with a feeling of ownership, promoting their encouragement and active involvement.

From these findings, one can conclude that the influence and accessibility of programming in indigenous languages are increased by employing efficient content marketing tactics and utilising influencers' relationships, online platforms, targeted advertising, and other digital marketing methods may help draw in more audiences and boost interaction with language-related content, as observed by Hallin and Mancini (2019), who assert that:

The journalism-audience interaction and marketing tactics have always been an interesting issue, digitisation has increased its significance (Hallin and Mancini, 2019, 216).

Promotion campaigns can draw attention to the distinctive qualities of indigenous languages, present success stories, and generate excitement about upcoming events or projects (McQuail, 2020). This aligns with what the researcher observed and noticed during the participant observation process. Furthermore, cross-promoting material on many digital platforms reaches audiences who may not have otherwise seen it, expanding the audience and improving the overall efficacy of marketing efforts, as perceived by Turin (2021), who suggests that local communities may now actively engage in the production and marketing of material in African languages thanks to digital media platforms.

5.3 Limitations of Digital Media in Promoting Indigenous African Languages on SABC DTT

5.3.1 Confusion and Lack of Professionalism in Digital Communication

The uneven application of linguistic conventions and guidelines across different digital media platforms is one of the main problems.

Responses from a few participants indicated that indigenous African languages cannot be fully promoted on SABC DTT official channels because of misunderstandings and a lack of professionalism in digital communication. Some of them responded as follows:

I can say that the emergence of informal digital communication channels like social media and text messaging has made it more difficult to distinguish between professional and casual language, frequently resulting in miscommunications and a negative perception of professionalism in the workplace- (Participant #1).

The lack of non-verbal clues in digital communication, such as tone, gestures, and facial expressions, can cause misunderstandings and confusion, particularly in cross-cultural or professional contexts where accuracy is essential on comments share either on Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging- (Participant #9).

Digital communication protocol violations, such as the excessive use of emojis, acronyms, and casual tones, can detract from the professionalism of business contacts and cause misunderstandings about the significance and aim of communications- (Participant #18).

From the above responses, one can conclude that informal digital communication and lack of professionalism frequently worsen these concerns. In light of this notion, the tenant of the Public Service Model notes that public employees ought to demonstrate high professionalism and understanding of the subject matter (Peters, 2015). Jacobs (2020) argues that South African news sources offer a different angle to professional news reporting. The responses from participants suggest that the proliferation of informal digital communication platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and text messaging, has blurred the line between professional and informal language. This has led to frequent miscommunication and perceptions of unprofessionalism in workplace interactions. According to Breuer et al. (2015), the convergence of digital media with indigenous African languages, however, also offers special prospects despite these difficulties. During participant observation, the researcher noted that as employees increasingly use these platforms for work-related communications, the casual tone often found in these channels can seep into professional discourse as perceived by SABC (2021) suggesting that professional news production requires a careful balance between harnessing the benefits of this new form of participation and maintaining the credibility and accuracy of the news, leading to uncertainty about the meaning or authenticity of messages that had not been previously explored. These results show that this shift can result in key miscommunications, where a casual tone is mistaken for a lack of professionalism, compromising the intended message (Makholwa, 2018). Moreover, Netshitenzhe (2022), believes that the expectation of immediate responses on these platforms can lead to hastily written replies, increasing the risk of confusion and inaccuracies. The researcher further perceived

that the pressure to respond quickly on official platforms can lead to errors in communication, as employees may not have the time to carefully consider their responses because audiences compete to be on screen.

While Balogun and Kalusopa (2021) found that as digital media is interactive, users may get accustomed to ingesting easily digestible material in bite-sized chunks rather than delving deeper into more complicated topics, which can lead to a lack of critical thinking and analysis, the analysis of this study shows there is a lack of nonverbal cues that include tone of voice and facial expressions for recipients to understand the whole context of a message, particularly in professional or multilingual environments where reliability is critical, suggesting that without this information, nuances in communication, such as irony or urgency, may be misinterpreted, resulting in miscommunication. Furthermore, one could conclude that frequent usage of online communication standard violations, such as emoticons, abbreviations, or excessive informal language, reduces professionalism and may cause the recipient to question the importance of the communication. This destroys the straightforwardness and intent of the message, leading to uncertainty regarding its purpose and significance, as contended by Hinton, (2019) who insists that the digital sphere has had a tremendous influence on how languages are preserved and resurrected, resulting in increasing significance in today's society.

5.3.2 Costs and Economic Constraints

It frequently costs a lot of money to produce and distribute excellent content in these languages.

The successful promotion of indigenous African languages on the SABC's DTT official system is hampered by costs and financial limitations. This has been alluded to by few of respondents who shared the following:

Economic limitations, such high living expenses and stagnant incomes, are major roadblocks to upward mobility, especially for families with low incomes who find it difficult to afford new technology- (Participant #7).

Data costs are rising faster than inflation, which puts a financial burden on individuals and families, particularly in nations where paying for internet services out of pocket is the main method of access. Thus, not every community or audience can afford to buy data to follow SABC's Current Affairs and News shows online. This does affect the promotion of indigenous African languages. Low digital literacy does seem to impact some indigenous language speakers' confidence to express themselves in much clearer terms. This

could also mean that an attempt to express themselves with a limited vocabulary may provoke cyberbullying which could, in turn, make them reluctant to engage- (Participant #2).

Economic issues are increasingly determining access to high-quality education, as chances for pupils from economically disadvantaged homes are limited by public school budget shortages and the inability to achieve basic education requirements- (Participant #10).

The above responses indicate that the high data price and financial constraints severely limit language promotion on SABC DTT. This aligns with the argument by Aiseng (2023), who avers that the high prices of internet bundles could make it more difficult for people to communicate effectively and restrict their access to important career and educational possibilities. Economic constraints, such as stagnating salaries and increased living expenses, present obstacles for families, particularly those with lower incomes, making it harder to purchase the technology needed to access digital platforms. This corroborates Bosch (2014)'s assertion, that the scarcity of digital content accessible in these languages is one of the main issues these languages are facing in the digital era. This lack of access restricts the audience's reach regarding language promotion on SABC DTT, as several households cannot afford to switch to new technology. One could argue that the increasing price of data, which has been rising faster than inflation, raises additional barriers to finance, making it more challenging for users to consistently access digital content, which includes language programming, stifling efforts to increase the diversity of languages on the platform. Graham and Zook (2013), contend that the increasing cost of accessing digital content creates substantial obstacles for users, mainly in marginalised societies.

Furthermore, Habermas (1989) suggests that the Public Sphere theory provides an advantageous framework that is thoughtful and empathetic regarding how digital media platforms facilitate the dissemination of information and allow individuals to participate in critical discourse, opposing this view, this data reveals that economic reasons such as budget cuts in public institutions and failing to provide fundamental requirements aggravate the digital gap. Families grappling with financial restraints prioritise necessary needs, leaving little opportunity for digital services such as internet connection or DTT-capable gadgets. This gap in access generates unequal chances for educational and cultural preservation, as only those with the means can access the entire spectrum of digital content.

The data from participants reveals a previously known aspect that promoting language on platforms such as SABC DTT becomes increasingly challenging as significant segments of the

population are denied access to these services due to economic constraints and rising living costs, as noted by Milenkova and Lendzhova (2021), who note that digital activists in Africa have pushed for inclusive ways to fast digital change as the globe becomes a global digital community while many indigenous, minority, and low-resource languages are excluded from the advantages and prospects of the digital economy, language is one of the many elements contributing to this gap on the continent.

5.3.3 Dialect, Language Inconsistencies, Language Barriers and Translation

Programming designed to encourage the usage and preservation of these languages may be less successful due to these issues.

Language hurdles, dialect and linguistic irregularities, and translation difficulties are important problems that hinder the advancement of indigenous African languages on SABC DTT platforms. This was indicated by the majority of respondents, who noted the following:

Even in situations where dialectal variances or linguistic inconsistencies are prevalent, language obstacles can seriously impede communication, making it challenging for speakers of the same language to comprehend one another. The use of various dialects on SABC's online media platforms is also a challenge and lastly, most of the terms that are used in digital content are not available in indigenous languages. When translating, one will have to describe the term, which makes it difficult for one to understand at times. Therefore, it hinders the development of these languages- (Participant #3).

Dialectical and linguistic discrepancies may make translation difficult and cause meaning and context to be distorted. This is particularly true for technical, legal, and medical translations where accuracy is crucial. Many indigenous African languages lack standardised orthographies and linguistic resources. Accurate translation of cultural allusions, idioms, and subtleties may be challenging- (Participant #1).

Between speakers of the same language, several dialects within it can pose serious obstacles to mutual understanding and frequently call for translation or service for interpreting- (Participant #7).

Localising digital content becomes a challenge as people speak different languages while some languages are spoken in the country are not official. This makes it difficult for people across the country to comprehend the message that is being conveyed. Variations of dialects and languages used in digital media form a misunderstanding and confusion amongst participants. This limits their access to digital media as they will not be able to access various platforms in the digital technologies that offer a wide range of content in the languages they speak. This will likely create a barrier for thousands of audiences- (Participant #2).

The above responses clearly indicate that dialectical variances, language inconsistencies, and obstacles severely impede the promotion of indigenous African languages on SABC DTT. These responses point out that dialectal distinctions can make it difficult for speakers of the same language to comprehend one another. On the same note, Bosch (2014), suggests that the distinctive

dialect is one of the main issues these languages are facing in the digital era. Given the researcher's findings from participant observation, this mismatch poses a dilemma for SABC's internet platforms, as the terminology used in digital content is frequently inaccessible in indigenous languages, and translating these concepts necessitates long explanations, making understanding difficult. Habermas (1989) argues that the public sphere theory could help make sense of the study findings by noting the challenges experienced when using digital media to spread information. This reduces the accessibility with which indigenous languages can be established and integrated into digital content, impeding their widespread promotion in current media formats. In support of this, Cladis (2020) insists that:

The digital era has transformed how people live their lives and relate to one another in the world around them. There is no going back to a time before digital; there is only going forward to a world more and more attuned to technology (Cladis, 2020:358).

This means that there is a bright side to these difficulties, as the digital era has transformed language preservation and relevance.

These findings further stress how linguistic and dialectical variations make proper translation difficult, especially for complex or specialised subjects like legal and medical knowledge concepts. A novel aspect discovered in this research is that many indigenous African languages lack established orthographies and resources, making it difficult to translate digital content. This problem causes misunderstandings because variances in dialect and vocabulary can confuse audiences previously underexplored. As a result, many South Africans have limited access to digital platforms, and they may struggle to connect with information in their indigenous languages due to a lack of constant linguistic tools for digital technologies. However, Tess (2013) argues that much effort is being put into creating digital tools and African languages.

5.3.4 Low Digital Literacy and Communication Skills

These difficulties may make it more difficult to produce and consume information, reducing the impact of initiatives to promote the use and preservation of these languages.

Responses from the few participants indicate that the SABC DTT official platforms present notable obstacles in promoting indigenous African languages due to low levels of technological literacy and communication abilities. The ensuing responses came up:

With my knowledge of the use of digital media on SABC DTT, some communities have low levels of digital literacy, which not only makes it difficult for them to obtain information but also limits their capacity to engage in an increasingly technological society and widens the communication gap. Communication through digital platforms, as well as email and messaging apps, requires digital literacy skills. Low digital literacy can make it difficult for people to communicate successfully on these platforms, hindering their capacity to interact with others and get information- (Participant #1).

Knowledge of technology is becoming just as important as conventional literacy, encompassing the ability to communicate successfully on the internet. People risk losing out on significant social, educational, and professional possibilities if they lack these abilities. Lack of basic user skills affects the quality of clips sent and sometimes audio quality, not to mention the fact that limited characters on digital media platforms are a challenge for indigenous languages- (Participant #3).

Ineffectiveness in professional and educational contexts is frequently caused by poor communication ability in digital environments, which is made worse by low digital literacy- (Participant #7).

The above responses clearly indicate that low digital literacy substantially impedes the promotion of indigenous African languages via SABC DTT. This further reveals that many groups struggle to access and use digital platforms because they lack technological skills, limiting their ability to get essential information and participate in societal communication. In contrast, Akinfemisoye (2014) asserts that the difficulties faced by African languages in the digital era are an issue that draws attention to the potential this convergence presents for language preservation, documentation, and revival. On the same note, Eisenegger and Schafer (2023), argue that:

In the digital age, online media platforms have substituted the potential for Public Sphere situations to become public or to expand the audience in a given situation, which has expanded dramatically and extended temporally. This is partly because online communication and social media have considerably lowered material communication barriers and made disseminating and re-contextualising digital communication situations easier (Eisenegger and Schafer, 2023:65).

This emphasises that Public Sphere is no longer appropriate in the digital age, as digital media platforms have substituted it. A novel aspect uncovered in this research is that low levels of digital literacy limit the ability to engage in an increasingly digital society and widen the communication gap, as observed by Mathur (2012), who believes that challenges need to be solved, including the lack of digital infrastructure, low levels of digital literacy in some areas, and the predominance of the main world languages in digital spaces. This aligns with what the researcher noted during the participant observation process, wherein the divide becomes a significant impediment, particularly when it comes to using digital tools such as email, messaging applications, and online communication platforms. Individuals without basic skills struggle to communicate and interact

effectively, which is critical for advancing and promoting indigenous African languages in digital formats.

Furthermore, these responses reveal that poor levels of digital literacy impact the quality of indigenous language content. As technology becomes more integrated into modern communication, those lacking the essential abilities lose chances for social, educational, and professional interactions. Dolowy-Rybinska (2013) contends that the merging of digital media and indigenous African languages presents unique opportunities despite these obstacles and divergent opinions. These findings indicate that the problem is exacerbated by technological issues with digital media and this technical limitation, along with inadequate user abilities, degrades the quality of audio and video clips, preventing the effective communication of indigenous languages via SABC DTT. Accone (2000) suggests that digital literacy for languages must be accessible and connected to guarantee that everyone has an equal chance to prosper in the current digital world the analysis of this study shows that the incapacity to interact professionally in digital spaces, compounded by inadequate digital literacy, restricts the ability to successfully promote these languages. Akinfemisoye (2014) posits that these difficulties include problems with digital aptitude and mindset in addition to difficulties with actual physical access to digital devices and the internet.

5.3.5 Effects of Load Reduction on Linguistic Diversity

Load reduction, or regulated power outages that occur amid energy shortages, can substantially influence linguistic variety, especially in areas where disadvantaged languages depend on digital and technical methods to be preserved and promoted.

Responses from the majority of participants indicate that some important elements that influence the propagation of indigenous African languages on the SABC DTT platform are load reduction and linguistic variety. The following responses emerged:

The issue of load reduction causes a huge problem as it affects communication and connectivity or internal services Load reduction interferes with having access to digital communication and educational tools, which are crucial for the survival and development of minority languages in a world that is becoming more global- (Participant #18).

The disruption of the electricity supply impedes education initiatives aimed at maintaining languages that are endangered, as many rely on internet platforms and digital materials to reach isolated areas- (Participant #11).

As urban areas encounter frequent blackouts, groups who rely on power for broadcasting in their native languages suffer disproportionately, reducing linguistic diversity in these locations- (Participant #20).

The quotations above highlight that the frequent power interruptions impair educational attempts to preserve endangered languages. Many programs aiming to teach and perpetuate these languages rely on internet-based platforms and digital tools, especially in distant or isolated locations. In addition, these responses further reveal that load reduction has a considerable influence on linguistic variety because it disrupts key communication and connectivity services as it impedes communities' capacity to access digital channels that are critical for the preservation and advancement of minority languages.

Aiseng (2023), posits that regardless of location or linguistic background, users may now contribute to the preservation and rebirth of endangered languages. The findings reveal that these digital tools will become less accessible, and it will become increasingly difficult to use and teach these languages. However, Dutta, Ahmed and Choudhury (2019) contend that language learning applications have increased the accessibility of endangered languages by enabling learners to study them from anywhere in the globe. Similarly, digital archives and online dictionaries have given communities a way to preserve their linguistic legacy (Fuseini, 2021). In contrast to this, the study uncovers a new mechanism by which the disruption of electricity supply interferes with educational programs aimed at conserving languages that are endangered, as many rely on the internet and digital materials to reach isolated areas, which has not been documented in previous research. From the above responses, one could conclude that load reduction in broadcasting capacities exacerbates the issues that these communities face, reducing the presence and usage of minority languages while contributing to a decline in total linguistic variety.

5.3.6 Compromising Language and Vocabulary Limitations

Programming efficiency may be impacted by these problems, making it more difficult to express and preserve these languages accurately.

All the respondents unanimously perceive one of the biggest obstacles to the promotion of indigenous African languages on the SABC DTT official platforms is a restricted vocabulary and compromise in linguistic authenticity. Below are some of the responses that emerged:

The audiences are continuously mixing languages, making it impossible to create graphics for social media comments for the program. It appears that they are not respecting the language they are using, and their vocabulary is sometimes unclear. I've witnessed a deterioration in the usage of good grammar and terminology on numerous shows. It appears that shortcuts are being made, which lowers the quality of the information- (Participant #19).

The wording employed on SABC DTT social media comments from audiences lately seems informal. Audiences should be setting a higher bar, but instead, we get slang and poorly written sentences. I recognise that South Africa is multilingual, but the SABC DTT ending up editing them in the middle of a phrase is annoying. It's not just about combining languages, but also about using a narrow vocabulary that doesn't do honor to both. Languages- (Participant #8).

The linguistic quality of specific episodes has significantly declined. It's challenging to take the topic seriously when the hosts use improper phrases or slang that do not fit the context. As a viewer, I would expect a national broadcaster to have a better vocabulary. The misuse of colloquial language undermines the depth and diversity of our languages- (Participant #20).

It's aggravating that the language quality is variable. Sometimes, the vocabulary appears overly simple, as if the presentations are catered to a small demographic, alienating those of us who want more significant depth. I admire the effort to be more inclusive with different languages, but it frequently results in lower quality. Words are misused, reducing the overall clarity of the presentation- (Participant #1).

The above responses from participants show that compromises in grammar and vocabulary on SABC DTT have resulted in evident concerns with program quality. Netshitenzhe (2022) argues that including comments with grammar may jeopardise the legitimacy and impartiality of the news, given that it may be prejudiced or wrong. However, a novel aspect uncovered in this research is that audiences are constantly mixing languages, making it difficult to create meaningful visuals for program-related social media comments, which were previously underexplored. The opportunity given to audiences who sent comments for questions of the day to be read on air is in line with the mandate of SABC to serve the audiences in their spoken language. This also emphasises the tenet of the Public Service Model, which notes that public employees are supposed to perform their tasks impartially and equally to all citizens (Peters, 2015). Additionally, the impartiality of the news gives a platform for a variety of voices and opinions to be expressed (Jacobs, 2020). This aligns with what I noticed during the participant observation process.

The above responses further reveal that merging languages, confusing vocabulary, and worsening grammar frequently lead to shortcuts that reduce the overall quality of the information delivered and hinder appropriate language preservation. Kant (2012) believes that allowing audiences to engage in their indigenous languages provides fresh prospects for promoting, reviving, and preserving indigenous African languages. However, Mathur (2012) believes that challenges need to be solved. During the participant observation process, the researcher noted this issue was

highlighted by audience comments on social media, which employ casual language and frequently include slang. Despite South Africa's multilingual character, the SABC DTT's requirement to censor comments mid-sentence owing to uneven language use and a limited vocabulary exacerbates the problem. Gibbins and Greenhow (2016) argue that:

Users' vocabulary and grammar may deteriorate as a result of the proliferation of social and digital media. Regular use of social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter might encourage a relaxed attitude toward language, resulting in less adherence to rigid grammatical standards (Gibbins and Greenhow, 2016:72).

According to Jacobs (2020), X's character restriction forces users to exercise critical thinking and intelligence, but it also promotes condensed writing, which may result in a disregard for formal grammar. Similarly, Alsamadani (2018) suggests that:

Frequent exposure to informal language on platforms like Facebook can result in the overuse of internet jargon, which 'may negatively influence students' ability to apply correct grammar and vocabulary in academic contexts (Alsamadani, 2018: 23).

This combination of languages and informal language use does not reflect South Africa's numerous languages. The deterioration in language quality on SABC DTT from audiences is visible in several programs when incorrect vocabulary and slang detract from the gravity of the themes covered (Gibbins and Greenhow, 2016). As a national broadcaster, one may anticipate a greater level of language and grammar, as observed (Alsamadani, 2018).

5. 4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed analysis of the data collected on the role of digital media in promoting indigenous African languages on SABC DTT. The chapter began with the profile of participants, which provided essential context regarding the pseudonym, age, gender and occupation of the participants involved in this study. The second section focused on the promotion of indigenous African languages through digital media on the SABC DTT. The data revealed that digital media, especially through the DTT has been effective in showcasing and revitalising African indigenous. Additionally, the analysis explored how digital media has enhanced audience participation in African language content. The responses from the participants show that interactive features available on digital platforms allow audiences to participate more deeply in

indigenous African language content. An analysis was done on the strengths and limitations of using digital media to promote indigenous African languages. The next chapter (Chapter 5), which is the final chapter, provides a detailed summary of the study findings presented in the Chapter and draws final conclusions based on the study findings. The final chapter also offers recommendations based on the study findings, critically reflects on the limitations of the study and provides directions for future studies.

CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This study examined the role of digital media in promoting indigenous African languages on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) Digital Terrestrial Television. As stated in Chapter One, the aim of the study was to establish how digital media technologies on SABC DTT were being used to promote African languages. Chapter Two reviewed literature related to the study and revealed emergent themes from related studies and research gaps that needed to be filled. It also situated the study within applicable theoretical frameworks to comprehend the research phenomena. Chapter Three discussed the research methodology applied in the study and provided a rationale for these research methodologies. Chapter Four discussed, and analysed research findings obtained through interviews, document analysis and participant observation. This last chapter is structured as follows: First, it provides a summary of the research findings discussed in Chapters Four and Five ensuring that all the research questions have been adequately addressed. Secondly, the chapter draws conclusions from the study findings and critically reflects on these findings and their implications for theory and practice. Thirdly, the chapter gives recommendations based on the study findings. Lastly, the chapter reflects on the limitations of the study and gives directions for future studies.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

Research Question 1 sought to establish how digital media on SABC's DTT is being used to promote indigenous African languages

The findings of this study revealed that SABC used its terrestrial DTT platform and digital media to support indigenous African languages and linguistic diversity with 24/7 News Channel broadcasting News, current affairs, sports, parliamentary proceedings, etc. SABC DTT used all indigenous African languages to communicate with the audience through X, WhatsApp and Facebook. Commenting on the question of the day and disseminating content in indigenous African languages on official digital platforms contributed to the larger objective of providing culturally appropriate programming and supporting language preservation, such as TshiVenda, XiTsonga, and IsiNdebele. The SABC uses digital media to provide a consistent production of

indigenous language programming, seeking to tackle the fundamental challenge of insufficient indigenous language content by making it widely reachable across the country. The findings further revealed that digital media, which offers multiple channels for accessible material in these languages, enhanced the visibility and appreciation of diverse cultures by preserving content on Facebook, X, YouTube and SABC+ applications which also play a role by providing catch-ups of programs in indigenous African languages. It promotes engagement with the community, intergenerational language transmission, and the development of locally relevant programming that appeals to audiences. This has been noted by Johnson and Callahan (2013), who found that interaction improves the viewing experience and encourages creating images around broadcast material. By presenting local international programming that emphasises traditional content including storytelling, music, and educational resources. SABC DTT's programs aid in the fight against language degradation and create an opportunity for audiences to use digital media to address issues affecting them. Interactive official digital media platforms enable indigenous communities to participate actively in content creation and discussions. This includes reacting to questions of the day, debates and issues affecting society. All things considered, including indigenous languages in digital media helps communities accept and promote their linguistic identities while also protecting cultural heritage. This tallies with the literature concerning the study as it shows that digital media convergence with indigenous African languages also promises phenomenal opportunities for the growth of developing technologies in the developing world (Breuer et al., 2015).

The study also revealed that digital media served as a repository for cultural stories, traditions, and knowledge, which can be disseminated on SABC *Ditaba_Dikgang*, *Zwamaramani*, *Leitlho la Sechaba* and other SABC news bulletin by creating a multifaceted approach to language revitalisation through a content that provides a broader reach, allowing speakers of indigenous languages, including marginalised communities, to get content that would conserve their language as a social practice. By watching documentaries, programmes and series which are informative. Bull (2016) notes that the merging of digital media, specifically the indigenous African language, is a unique opportunity to foster the advancement and popularity of the developing world technology. This is deemed appropriate to preserve cultural reference and tradition. Religious ceremonies and customs are part of the indigenous Africans and are culture vital for the protection

of the cultures of societies. Hence, SABC+ application and YouTube allow content creators to improve various types of programming, such as news, entertainment, knowledge dissemination in indigenous languages. In addition, people who enjoy different books come across different demographics, not to mention that these languages are relevant today. Whaley (2006) found that the provision of material tailored to individual languages improves accessibility and promotes the usage of these languages in everyday interactions. Programs centered on cultural tales, customs, and current concerns are popular with audiences and help speakers of these languages feel proud of their identity. SABC ensures that these populations get an opportunity to air their views in as well as cultural representation in consonance with the global media trends where personalised content generates consumer loyalty and forms the basis for language rejuvenalisation. The interacting features of the platform to augment the inclusion of indigenous African languages to the continent make the speakers of these languages feel more belonging. This study has confirmed that through SABC DTT, SABC strongly supports the rights and encourages the promotion and protection of linguistic diversity hence sustaining a positive future for multilingualism in the area (SABC, 2022).

6.2.2 Enhancement of audience participation

Research Objective number 2 **sought to ascertain how digital media technologies are enhancing audience participation on SABC DTT**

Findings from the study revealed that SABC DTT adopted social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Microsoft Teams to enhance audience engagement across the African region in vernacular languages. Most of the participants of this study agreed that the use of this platform fosters audience participation and culture in broadcasting. The study found that SABC incorporated live elements such as chats, polls and question and answer (Q&A) to enable the audiences to participate in discussions during the show. This tallies with the evidence provided by Kramsch (1998) who noted that the relationship between communication and culture may be observed in how we communicate on a daily basis. According to Adam et al. (2022), the democratisation of communication via contemporary media technologies has profoundly transformed the paradigm of content accessibility, production, and dissemination. This technique has the effect of democratising communication in that it transforms audiences from mere consumers to prosumers, that is, producers of content (Kotler, 2000). Most of the participants

admitted that tags like #AfricanLanguageMatters or #MotherTongueDay contributed to the support of multilingualism and triggering the discussion on indigenous languages. With these hashtags SABC expanded its viewership pool and created a buzz around African language programming via Facebook and X. These findings concur with SABC's (2022) assertion that, content producers for indigenous African languages increase the exposure, interact with audiences, and start discussions about particular subjects or themes by utilising hashtags.

Study findings complement Li et al's (2012) assertion that the use of digital platforms such as X, WhatsApp, Facebook, and live broadcasts enables SABC to engage and connect with various cultural groups beyond traditional media (Li et al., 2012). Most participants in the study indicated that live broadcasts in languages such as IsiZulu, Sesotho, and Setswana had increased cultural pride and importance. Specific programming patterns evolved, such as isiZulu stories on rural development and Setswana broadcasts that used English vocabulary for technical themes. These techniques represent the best efforts by the SABC to balance cultural imperatives and modern communication requirements. These findings refer to the assumption by Warschauer (2003), who observes that technical content and multilingual activity afford opportunities for communication and interaction with the audience. Of interest was the fact that most respondents observed that real-time audience feedback from live events helped the SABC to fine tune the content to suit the audience. This adaptive strategy enhanced program popularity because it made programming to reflect multiple language communities through focus on long-term audience participation. With the use of Zoom, WhatsApp, and various internet platforms, what is accessible and reactive has changed, thus offering the audience a far less disruptive experience. This tallies with Smith's (2023) argument that through the help of digital media, interactive exercises improve the ability of media. While the indigenous language helps in enhancing community participation, the translation of language comprehension with technical jargon fails to give the best results.

The study noted that real-time reporting in indigenous languages might have a bigger impact than pre-recorded information, especially when conveying important news. These findings align with McQuail (2020)'s assertion that, with the emergence of technologies and new media, especially the so-called social networking sites like Twitter, they have become useful for presenting news to deliver break news that people with different views and opinions can offer. This means that in SABC DTT, heraldic communication is embraced whereby indigenous language speakers are

incorporated into programs, which means that audience involvement is improved. There is involvement of audiences from diverse cultures. This method uses digital media technology eliminating cultural barriers, advocating for African languages and aligning programming with South African social values. It is effective to include local speakers in conveying the information because it is relevant and from the real world interacting with the various clients served. Moreover, it is worth emphasising that the participants described how this technique provided an additional degree of the impression of identity, ownership and pride to the indigenous speakers. This corroborates observations that this strategy assures that content is original and reliable and resonates intimately with the people it intends to serve (SABC, 2021).

Findings from the study revealed that by allowing audiences to actively engage and access material in their preferred languages, SABC promotes inclusive broadcasting that represents South Africa's cultural and linguistic diversity. This research emphasises the significance of DTT technology in facilitating public involvement, content co-creation, and language preservation through inventive media practices. The study concluded that SABC DTT's use of digital media technologies effectively increased audience participation by encouraging real-time contact, additional material access, tailored suggestions, user-generated content, and multilingual engagement. These initiatives not only enhance the viewing experience but also promote cultural preservation and language variety.

Consequently, the study revealed that through the provision of information which audiences can use to engage with and obtain media in their own languages, the SABC enhances multicultural media that reflects diverse South African cultural identity. The focus of this research is the importance of DTT technology in increasing the participation of the public, content generation, and language sustainability through creativity in media. Through embracing digital media technologies, SABC DTT embarked on constructive efforts to enhance the participation scores through real contact, more extra material access, provision of subsequent material suggestions, user contribution and multilingualism. Media also improves the experience of the screen and amplifies traditions and linguistic differentiation.

6.3 Strengths and limitations of digital media in promoting indigenous African languages on SABC DTT

Research Objective 3 **sought to identify the strengths and limitations of digital media in promoting the use of indigenous African languages on SABC DTT**

Findings from the study revealed that there were several strengths and weaknesses faced by SABC DTT in using digital media to promote indigenous languages. The main strengths identified include the effectiveness of video content in audience engagement, interactive nature of current affairs shows and SABC's commitment to audience connection, growth in viewership through digital media and enhancement of content quality, broadening content engagement range with indigenous languages through digital media technologies, the success of language standards in expert, audience comments and multilingual translations and subtitles for inclusivity, community outreach and content promotion.

The study revealed that video content as a form of media can effectively get the attention of audiences if only it captures the language and culture of the people. It revealed that videos in indigenous languages made the audiences feel more comfortable have a sense of belonging and understood the content better. Study findings corroborate Ngulube's (2016) assertion that video content enables targeted information, active audience engagement, and a feeling of belonging and community among different languages. Such increased engagement can be explained by the fact that the application of video as a media type is more stimulating to the sight and hearing than text. This is because current affairs programs on SABC DTT create an environment that allows audiences to interact with real-time information. This is so due to the interaction feature where audiences feel generally valued and included when a response or comment or even interaction can be posted. This interaction is always done in the indigenous language of the audience, which makes audiences establish a deeper relationship with the platform serving SABC's purpose of portraying a community broadcaster well. This resonates with Accone's (2000) assertion that the relationship between broadcasting and audiences improves cultural advancement across digital media platforms.

The study further revealed that digital media increased the viewership of content because it is easily accessible and almost everywhere. Indigenous language programming supported by good

production values draws bigger audiences because it offers audiences programming that they perceive as appropriate and trendy. This ensures that there is quality indigenous language programming, which is a unique selling proposition, appealing to a wider population. These findings concur with SABC's (2022) assertion for a legal framework for SABC to provide content in indigenous African languages (SABC, 2021). This means using digital technologies in dissemination as a way of expanding the viewership of indigenous language programs. This cross platform/interconnectedness implies that videos can be streamed via TV/streaming/social media, so people can always learn and hear more of these indigenous languages that resonate with younger generations—audiences living the digital life.

Moreover, findings from the study revealed that having a standard writing style in expert comments, audience feedback, and translations is very useful since it creates content that is easily relatable to members of society. This resonates with professionalism as a tenet of Public Service theory (Peters, 2015). The availability of subtitles or introductions in multiple languages helps persons of different tongues to embrace the indigenous language content and programming, not forgetting the audience benefit they get from live programs. Lastly, the study revealed that community outreach programs are employed when seeking local communities and presenting content in their language as well as promoting indigenous language content. Study findings complement SABC's strategy which ensures that the communities are incorporated directly through local content and reporting, which contributes to the promotion of indigenous languages, more viewership and a shift of these languages away from the traditional modes of media such as radio to a broader digital platform (SABC, 2021).

Furthermore, portable content formats enable younger audiences—who are more likely to use digital platforms—to engage with and appreciate their linguistic heritage. Consequently, Whitten-Woodring (2009) argues that younger generations may feel more connected to their linguistic and cultural roots due to giving languages the same and equal treatment on digital media. It was demonstrated that having language specialists discuss content production and be interviewed on SABC DTT guarantees that complex linguistic features are retained, thus preserving these languages' cultural function. Opinions of possible listeners on pronunciation, translation, and vocabulary are also employed in increasing the program's credibility. This echoes Sundani's (2023) assertion that “the multimedia proficiencies (e.g., recording devices and digital video),

storage capacity (e.g., online databases), and communication tools (e.g., the Internet and digital technologies) offered by the new technologies offer new possibilities for the maintenance of indigenous peoples' cultures and languages and their renewal" (Sundani, 2023:47).

Although there were several strengths associated with the use of digital media to promote African languages, the study also revealed several weaknesses with the appropriation of digital media technologies. These include confusion and lack of professionalism in digital communication, costs and economic constraints, dialect, language inconsistencies, language barriers and translation, low digital literacy and communication skills, effects of load reduction on linguistic diversity and compromising language and vocabulary limitations.

The study showed that inadequate professionalism in digital communication may result in no audience reception and believability and unprofessional communication may discourage audiences from using digital platforms to access indigenous language materials because the way the material is presented says something about the language and its speakers. This concurs with Jacobs's (2020) assertion that a lack of professionalism in media hinders participation.

The study also revealed that raising awareness of indigenous African languages on digital media platforms costs a lot of money in terms of hiring specialised indigenous African language experts, content developers, and translators. Furthermore, economic constraints in communities could limit audience access to the appropriate digital devices or reliable Internet connectivity to consume indigenous language content on DTT. These findings corroborate Graham and Zook's (2013) argument that the ever-rising hedge of accessing digital content poses a significant barrier to most consumers, especially from minority worlds.

Another constraint which was revealed by the study was that some of the African languages are characterised by dialectal differences. Failure to set some form of standard for these dialects in digital media meant that some dialects were given preferential treatment to others. Such disparity can be a demoralising factor to industrial dialect workers, while the breakdown of consistent language can lead to conflict omissions if the standard language does not encompass regional variation. This concurs with Netshitenzhe's (2022) argument that the universal inclusion of comments with correct grammar compromises the credibility and neutrality of the news because it can be prejudiced or wrong.

It also emerged from the study that translating indigenous language words to digital media can sometimes be difficult as there is, at times, no equivalence for certain ideas. This can lead to errors, misunderstanding or loss of meaning. Moreover, few translators capable of translating both the indigenous language and the terms used in digital media are available which aggravates this challenge. This concurs with observations made by Makholwa (2018), who argued that a casual tone is mistaken for a lack of professionalism, thereby compromising the intended message.

Some users may be technologically illiterate and need to learn how to use or access certain electronic resources for learning, enjoyment or information. This digital divide is worst amongst the elderly which also hinders the engagement of indigenous language content on SABC DTT. Moreover, the remaining available airtime or resources for language programming, are also often used, least affecting minority languages. In such cases, digital media services cut down the resource or program positions, and indigenous African languages are often cut to avoid compromise of maximal coverage among the languages, leading to limited language diversity on the SABC DTT platform. Olaitan, Issah and Wayi (2021) argue that retraining the majority of the population to become proficient in the use of emerging digital devices is also necessary if South Africa is to meet its target of reaping the benefits of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

The study found that some indigenous African languages may be less equipped with modern-day vocabulary for technical terms. This can reduce the impact of these languages on the digital platforms as there may be no words to express ideas of the current world and since it will frequently be translated from the local language words to English or Afrikaans, revealing the language in certain instances, it can reduce a language's presence on the platform. As Breuer et al. (2015) pointed out, there are several challenges for translation when digital media is translated into African indigenous languages. Nevertheless, combining digital media with African indigenous languages has special prospects despite these difficulties. the convergence of digital media with African indigenous languages, however, also offers special prospects despite these difficulties.

One significant barrier noted is the financial burden connected with digital media, specifically the high cost of data in South Africa. Many prospective audiences, especially in rural and low-income regions, come across economic constraints to access digital information. The majority of participants indicated that lack of access to the Internet hampered indigenous language projects and reduced their visibility and cultural value. The majority of participants indicated that this

restricts the scope of indigenous language projects, lowering their visibility and cultural significance. This resonates with a body of literature that posits that financial challenges such as low and frozen pay levels and the rising cost of living are barriers for families especially those of low income to acquire the hardware required to access digital media (Milenkova and Lendzhova, 2021; United Nations, 2000; Bosch, 2014). This supports Bosch's assertion that the shortage of digital content that is available in these languages is one of the challenges these languages are grappling with in the newly born world of digitisation. Another issue was the linguistically diverse nature of African languages, which comprises several dialects and regional dialects (Breuer et al., 2015).

The study revealed that adequate internet availability, both within and across communities, continues to be an unfulfilled aim. It also emphasised the impossibility of adapting communication methods to local circumstances and cultural languages, and it also noted the difficulty of standardising digital languages without excluding speakers of different dialects. This has been indicated by some participants who pointed out that daily, there were translation mistakes from dialects and cultural misinterpretations which make the validity of materials offered in indigenous languages questionable. Bull (2016) notes that while this task may be complicated by the challenge of digital media and indigenous African languages, it is not altogether without special potentialities. Responses from most participants demonstrate that low digital literacy among specific demographic groups reduces the efficiency of indigenous language promotion. The audiences lack the ability to navigate and obtain material on the DTT network. The absence of other interpersonal communication skills hinders the attempt to reach out to different audiences and hampers the openness of digital forums. Beermann and Spreer (2018) rightly argue that the community should be equipped to use new technologies to conserve knowledge through implementing and supporting the enhanced initiatives towards technological conviviality and the formation of skills.

Load shedding also reduced other communities' access or interaction with content because of the bad networks and lack of electricity. To rationalise the operations of SABC, indigenous language material is sometimes deemphasised and reduced in representation throughout the DTT platform. This tendency weakens the chances of survival of minor languages in the digital age as an audience

is limited due to bad network connection. García-Peñalvo et al. (2020) argue that only expenditures capable of sustaining knowledge preservation programs can be sustainable in the long run.

Digital media also curtails how language can be deployed because of constraints in space and time that come with captions and brief streaming services. This threatens indigenous languages that often have circuitous syntax and are literally packed with idiomatic expressions. Therefore, fewer terms and thus, paralinguistic phenomena are used by people, and these languages are less complicated. The use of digital media in indigenous African languages.

Making and posting audio files, movies, dictionaries, and other grammatical resources safeguards language resources for future use by generations to come (Barton and Hamilton, 2000). Nonetheless according to Mathur (2012), some problems must be solved: the problem of infrastructure, most of the populations have very low levels of digital literacy, and predominance of the main world the digital space.

6.4 Conclusions

The present study revealed that the use of digital media on SABC DTT to promote indigenous African languages has been transformative in that it lays the foundation for the preservation and revival of these languages.

Tess (2013) notes that a massive push is being made in an effort to develop new, digital tools for African languages. These platforms alleviate what has remained a pervasive problem of marginalisation of indigenous languages in public broadcasting that has remained dominated by English. Austin (2019) argues that the adoption of English and other foreign languages makes cross-border relations and the sharing of ideas easier. By using digital media technologies, material can be developed and disseminated in African languages, thereby achieving a broad coverage for the consumer in South Africa.

One of the greatest strengths of digital media is the ability to do away with timed scheduled airtime and limited time slots, which have often relegated indigenous languages to dominant media platforms. Since DTT operates on 24-hour programming, indigenous language content stands a better chance of getting dedicated parts, through which viewers can get storytelling, education, entertainment, and news in their native languages. Digital storytelling and language learning

application during interphase for promoting or regeneration of language diversification is also crucial (Mare, 2014). This promotes linguistic variety and allows people to interact with information in their original language, increasing their feelings of identification, pride, and cultural belonging.

However, the study revealed several limitations in using digital media to promote indigenous African languages. One of these was the use of different dialects among different audiences and the high cost of broadband, which limited access to African language broadcasts. This means that despite the rising interest in audience involvement in the digital arena, the lack of competency in the use of digital technologies among language users continues to present a challenge. However, a lot of optimism is offered by the development of digital platforms of various kinds. The media institutions, jointly with educational entities and other community groups must support the importance of indigenous languages in the media. It may also be argued that digital literacy programs and content collaborations will alleviate or gradually establish different languages used in broadcasting as normalcy in operating cultures in South Africa.

Considering that digital media incorporation entails users in the production of content, indigenous language speakers can be part and parcel of content production and contribution of their narratives. Interaction with DTT platforms increases the digitisation of media and can potentially foster a support system for preserving indigenous languages. They afford a method of allowing content to be produced in a manner that involves everyone allowing the media produced to represent the population's variety of language.

This study offers crucial insights into how digital media, particularly SABC's DTT platform, might advance indigenous African language in South Africa. It has mapped steps and non-preferential policies for the development of these languages in the broadcasting sector and other media. The study argues that media companies need to move beyond the policy of appeasement as far as the use of indigenous African languages is concerned. Due to DTT's 24-hours airtime, local language content is in better standing of getting dedicated portions or at least a shot at the kind of storytelling, education, entertainment and news reporting in indigenous languages.

6.5 Recommendations

Based on the study findings the study makes the following recommendations:

- This research indicated a lack of relevant and easily accessible indigenous language content in SABC DTT which limits the broadcaster from fully addressing its audience base when appealing to more speakers of diverse languages. To address this gap, SABC DTT should strive to generate and acquire more indigenous language programs that are more appealing to the youths and people of other age groups and with other interests.
- The study also found that some journalists do not possess the preferred language skills to enable them to access comments in dialects for basic terms which compromises content quality, professionalism and audience engagement. To address this challenge, journalists should use indigenous languages to improve storytelling and promote native media culture, promoting indigenous customs.
- Among the challenges that emerged from this study, about the use of digital media to promote indigenous African languages was the high cost of mobile data which leads to minimal internet usage and was a barrier to promoting indigenous African languages through SABC DTT. To mitigate this challenge, the government should implement policies that ensure the Internet is made available to the majority of South Africans who speak these languages. Such policies could involve liberalising the mobile market sector, making the electromagnetic spectrum more available to players in the mobile market industry and or subsidising mobile data so that more people access the internet. In addition, the government could offer incentives to mobile companies to lower the cost of data, thereby increasing broadcasting coverage to include communities where these indigenous African languages are spoken.

6.6 Study Limitations

The study had some limitations. One of the study's limitations was that it was only conducted at the SABC DTT, which is a public service broadcaster, and hence could not compare the findings with other South African broadcasters that are most likely to have different strategies that best suit their audiences. Future studies could provide a more detailed analysis of how digital media are used by public service broadcasters as opposed to instead of commercial broadcasters or community broadcasters to popularise indigenous African languages in South Africa. Using

multiple broadcasters and various languages in broadcasting would help in conducting a cross-sectional survey of the participants' perceptions across different media platforms. The information collected would be valuable in making improvements in these key areas. This could help in getting emerging trends and preferences that are not fixed to a particular broadcaster, leading to enhanced generalisability of the study.

- Moreover, the qualitative methodology used in this study could not fully represent the range of audience preferences and experiences. Future studies should integrate both qualitative and quantitative methodologies that would provide a more inclusive understanding of audience perceptions. Quantitative surveys could be used to have a more objective view of audience engagements with African languages on digital media platforms, while qualitative interviews could examine deeper into individual experiences and opinions.
- Finally, of using a small sample of participants in the study made it difficult to generalise results, hence a limitation of the study. Future studies could adopt larger samples that encompass a diversified populace to enhance the richness of the given phenomenon under analysis. This can be accomplished through stratified sampling techniques to ensure representation across numerous age groups and geographic locations.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter presented a summary of the study findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the study. This summary was premised on the three research objectives discussed in Chapter 1. The summary demonstrates that all three research objectives were adequately addressed, and areas for further investigation were identified. The chapter also offered general conclusions relating the research objectives stated in Chapter 1 to the analysis of results in Chapter 4. Limitations of the study were also pointed out in the chapter as well as what other studies could entail. In addition, the chapter presented recommendations on how to enhance digital media in the promotion of the African language in South Africa based on the findings of the study. Through the identification, analysis and discussion of the study implications, strengths and limitations and recommendations for future research, the chapter has demonstrated its contribution to the existing body of knowledge, particularly about how digital technologies may be utilised to support, foster and reinvent indigenous African languages. In this chapter, overall conclusions and

recommendations have illustrated the study's usefulness to existing scholarship. This study has posited that digital media has useful roles in the promotion and development of African indigenous languages. This study further argued the integration of digital media for the promotion and continued existence of these languages bridges the gap between the public broadcaster and citizens, thereby enhancing a sense of belonging and public citizenship.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Letter of approval to conduct the study



Date: 13/04/2024

To: Ramalahla Sello Keith

Dear, Sello

Re: Permission to conduct the study at SABC

I am writing to formally grant you permission to conduct your research study titled "An investigation into the use of digital media to promote Indigenous African Languages: The case of Digital Terrestrial Television on SABC."

We recognize the importance of this research in enhancing the visibility and promotion of African Indigenous languages through digital media platforms. Your study aligns with SABC's commitment to diversity and inclusivity, and we appreciate your efforts in contributing to this vital area of research.

As part of your study, you are authorized to conduct interviews, collect data, observe programming. We ask that you ensure all activities are conducted in compliance with SABC's policies and guidelines, particularly regarding participant confidentiality and data protection. All data collected should be used only for this specific study purposes and cannot be published or shared with third parties without SABC's prior consent.

Thank you for your dedication to this important work. We look forward to seeing the positive impact of your research on the promotion of Indigenous languages.

Sincerely,

Mlungisi Shivamba
Head: TV News Output

South African Broadcasting Corporation SOC Limited: Registration Number: 2003/023915/00
Non-Executive Directors: Mr K M Ramakumba (Chairperson); Mr N A Bafy (Deputy Chairperson); Dr B K C Horne; Ms P Kadi; Ms P P Magopent; Mr D M Maimela; Ms A C Makhanya; Mr D K Mkhube; Ms M Mosekame; Ms R M S Moseung; Adv T S Thipanyane; Mr M Tseu
Executive Directors: Ms N L Chabell (Group Chief Executive Officer); Mr I C Platjea (Chief Operations Officer); Ms Y van Dijk (Chief Financial Officer); Company Secretary: Adv T Moshalega

Appendix Two: Budget

Item description	Quantity	Unit	Unit Cost (R)	Total cost (R)
Research Assistance				
I will conduct this research by myself and save R18 000.00 (R300 per day for 60 days)	60	Day	300	18 000.00
Language editing for proposal @R55/page x28	28	Page	55	1 540.00
Language editing final document @ R55/page x 150	150	Page	55	8 250.00
Subtotal				R 27790.00
Consumables				
Pens x20@ R28.00	20	Number	27.00	540.00
Memory stick	2	Number	700	1400.00
Modem	1	Number	2000	2000.00
Sony ICD-UX570 Voice recorder to record interviews	1	Number	2080	2080.00
Batteries @R55 per pack by 6packs	6	Number	55	330 .00
Data 100GB @R450/Month x16	19	GB	450	8500.00
Spiral binding (R150per copy x2)	2	Number	150	300 .00
External hard drive for data storage	1	Number	1500	1500.00
Subtotal				R 16 650.00
Traveling expenses				
Data collection: From Cosmo City to Johannesburg, Auckland Park (x20 trips) (20 x24.4Km =488Km x2 (single + return)	976	Km	3.85	3 757.6
Catering Catering of securities and researcher for 20 days (90 x 3 people x20 days =)	20	Days	90	1800.00
Subtotal				5 557.6
Grand total				R 49 997.6

Appendix Three: Interview guide

The study examines the role of digital media in promoting African indigenous languages on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

Declaration and inform of consent

All participants should take note of the aim and ethics of the study. These steps will encourage them to strive to be useful and assisting the researcher to collect data in an ethical manner. Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population.

Demographic data of participants

1	Age				
2	Indicate Category (<i>Tick relevant box</i>)	M		F	
	Gender				
3	Indicate Category (<i>Tick relevant box</i>) (<i>S = Staff, A = Audience</i>)	S		A	
	Position/Role				
4	Pseudonyms names of participant				

Semi-structured interview questions

The research questions guiding the interview are as follows;

- i. Could you please share with me your experience of using digital media technologies to promote African languages on SABC DTT?
- ii. Why was the DTT introduced?
- iii. How are digital technologies on SABC DTT being used to promote Africa languages?
- iv. How are digital technologies on SABC DTT being used to promote African languages?
- v. In your view, why is it important to promote African languages through broadcasting?
- vi. So far, what has been your experience of using digital technologies on SABC DTT to promote African languages?
- vii. How are digital media technologies on SABC DTT enhancing audience participation?
- viii. Why is it important to promote African languages using digital media technologies on broadcast media such as SABC DTT?
- ix. Could you please share with me some of the successes of using digital technologies on SABC DTT?

- x. What would you say have been the main challenges faced in using digital media technologies to promote indigenous African languages on SABC DTT?
- xi. Is there anything else that would can share with me about the use of digital media technologies to promote African languages on SABC? Please elaborate.

Appendix Four: Ethical Clearance Certificate

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr SK Ramalahla

STUDENT NO:
17003309

PROJECT TITLE: **An investigation into the role of digital media to promote African indigenous languages: A case of Digital Terrestrial Television.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: **FHSSE/24/EMS/12/0507**

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Mr SK Ramalahla	UNIVEN, English, Media Studies, and Linguistics	Supervisor
Prof TJ Chari	UNIVEN, English, Media Studies, and Linguistics	Co-Supervisors

Type: **Masters Research**

Risk: **Straightforward research without ethical problems (Category 1)**

Approval Period: **July 2024 – July 2025**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A it necessary

ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: **June 2024**

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: **Prof M. Mwaile-Manjoro**

Signature: 



PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHOYANDOU 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 852 8504/8313 FAX (015) 852 8500
"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University".

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
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Signature: 



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ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: June 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof M. Mwaale-Manjoro

Signature: Mwaale



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Risk: Straightforward research without ethical problems (Category 1)

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ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: June 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof M. Mwaale-Manjoro

Signature.....



Appendix Five: Language Editing Certificate

mawokomayi@gmail.com
0725948848

Date: 20/11/2024

RE: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that I edited and proofread a dissertation titled:

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF DIGITAL MEDIA TO PROMOTE
INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF DIGITAL TERRESTRIAL
TELEVISION ON SABC**

BY

Ramalahla Sello Keith

17003309

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any queries.

Yours sincerely,



Betina Moffat
Associate Member
Membership number: MOP002
Membership year: March 2024 to February 2025
(+27) 072 694 8848
mawokomayi@gmail.com
betinamoffat@gmail.com
www.editors.org.za

*Ph.D, Communication, Master of Social Science, Communication, (University of Fort Hare)
B.A. Honours, Literature & Media Studies (University of Venda), B.A. Media Studies (University of Venda).*

Appendix Six: Proof of registration

Page: 1



University of Venda
Creating Future Leaders

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

PROOF OF REGISTRATION: ACADEMIC YEAR 2024

This document is issued without alterations

Student Name	MR SK RAMALAHLA		MAIN CAMPUS	
Student Number	17003309			

Qualification Code and Name	Study Level	Faculty	Offering Type	Cost
HSMCMS MASTER OF ARTS (COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA)	2ND YEAR	HUMANITIES, SOCIAL SCIENCES AN	MASTERS (SUCCESSIVE) FULL TIME	22490.00

Qual #	Subject Code	Subject Description	Registration Date	Cancellation Date	Stats Credit	Primary Enrollment	Cost
1	MSC6300	RESEARCH MEDIA STUDIES COMMUNICATION	13-MAR-2024		0.500	Y	19000.00
TOTAL					0.500		19000.00

Other Costs

Registration Fee	3490.00
SRC Levy	0.00
Residence Fee	0.00

NB. Costs reflected in this document applies to the current academic year registration only and do not constitute a statement account



Registrar

Print Date : 15 March 2024

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

P/BAG X5050 THOHoyANDOU 0950

15 MAR 2024

DEPUTY REGISTRAR
ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

University Road, Thohoyandou, Limpopo, Private Bag x5050, Thohoyandou, 0950, Limpopo, South Africa

Tel: +27 15 962 8000, Fax: +27 962 4759, Email: info@univen.ac.za Web: www.univen.ac.za