

**Audience reception study of isiZulu language newspaper '*Isolezwe*'; to explore what factors attract the audience to the newspaper**

by

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## DECLARATION

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## ABSTRACT

In South Africa, the usage and positioning of English as the dominant language has led to the marginalisation of African languages. The dominance of the English language in South Africa is rooted in the historical injustices of apartheid and colonialism. In modern society, education, mass media, globalisation and expansion of information communication technology exacerbate the use of English at the expense of African languages.

However, the popularity of African language publications such as *Isolezwe* triggered my curiosity to explore the reasons behind the attraction of readers to this publication. Against this background, this study examined the audience reception of isiZulu language newspaper *Isolezwe* by exploring the factors that attract readers to this newspaper. This study utilised a mixed methods design and focus group interviews and content analysis are selected as research methods. The focus group interviews aimed at discovering what readers like and dislike about the *Isolezwe* newspaper, and content analysis examined the news characteristics of the *Isolezwe* newspaper.

The results of the study reveal that readers of this newspaper are attracted by its cultural proximity, as it relays news in isiZulu language. Another factor appealing to readers about *Isolezwe* newspaper is that of geographic proximity, as it covers stories on the KwaZulu Natal region. Furthermore, readers like the type of news covered in the *Isolezwe* newspaper, that is, stories on social issues happening in their communities. Readers also favour *Isolezwe* newspaper because it contains stories about entertainment culture, music, television radio, and books.. Close to entertainment, readers of the newspaper like sports stories covered in the newspaper.

The study recommends that the *Isolezwe* newspaper must expand its coverage of current political stories and the coverage of international news. Excessive advertising creates is not liked by most readers. Therefore, the *Isolezwe* newspaper should determine the appropriate amount of advertising in the newspaper.

African language media; Media functions in Africa; Decoloniality; Afrocentricity; Post-coloniality; African development communication.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	African National Congress
CDMT	(Chuka & M'Bayo) CHUMBA Development Media Theory
ICT	Information communication technology
ICT4D	Information communication for development
IFP	Inkatha Freedom Party
LSM	Lifestyle measure
PanSALB	Pan South African Language Board
MDDA	Media Diversity Development Agency
CRL Commission	Cultural Religious Linguistic Commission.
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UDM	United Democratic Movement
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

In modern society, the expansion of information communication technologies and globalisation has led to the promotion of English as the predominant international language. This trend has negative implications, especially on the third world non-Western societies, with diverse cultures and several languages like those in Africa and Asia. According to Maluleka (2004:1), the processes of globalisation and internationalisation of the English language has resulted in the extinction of approximately twenty languages per year. African languages are threatened by this phenomenon (Moller 2014:7; Maluleka 2004:1).

In as much as the media has played a role in propagating the use of the English language, it can play the same role in preserving and promoting African languages (Maluleka 2004:12). The print media can be instrumental in the promotion of African languages (Maluleka 2004:12). In South Africa, 90% of print media is in English, the first language of approximately 10% of the country's population (KwaaPrah 2006; OMD Media report 2016; Statistics South Africa: Census in brief 2011). Against this background, this study sought to contribute to the existing knowledge on South African native language media, focusing on factors that attract readers to the isiZulu language newspaper, *Isolezwe*.

In South Africa, the dominating language group is isiZulu (Statistics South Africa, 2017). The amaZulu ethnic group is found all over South Africa but mainly concentrated in KwaZulu-Natal (Mgwebi, 2011:67). IsiZulu is the most prominent language group that constitutes about 22,7% of the total population made of eight other language groups (OMD Media Facts Report, 2016:50). IsiZulu is the most spoken African language in urban townships and gaining momentum as the most spoken language after English in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017).

This chapter outlines the research problem, the context and the background in which this research is based. Research elements such as variables, concepts and research questions are also discussed in this chapter. Furthermore, the objectives of the research are included in this chapter, and a brief overview of the theoretical framework used in this study is presented. This chapter also introduces the research design and methods used in this research study.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

This research is a cross-sectional mixed methodology study that utilises focus group interviews and content analysis to explore factors that attract the audience to isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. The study aims to discover what appeals to readers in *Isolezwe* newspaper by questioning readers from the isiZulu community, Nobuhle Hostel in Alexandra township, about their attitudes and opinions regarding the *Isolezwe* newspaper. Content analysis is used to describe and account for certain themes that appeal to readers in the newspaper, as raised in the focus group interviews.

## **1.3 Objectives**

This audience perception research study carries both exploratory and descriptive objectives. Du Plooy (2009:50) states that exploratory objectives explore an unknown area or a research area that little is known to obtain new insights and identify key concepts. This research aims to discover new knowledge or insight into a topic that is less researched. This study explores the audience reception of isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*.

The descriptive objective of a study is to provide an accurate description of the characteristics of a phenomenon and asks the 'what is' question (Du Plooy 2009:51). The objective of this research is to describe the factors that attract readers to the isiZulu newspapers *Isolezwe*. As mentioned earlier, the main qualitative objective of this study is to explore the audience reception of the isiZulu newspapers *Isolezwe*. Another objective of this study is to describe what appeals to readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper.

## **1.4 Research Elements: Hypothesis, Variables, and Research Questions**

The tradition of every research study is to define the elements essential to conducting meaningful and precise research (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:43). Du Plooy (2009:69) writes that the two important elements in scientific research necessary in formulating research questions are concepts and variables. This section deals with research elements, which aid the researcher to move from a general idea to a more specific, well-defined research question. This section discusses the interrelated elements of research, conceptualisation, operationalisation, and defining variables to effectively formulate the research questions. In view of the research

statement, which is to explore audience reception of the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*, attention is paid to the following research elements:

#### **1.4.1 Concepts, constructs, and variables**

To elaborate the main ideas of this study and to describe the topic of the study in detail, concepts, constructs and variables are outlined in this section. A concept, as explained by Wimmer and Dominick (2011:43) and Du Plooy (2009:68), refers to a term that represents abstract ideas by summarising specific and related observations. Concepts combine particular characteristics of objects or people into categories (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:43). A collection of concepts grouped together is known as a construct. A construct refers to a combination of concepts used to describe a particular phenomenon (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:43; Du Plooy 2009:69). The construct is defined according to the context of the research in which it is utilised (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:43).

In the context of this research on audience reception, the concept that is central to this investigation is the audience reception of isiZulu newspaper, *Isolezwe*. As broad as this topic sounds, this audience reception study examined the news content appearing in the newspaper as the main attraction of readership. It follows that the constructs for this study referred to the various content and story types that appear in the *Isolezwe* newspaper, as factors which appeal to the readers.

Along with forming concepts and constructs is the process of conceptualisation. Conceptualisation is the process of defining the specific meaning of terms in the context of the research study (Babbie 2011:106). In this study, the audience reception is used to denote the relationship between the audience and the *Isolezwe* newspaper. The exploration of factors which attract readers, describes relationship between *Isolezwe* and its readers based on the content factors of the newspaper, which are seen as appealing to the readers.

#### **1.4.2 Variables and attributes**

As mentioned earlier, this research study examines the factors that attract an audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper. It is necessary to clearly define what is meant by factors or what kind of factors are examined in the context of this research. Variables are the counterpart of a construct which refers to an organism of the environment (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:44; Du Plooy 2009:73). Babbie (2011:120) further states that variables are logical sets of attributes. Variables refer to the phenomenon or events under study. On the other hand, an attribute is a quality or characteristic of

a variable (Babbie 2011:120). It is this definition of attributes of variables that enabled the researcher to link theory with reality.

Variables are distinguished in terms of the relationship between them (Wimmer and Dominick 2011:44). Variables can be classified into dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is known to be an effect or response to an independent variable(s) that serves as a cause or the stimuli of the dependent variable (Du Plooy 2009:75). Furthermore, variables can be typified into two forms, namely, discrete and continuous variables. The discrete variable is not divided into subparts, whilst continuous variables assume many values and are divided into sub-parts (Wimmer and Dominick 2011:44; Du Plooy 2009:75). In the context of this study, the dependent variable is the content isiZulu newspaper, and the independent variable is the audience of isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. Furthermore, the independent variable of this study can be divided into sub-parts of the identified content factors.

In a research study, it is critical to provide operational definitions for both the dependent and independent variables (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:47). Operationalisation is the clarification of the range of variation between concepts that constitute variables (Babbie 2011:118). Operationalisation is the researchers' expression of abstract concepts in concrete terms (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:47)

In the context of this study, the concepts and constructs to be analysed have been identified as the newspaper content that appears in *Isolezwe*. Operationalisation of the concepts and variables for this study subscribes to the definition of news explained by Nel (2001:63) that "news is a representation of what a news organisation has recently learned about matters of some significance or interest to the specific community served by the organisation".

Furthermore, Nel (2001:61) indicates that news coverage can focus on four themes politics/government; crime/police/legal; sport and business/economics/finances.

In addition, the variables in the study are aligned with the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework is constructed on Africa mass communication theory, the uses and gratifications theory, social responsibility theory, and the critical theory. Given these theories, key concepts and variables are identified, and research questions formed.

### **1.4.3 Research Questions**

The following research questions suffice in this audience reception study:

- What factors attract readers to *Isolezwe* newspaper?

- What type of content is appearing in the *Isolezwe* newspaper?
- What type of content do readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper prefer?
- What factors of *Isolezwe* newspaper readers do not favour?
- How has *Isolezwe* newspaper adapted to the digital communication platforms of the internet and social media?

## 1.5 Context and Background

The South African Constitution recognises and embraces the multicultural nature of South Africa as a country. All eleven South African languages are recognised as official languages of the Republic. The constitution has enacted legislation and statutory organisations to put into effect the promotion of local cultures and African languages (Ngulube 2012:3-4). Section 6 of the South African constitution makes provision for the establishment of Pan South African Language Board (Language and Culture in the South African Constitution 2011:3). Section 185 'provides for the establishment of a commission to promote rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities' (Language and Culture in the South African Constitution 2011:3).

In contemporary South Africa, English is unequivocally positioned as the language of power and is used as the lingua franca. African languages are being marginalised in the context where English, a language of European origin, is promoted (Maluleka 2004:2; Matchet 2002:6). This study focusing on isiZulu language newspaper *Isolezwe* aims to contribute to the discussion on preservation of South African languages through media.

Scholars such as Ngulube (2012), Maluleka (2004), Callinicos (2006), and Machet (2002) are of the opinion that to revive African languages, the media should, in its role of disseminating development messages, also empower and promote marginalised African languages through usage. McDonnell (2012), Phaahla (2011), and Moller (2014) propound the importance of mobilising development using African languages and African indigenous knowledge systems.

IsiZulu newspapers *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* are experiencing growth amidst the decline in readership faced by local and global media markets (Ndlovu 2015). New isiZulu newspapers have been launched such as *Ubukhosi*, *Bayede* and *Msunduzi News*, and existing ones are experiencing growth (Ndlovu 2015:8). Moreover, isiZulu has proven to be an attractive language group to media

corporations because it is the ethnic group with the most significant number of speakers in South Africa (Statistics South Africa 2017).

Some noteworthy studies conducted in African language media includes an article by Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015) that centres around an analysis of the relationship between *Isolezwe* newspaper, and its consumers who are mainly Zulu-speaking black readers. This article closely resembles this study in that it explores audience reception of *Isolezwe* newspaper. Furthermore, in this study on factors that attract readers to *Isolezwe* newspaper, a study by Wasserman (2008) asserts that tabloids newspapers provide sensational and entertainment news stories to attract an audience and provides less information that contributes to full participation in democratic citizenship.

Material to this study on African language newspaper, scholars such as Ndlovu (2015) and Ngulube (2012) maintain that African language media can be used to create awareness and disseminate the development messages. It is against this background on African language media that this study aims to explore audience reception of *Isolezwe* newspaper. Desai (2002) argues that language policy may enable or restrict citizens of a country from being active participants in the economic, political, social and educational affairs.

Language is crucial in society because it facilitates communication, produces meaning, and creates social relationships (Rassool & Edwards 2010:277). In post-apartheid South Africa, language has become a contentious issue because language is behind the largest historical marches (June 16 1976, student protest), highlighting the plight of apartheid in the country. On the 16<sup>th</sup> of June 1976 high school students embarked on protests against the introduction of Afrikaans as medium of instruction in South African schools.

Mass media in a post-colonial society is an important industry involved in creating linguistic goods such as newspapers, TV/radio show, film and music. It is regrettable that in a country with eleven official languages, the print media is predominantly in English and some titles in Afrikaans, but only a few in African languages. The function of mass media in society is to assist in the transmission of cultures for cultural continuity. The media is instrumental in expressing culture while recognising subcultures and disseminate new cultural developments (McQuail 2010:98-99). This study seeks to discover and expose the factors that attract the audience to South African language mass distributed newspaper *Isolezwe*.

## **1.6 Isolezwe Newspaper Profile**

The isiZulu newspaper under study is *Isolezwe*; translated 'eye of the nation' was launched in 2002 and has weekend editions: *Isolezwe NgomQgibelo* and *Isolezwe NgeSonto* (Media Facts 2016; Moller 2014:2 & Madlala 2014:59). Since its launch, *Isolezwe* has experienced increased readership at over 20% annually (Moller 2014:2). The newspaper *Isolezwe*, according to Madlala (2014:67), is the third-highest circulating daily newspaper in South Africa following the *Daily Sun* and *The Times*. Also, the weekend editions of the newspaper *Isolezwe NgomQgibelo* and *Isolezwe NgeSonto*, record the highest growth for weekend newspapers (Media Facts 2016; Moller 2014:2 & Madlala 2014:59).

The newspaper, founded by Independent Newspapers Group, has substantial sales in KwaZulu-Natal province than elsewhere. In Gauteng, only about 10 000 units of the newspaper, are sold per day (Moller 2014:4). As part of its success story, in 2004, this newspaper was launched online which aided its growth to become the largest isiZulu news site. In its expansion, *Isolezwe* has introduced a motoring supplement (Moller 2014:4). In 2015, *Isolezwe lesiXhosa* was launched, and it remains the leading mass distributed isiXhosa newspaper.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is made up of analytical insights from theories of mass communication, the African development communication theory, the normative theory, the critical and social responsibility theory, the audience reception theory, uses and the gratifications theory. This research study, which is situated within the broad area of mass communication, investigates factors that attract an audience to the isiZulu language newspaper *Isolezwe*. Aspects of culture, society and media theories are interrogated to inform this audience reception study.

According to the Africa development perspective, mass media should focus attention on long-term coverage of public or private events that contribute to development (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84). Regional or local media usually cover development news happening in a local or regional context than national development and language used in mass media should be understood by many members of society (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84).

African perspective on mass media maintains that mass media should contribute to national development policies by setting an agenda for the government and the public (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84). There are multiple sources of development messages, and the media which disseminate such messages is likewise varied. African perspective in mass media recognises the



latest forms of communication such as new media as essential because they add to various message types (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84). This theory is relevant because it informs the study on how *Isolezwe* as a South African language newspaper should express African experience and language. This audience reception study will examine if *Isolezwe* newspaper appeal to readers because it carries foundational ideas of what mass media ought to do in Africa.

In exploring factors that attract audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper, uses and gratifications theory informs the study by highlighting the reasons audience consume media. The uses and gratifications theory is the oldest and the central theory of communication that seeks to explain what the audience does with the media and examine the relationship between media and audience from an audience point of view (Musa & Domatob 2011:85 & Lin 1999:200). Uses and gratifications theory investigates the reasons audience consume newspapers (Musa & Domatob 2011:85).

As a normative theory, the social responsibility theory is concerned with the ideal role and responsibility the media is expected to fulfil in society to achieve certain social values for the benefit of individuals and society (McQuail 2010:162, Fourie 2009:179 & Saqib 2014:1). This reinforces the idea that South African language newspaper is obliged to be socially responsible in performing its role in society. Social responsibility theory is relevant to this study because it provides principles to assess if *Isolezwe* newspaper attract audience through socially responsible journalism.

The critical theory belongs to the normative frame of theories because it provides guiding principles on good behaviour in society (Skerjald 2001:32). In their essence, when normative critical theories are applied to mass communication, they do not aim to reform a reality. Rather, they are concerned with setting a standard for evaluating and judging a given media system (Baran & Davis 2012:119). The contribution of this theory is to highlight aspects of *Isolezwe* newspaper that audience do not favour. Another research question is what do audience dislike about *Isolezwe* newspaper. With this question, attention is given to criticism levelled against *Isolezwe* newspaper.

## **1.8 Proposed Method**

This audience reception study that explores what attracts audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper, employs a mixed methods research design. According to Patton (2006:2) this type of research question that ask 'what, how and why is it happening' warrants a mixed methods research. The research methods used in this study are focus group interviews and content analysis.

Focus group, which is part of qualitative fieldwork research, is suitable to research topics, which

looks at respondents' attitudes and behaviour (Babbie 2011:287). Content analysis is defined by Riffe et al. (2005:24) as a method that studies and analyse communication messages in an objective, systematic, and quantitative manner to measure variables.

Focus group interviews aimed at readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper as the target population of this study. For content analysis research, *Isolezwe* newspaper stories are selected as the target population. Within the context of this research study on factors that attract audience to isiZulu language newspaper, focus group interview will probe readers of *Isolezwe* on their preferences and reasons they favour the newspaper. In addition, content analysis is used to examine what type of news content is covered in *Isolezwe* newspaper.

### **1.9 Research Ethical Requirements**

This research study considered the ethical implications to which it is subject. This study used both media content and humans as research subjects. The responsibility of the researcher does not only rest with generating truth and knowledge but also concerned with protecting the rights and ensuring the safety of research participants or subjects (Du Plooy 2011:97; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:64).

With qualitative focus group interviews, this research study dealt with humans as participants. Thus, certain civil rights needed to be protected through the relevant research ethical principles. This research study upholds the principle of 'do no harm nor cause physical and emotional discomfort'. In line with this principle, focus group interviews were conducted at a selected venue in the community in which the participants reside. In this study, participants were not harmed both physically and emotionally.

Before the focus-group interviews, participants were invited to participate and conferred their voluntary consent by agreeing to participate in the research study. Participants were then requested to fill in the participant consent form (attached as ADDENDUM D) in line with the requirements of the University of South Africa research ethics for master students. Participant voluntary consent was obtained. This study protected the privacy of participants. The participants were informed that their personal information would be kept confidential, and anonymity of identity and responses of the participants was guaranteed.

Respondents were also informed that the interview is recorded. Their identity was concealed, and all parties who will be privy to the contents of the recording will be disclosed. Ethical clearance

was obtained from the University of South Africa, where the researcher is enrolled for a master's degree and receiving supervision. With regards to content analysis, the newspaper issues under review are correctly referenced in-text and in the list of sources consulted.

## **1.10 Overview of Chapters**

### **1.10.1 Chapter 1: Introduction to the study**

This chapter presented a brief background and introduction to this research study. The research topic, research questions, and methods are introduced in this chapter. Also, a brief overview of the preliminary literature review is provided.

### **1.10.2 Chapter 2: Theoretical framework**

The theoretical framework for this study is outlined. Theoretical underpinnings in this study includes African development communication, the normative theory, and the uses and gratifications theory.

### **1.10.3 Chapter 3: Literature review**

This chapter presented the literature around African language newspapers. The literature review covered the historical developments of African language newspapers. Also, the background of the newspaper under study is provided. Various aspects of language culture and mass media are dealt with in this chapter.

### **1.10.4 Chapter 4: Research methodology**

This study utilises sequential mixed methodology design. Focus group interviews and content analysis are utilised as research methods.

### **1.10.5 Chapter 5: Analysis and interpretation**

Here in this chapter, results from the two research methods are presented separately. Then results from the two research methods are integrated into one discussion that is interpreted and related to the theoretical framework and the literature review. The discussion integrating the results from the two research methods is presented.

### **1.10.6 Chapter 6: Conclusion**

The findings are briefly analysed to determine whether research objectives have been met. The conclusion of the study is stated while recommendations for future research are made, and limitations to the study highlighted. Here in this chapter, a review of all the chapters is also presented.

## 1.11 Conclusion

This chapter presents an introduction to the study and outlines the content of this research report. This chapter introduces the research report by giving an overview of research problem, research questions, context and background, objectives, theoretical framework and the proposed research methods.

This research is situated focus on exploring the factors that attract audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper. The mixed methods design used focus group interviews and content analysis are used as research methods. This research carries exploratory and descriptive objectives. This research document aims to contribute to the existing knowledge on South African native language media. By pointing to what attracts readers to isiZulu language newspaper *Isolezwe*. The next chapter details theoretical framework that is used within the context of this study.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter introduced the rationale behind this audience reception study of *Isolezwe* newspaper, and the planned methods for its execution. This chapter discusses the mass communication theoretical underpinnings that inform this study. The theoretical framework employed in this study combines theoretical underpinnings from an African perspective on mass communication, the audience reception theory (uses and gratifications) and the normative theories (social responsibility and critical theory).

### **2.2 African Perspective on Mass Communication**

In this section, theory on African mass communication is described. It is important for a research study on African mass communication to explore the epistemology of mass communication from an African theoretical perspective. This study focuses on isiZulu language newspaper, therefore African perspectives on mass communication is the main theory that informs this study because it is oriented towards African knowledge and perspective.

Ndlovu (2015:1) notes that because Third World countries suffer political and economic domination, knowledge production is also characterised by colonial domination. In a study that theorises development through an indigenous African worldview McDonnell (2012) observes that the current approach to African development fail to acknowledge the integral link between culture and development because it is driven by Euro-Western approaches. The South African media system is influenced by the history of colonialism, apartheid, and democratic political developments (Kupe 2007:77).

There is an upsurge in African scholarship on mass communication from an African perspective. This is motivated by the fact that mass communication in Africa should derive its meaning and direction from an African philosophy (Okigbo, 1987:19). This kind of thinking has led to the development of several concepts and related terms such as Afrocentricity, decoloniality, and even de-westernisation. This surge is not only in Africa, but it is witnessed in other developing contexts, especially the peripheral third world continents such as South America and Asia (Thiongo 1993:3).

These emerging or alternative theories on mass communication challenge the dominant ideas of mass communication (Thiongo 1993:3 & Fourie 2009:174).

As indicated previously, the dominating view of the world and mass communication is based on the philosophies and the outlook of the Western world. To achieve a comprehensive overview of mass communication in an African context, this research seeks to utilise this theoretical foundation to ensure the study on *Isolezwe* newspaper audience reception is informed by African scholarship on mass communication.

### **2.2.1 Afrocentricity:**

The main issues of the Afrocentricity theory are explained by Fourie (2009:177) as to developing a philosophy based on African value systems. Afrocentricity looks at knowledge from an African perspective and concerns itself with rediscovering African history and contributions of Africans to the development of Western civilisation (Fourie 2009:177, Chawane 2016:78).

Afrocentricity aims to develop African literature and culture; and strengthen the consciousness of African nationalism. Afrocentricity also seeks to develop African scientific methods and practices; whilst encouraging African education (Fourie 2009:177, Chawane 2016:78). Afrocentricity is central to the study on audience reception of a South African language newspaper because it outlines African cultures, methods and practices which *Isolezwe* newspaper needs to take into account in news reporting.

The vantage point for all Africa mass communication theory is the intellectual resistance against the colonial discourse. It is historical moments such as the slave trade, colonialism, and neo-colonialism that place the West in a world domination position (Thiongo 1993:13). Thiongo (1993:29) maintains that any study of culture should take into cognisance the structures of domination between nations and races as apparent in the history of the world.

However, in the current global context of scholarship, intellectual resistance is emerging against these structures of domination (McDonnell 2012:2). But the downfall of this intellectual resistance is the translation or relaying of the resistance concept to be understood in society. Developments on decolonisation, Africanisation and Afrocentricity should not only be confined to or active in academia, but society needs to be exposed to such ideas.

Wasserman (2011:19) argues that the global media excludes African worldviews and cultural values. Given the media power to organise culture, the West impose domination across the world through media industries such as film, television, news agencies, books, newspapers, magazines, and the internet.

A major historical concept that influences mass communication is imperialism. The concept of imperialism refers to the fixation of influence or power and control of one country over another (University of South Africa 2001:164). The theory of imperialism can be traced to when the former colonies gained independence and colonisers could no longer utilise military intervention to expand their hegemony. Imperialism manifested in various forms which include economic imperialism, communication imperialism, cultural imperialism, media imperialism, military imperialism, and political imperialism (Rukundwa & van Aarde 2007:1172.)

Cultural and media imperialism is more relevant to this study. Wasserman (2011:33) enunciates that cultural imperialism is the cultural domination of weaker states by the more powerful states and is driven by global capitalism. Since media is a cultural product, media imperialism is an engraved property of cultural imperialism (Rukundwa & van Aarde 2007:1172). Media imperialism involves a powerful country exercising power, control, and influence over the media of a less powerful country (University of South Africa 2001:167; Wasserman 2011:33). Through media imperialism, ownership, structure, and content of the media in one country are subject to the control of another more powerful state.

The impact of media imperialism is the marginalisation of local languages and cultures, exacerbated by media as a linguistic industry. Thiongo (1993:30) notes that language is an important carrier of culture for society. As noted by Thiongo it is important for *Isolezwe* newspaper as a South African language newspaper to publish stories that upholds African culture. America's power asset is dominance over major media industries such as film, television, publishing, and the internet (Wasserman 2011:33).

### **2.2.2 Africa development communication**

At the time when African states gained political independence, the media became an important tool to inform the public about development projects (Onwumechili and Ndolo 2013:25). Early scholars on development theory such as Daniel Lerner, Everett Rogers, and Wilbur Schramm held the premonition that the media would play a role in assisting traditional societies in progressing to modernisation. Baran and Davis (2012:149) and Al-Ahmed (1987:20) concur that the development theory is originally targeted at the third world developing countries who need to use media for socio-economic development.

The development theory regards the media as an important instrument to facilitate the promotion of social and economic development; and holds the media accountable for supporting government development efforts (Fourie 2009:198; McQuail 2010:92; Baran & Davis 2012:149). National

media is used in some countries as a tool for facilitating the promotion of government-set national goals and cultural identity (Fourie 2009:198).

De Beer (2011:19) maintains that the persistent view of the normative theory is that media must be committed to economic, social, political, and cultural development. Onwumechili and Ndolo (2013:25) observe that in some African countries, private and public media are expected to support the government's development goals. The audience reception study of *Isolezwe* will explore if coverage of development news in the newspaper, attract readers to the *Isolezwe* newspaper.

To examine development communication from an African perspective, African scholars Ndolo and Onwumechili (2013) propose that it be done within the CHUMBA Development Media Theory (CDMT). The name CHUMBA is derived from the first three letters of the names of the authors who are Chuka and M'Bayo. The CDMT is focused on criticising the development theory proposed by earlier scholars, on the basis that the theory prioritises government-set objectives like the development aspirations of the government; overlooks the role played by culture in development, and social changes are not given attention (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:80). CDMT maintains that media content should focus attention on national culture and language factors.

It is the government-media relationship in newly developed African states which led to the concept of development media theory (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:26). The strength of the CDMT lies in the fact that it acknowledges different sources of development messages and recognises culture as central to the effectiveness of development messages (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:81). The CDMT model represents the existence of multiple sources of development messages. The content of this theory focuses on subjects such as health education, poverty reduction, infrastructure. The CDMT model recognises the various levels at which audience are found community, regional and national. Media ownership falls in three categories which is public; private and joint ownership (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:81). CDMT model attached as ADDENDUM G.

Furthermore, mass media focus attention on long-term coverage of public or private events that contribute to development (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84). The latest forms of communication, such as new media, are important because they add to the variety of message types (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84). An understanding of African development communication theory informs this audience reception study on factors related to theory that could attract readers to the newspaper.

A notion which resonates with the CDMT theory is expressed by Ndlovu (2015:29), who notes that mass media is important because it creates awareness and disseminates messages about



development issues. Ndlovu (2015) reiterates that mass media plays a pivotal role in informing and mobilising people in their quest to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Levine (2014) examines print media response to the South African government's development communication messages. The study relays an interesting history of the evolution of development theory over six decades. Levine (2014) conceptualises development within the context of modernisation and overlooks other concepts of development originating from non-Western perspectives, such as African development communication, post-coloniality, and Afrocentricity.

Promising as it may, the development theory has its own limitations. The development theory ignores external causes of under-development, especially those that were created by imbalances of colonialism and dependency (Fair 1989:132). The development theory describes the Western expectation to achieve certain economic, political, and social goals (Ramos 1989:98; Al-Ahmed 1989:98).

A threat to the African development communication theory, as alluded to by Al-Ahmed (1989:20), is on account that media in developing countries prioritise values of commercialisation, consumerism, and materialism usually inconsistent with the development needs of a country. Levine (2014:13) adds that in the view of the government, the print media in South Africa does not communicate adequate development news. Media ownership is said to jeopardise information dissemination (Levine 2014:13). Drawing from the analytical tenets of the Africa development theory, this study seeks to ascertain whether the *Isolezwe* newspaper subscribes to development communication values as set out in CDMT. Furthermore, this study seeks to ascertain if whether one of the attractive features of the *Isolezwe* newspaper is the coverage of development news.

Africa development communication theories are relevant to the South African context when considering native language media is expected to contribute towards the development of society by distributing development messages to the masses. African development communication theory is useful in this study because it clarifies the connection between African culture and media. Furthermore, this theory assists the study to ascertain if *Isolezwe* newspaper covers development communication news and includes African worldviews and cultural values in its news stories.

### **2.3 Uses and Gratifications Theory**

The uses and gratifications theory is known as the oldest and the main theory of communication that seeks to explain what the audience does with the media and examine the relationship between

media and audience from an audience point of view (Musa & Domatob 2011:85; Lin 1999:200). The theory can be traced back to the early 1940s, represented in the Stanton-Lazersfeld when researchers began investigating the reason audience consume radio and newspapers (Musa & Domatob 2011:85). Well-known forerunners of the uses and gratifications theory are Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch, who pioneered the theory in 1974 (Musa & Domatob 2011:85). The uses and gratifications theory explains what attracts people to certain media and the benefits they derive from consuming certain media (Musa & Domatob 2011:85).

Uses and gratifications theory shifts analysis from the ideological construction of *Isolezwe* newspaper as contained in African development perspectives, to the preferences of audiences who consume the isiZulu newspaper. Uses and gratifications theory is based on three tenets that audience are goal-directed, actively select media; to fulfil their needs (Lin 1999:201). It is critical to note that different needs can be satisfied through the consumption of various media (Branston & Stafford 2010:288). Many writers from various sources agree on the categories of needs that constitute the uses and gratifications theory.

Fourie (2017:392), Branson and Stafford (2010:382) and Lin (1999:201) explain the categories of needs as Cognitive needs include seeking information about the environment, society, and the world. Affective needs refer to the audience 's emotional experience when interacting with the media. The needs are to escape from reality and personal problems, relax, seek aesthetic and enjoyable experiences, pass the time, relieve anger or disappointment, and become sexually aroused (Pitout 2017:393).

Social integrative needs include the desire for social contact. The needs are to understand the circumstances of others and to have empathy with them and feel a sense of belonging to a group. Personal integrative needs include the need to strengthen personal values (like honesty, integrity, and selflessness), identify with others like role models, and improve self-esteem and self-confidence (Pitout 2017:395).

Material to the research question of what attracts the audience to isiZulu newspaper (*Isolezwe*); Musa & Domatob (2011:85) highlights that sources of media gratifications include media content, exposure to media, and social context in which messages are received. Applying the uses and gratifications theory to this study will lead the inquiry to investigate whether *Isolezwe* newspaper attracts readers by appealing to their various needs.

Fourie (2009:392), De Beer (2011:21) and McQuail (2010:424) corroborate three assumptions underlying the uses and gratifications theory. Firstly, the audience's use of the media is defined by the satisfaction of their needs. The audience actively selects which media would fulfil their needs. Lastly, audiences are spoilt for choice because there is a wide variety of media to satisfy different audience needs.

An important development of the uses and gratifications theory is the expectancy-value theory which distinguishes between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained (McQuail 2010:426; Fourie 2009:395; Lin 1999:206). Gratifications sought are pervasive before exposure to the media and its contents. Gratifications sought is the motivation an audience member has for using particular media (Fourie 2009:397). Gratifications obtained is evident after exposure to the media text has been completed and refers to the ability of the mass media text to satisfy certain audience needs (Fourie 2009:397). According to McQuail (2010:426), the expectancy-value model is proposed as a result of the expectancy-value theory. The expectancy-value theory posits that audience attitudes towards media are an outcome of their beliefs, values, and personal preferences.

Uses and gratifications exist along with tough criticism challenging the extent of its theoretical foundation. Use and gratification tend to focus on media use instead of media exposure (Ruggiero 2000:11). In addition, as stipulated by Ruggiero (2000:12), one of the flaws of the uses and gratifications theory is its tradition of self-report methodology which carries the disadvantage of over-reliance on attitude variables rather than observable audience behaviour.

In hindsight, the objective of this study is to explore what attracts the audience to the *Isolezwe* newspaper. Uses and gratifications theory aims to answer why the audience consume media. Thus, this study explores how *Isolezwe* fulfils certain audience needs as one of the contributing factors that attract its readers. A combination of the African development communication theory and the uses and gratifications theory as main theories of this study, highlights the interaction between socio-cultural determinants and audience preferences as influencing factors to the audience reception of *Isolezwe* newspaper.

## **2.4 The Social Responsibility Theory**

As a normative theory, the social responsibility theory is concerned with the ideal role and responsibility the media is expected to fulfil in society to achieve certain social values for the benefit of individuals and society (McQuail 2010:162; Fourie 2009:179). Normative theories define the

ideal way a media system ought to operate in society (Saqib 2014:1). Early developers of the normative theory such as Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm acknowledge that the social responsibility theory is not based on a certain political ideology (Skerjdoj 2001:34). Siebert et al. (1974) assert that at the time social responsibility theory emerged, the Libertarian theory had bestowed a lot of power in the hands of a few media owners, who propagate media messages for their personal benefit rather than for societal development (Al-Ahmed 1987:14; Skerjdoj 2001:34; Ugangu 2012:48).

The social responsibility theory emerged from dissatisfaction with the liberal system and to remedy the conditions created by the libertarian theory (Al-Ahmed 1987:14; Skerjdoj 2001:34). Proponents of the normative theory such as Siebert et al. (1974) were aware that libertarian theory does not prioritise the public right to information and the moral responsibility assumed by the media.

As a result of huge capital investment required, the media in the Western world was dominated by a few powerful people who owned and controlled the industry, with the detrimental effect that the press did not meet the informational, social, and moral needs of the society (Al-Ahmed 1987:14; Ugangu 2012:48; Yadava 2017:54). In this light, the social responsibility theory is seen to deviate from the stipulations of the Africa development communication which advocates that African media such as *Isolezwe* newspaper should emanate from multiple sources and communicate development messages in various African languages.

In its foundation, the social responsibility theory originates from the Commission on Freedom of the Press established as Hutchins Commission in 1947, with the task to improve the quality of the press (Skerjdoj 2001:34; Ugangu 2012:48; Yadava 2017:54). The social media theory was drawn as a framework to commit the media to act responsibly towards society (Ugangu 2012:47). The Hutchins Commission, as outlined by Ugangu (2012:54), found out that the press is sensational and irresponsible, and that the ownership of media is concentrated in the hands of few people who sometimes engage in society's condemned practices.

According to Yadava (2017:54), the Commission's main findings is that the free market has failed to meet certain obligations towards society. The Commission recommended a socially responsible media and gave a right for the public to expect the press to act with responsibility towards society (Skerjdoj 2001:34; & Ugangu 2012:48). Ugangu (2012:48) outlines the fundamental services expected from the press by the public.

The social responsibility theory upholds the idea of a free and responsible press (Ugangu 2012:49). Within this ambit, the media should give an accurate and comprehensive account of the day's news. In addition, the media is expected to present and clarify societal goals and values; and to provide a forum for the exchange of comments. The news media must be truthful, accurate, fair, and objective in their news reporting (Skerjdoj 2001:34; Yadava 2017:54).

These principles of the social responsibility theory will guide this study to determine if the *Isolezwe* newspaper subscribes to ideals of responsible journalism to attract audiences. The social responsibility theory is relevant to this study on audience reception because it outlines journalistic standards *Isolezwe* newspaper should uphold in service to society.

Regarding social responsibility theory, Rodney-Gumede (2017:6) emphasise that journalism should be in the interest and service of the public. The social responsibility theory outlines the journalistic standards the press should maintain in a society (McQuail 2010:170). The press should fulfil its role in society, in accord with the ideals of freedom and democracy (Fourie 2009:194). It should promote democratic political ideals, and assume the mandate to express different viewpoints, meet certain standards and recognise their responsibility to society (McQuail 2010:170 & Fourie 2009:194). Along with free speech, the social responsibility theory pronounces media obligation of free education, entertainment, and advertisement in society.

Fourie (2009:194), De Beer (2011:19), McQuail (2010:170) and Levine (2014:38) corroborate the principles of social responsibility theory. They agree that the press must accept and fulfil certain obligations to society. For media to fulfil its responsibility in society, professional standards are set with regards to truth, accuracy, objectivity, and balance of the reporting of the day's events.

The media must be self-regulated according to the existing legal framework and established institutions (Levine 2014:37). Akinwale (2012: 29) attests that within the social responsibility system, self-regulation by the media is seen as an important element. Furthermore, the public upholds expectations of high professional standards in media operations, and government intervention is necessary should media fail to meet these standards. The media should desist from disseminating information that may lead to violence or social disruption; and information that may offend religious or ethnic minorities. The media should represent all social groups and give access to various viewpoints (Levine 2014:37).

Social responsibility theory has been criticised for its emphasis on self-regulation. A case in point is the criticism that South African media has received from the ruling party, the African National

Congress (ANC). The political party has on numerous occasions, expressed its disapproval of existing self-regulation mechanisms which they consider to be inadequate in protecting against irresponsible reporting (Akinwale 2012: 29). The late former president, Nelson Mandela, also criticised the media for its failure to transform the conditions of the new South Africa (Skerjald 2001:40). The media is accused of exercising power without accountability (Akinwale 2012: 29; Skerjald 2001:40).

As a result of the variation that exists in the social structures and values, social responsibility theory differs from one society to another (Al-Ahmed 1987:27). What is considered socially responsible in the USA is perceived differently in Africa. Social responsibility theory is said to lack awareness of context.

The African development communication theory is based on socio-cultural determinants and the uses and gratifications theory deals with preferences of *Isolezwe* newspaper readers. In congruence to these theories, the value of the social responsibility theory is seen as understanding the commitment inherent to *Isolezwe* newspaper to act responsibly towards society. *Isolezwe* newspaper exists in a media environment that is democratic and self-regulatory. Through this theory the study will determine if *Isolezwe*'s news reporting is socially responsible.

## **2.5 Critical Theory**

The critical theory belongs to the normative frame of theories because it provides guiding principles on good behaviour in society (McQuail 2010:162; Fourie 2009:179). In their very essence, normative critical theories, when applied to mass communication, do not aim to reform reality; but are concerned with setting a standard for evaluating and judging a given media system (Baran & Davis 2012:119). As alluded to earlier, the normative theory has its foundation in media and social theories (Saqib 2014:1).

Skerjald (2001:32) is of the opinion that the critical theory is related to power relations and political-economic systems and conditions which prevail in a given society. Critical theory has its foundations in the works of the Frankfurt School and is a tradition of Marxist thinking (Fuchs 2016:1; Fourie 2017:127; McQuail 2010:132). It is scholars associated with the Frankfurt School such as Herbert Marcuse, Max Horkheimer, Theodore Adorno, and Walter Benjamin who found the critical theory (Fuchs 2016:1; Fourie 2017:127).

Critical theory studies political economy, power, ideology, and exploitation inherent in media within a society (Fuchs 2016:1; McQuail 2010:132). The critical theory, as illuminated by Fourie (2017:126), is concerned with resistance against the influence of modern media and society as creators of culture. The theory focuses on the political economy relationship between economic structures, dynamics of media industries, and the ideological content of media (McQuail 2010:133).

In examining what attract audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper, it could be possible to discover what factors do audience dislike. Another research question posed is what factors of *Isolezwe* newspaper do readers dislike. The answer to this question encapsulates a resistance against the influence of modern media and the acknowledgement of society as creators of culture.

On the critical tradition, Madikiza and Bornman (2012:43) maintain that mass media are perceived as oppressive economic structures that determine the nature of society. The Frankfurt School envisions a society free from domination and class, critique the media on the grounds of presenting selective reality based on economic, political, cultural, and social reality to which the media conforms.

As a result of its origination from the Frankfurt School of the Marxists trajectory, the critical theory, as observed by Smith (2011:65), focuses on the ideological and economic role of media in a capitalist society. Salawu (2017:195) explain the critical theory as a branch of political economy that deals with issues of culture and media.

Fuchs (2016:7) highlights that analysing media from a political-economic perspective should observe capitalism, commodification, labour, power structures, advertising, ideologies, and interaction of exploitation and domination. Political economy approaches aim to understand how political and economic relationships influence the function of media and its impact on development and social transformation (Fourie 2017:135). The economy forms the basis of social structures such as the media, and in a capitalist economy production is motivated by the idea of making a profit. With the critical theory, this audience reception study will discover how political economy of media affects relationship between *Isolezwe* newspaper and its readers.

Fourie (2017:142) highlights two fields associated with critical theories, namely, cultural and feminist studies. Within cultural studies, media is seen as a cultural product that embodies characteristics of a commodity such that the profit is prioritised over values (Li 2015:14). Fuchs (2016:10) supports this assertion by stating that capitalist media thrives on advertising. Adversely,

commodification and advertising make the media audience an object for economic profit accumulation.

The second field associated with critical theories is that of feminist media studies. Feminist media studies are concerned about the position and portrayal of women in media (Fuchs 2016:143). Discoveries of feminist studies form the basis for analysis of discriminatory practices and the portrayal of minority groups, women, disabled people and LGBT (Fourie 2017:143). The general focus of feminist studies is on how women are portrayed in the media as a product of male perceptions of women and stereotypes in media. Taking into consideration the two fields associated with critical theory, the cultural and feminist studies. This audience reception study examines how commodification of *Isolezwe* newspaper affects its relationship with the readers and issues around women representation in the newspaper.

A discourse analysis study by Feltham-King and Macleod (2016) examines women representation in media through a content analysis of 600 articles from 1978-2005 South African newspapers. Although this research on *Isolezwe* audience reception does not employ discourse analysis; two interesting topics worth of mention in this study; regarding the discourse of women in media emerged. First is the discourse of autonomy and the discourse of victimhood (Feltham-King and Macleod 2016:4). Women are depicted in media as autonomous beings, having the ability to make their own decision and choices; and to take responsibility. In relation to victimhood, women are portrayed as having little options, suffer a lack of status and resources, are marginalised and as victims of social ills (Feltham-King and Macleod 2016:4).

Criticism developed against the critical theory points on how critical theories discount the informative, educational, and entertainment value of the media (Fourie 2017:143). Critical theory is criticised for emphasis of universality and disregard of societal differences (Ugangu 2012:67). Critical theory, as used in this study, analyses media as producers of culture; and the extent to which media ownership is instrumental to media content and audience. The media is not only concerned about producing and distributing knowledge and culture, but also big business that is interested in making a profit (Nhedzi 2018:21). This means that business decisions often have an influence on knowledge and culture.

African development communication and the uses and gratifications theory as the main theories centre this audience reception study within cultural and audience points of view. Therefore, the critical theory is relevant to this study because it examines relationship between *Isolezwe*



newspaper and its readers by evaluating this newspaper as the media that is responsible for producing culture.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter examines mass communication theories that informed this study. The theories that direct this study are the Africa development communication theory and the uses and gratifications theory, social responsibility theory and the critical theory are the supporting theories which are also considered within the scope of this study. Afrocentricity theory develops a philosophy based on African value systems. The uses and gratifications theory, which maintains that audience are goal-directed in their consumption of media; and audience actively select media to fulfil specific needs. Social responsibility theory recommends media to be socially responsible in fulfilling its role to assist society and individuals achieve certain social values. Critical theory focuses on the ideological and economic role of media in a capitalist society.

## CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 3.1 Introduction

As seen in chapter two the theoretical framework that directs this enquiry. This chapter elaborates on literature reviewed from other media scholars and related studies. The first section details with the history of South African newspapers. It highlights the history of African language newspapers. In this section, the relationship between the government and African languages is discussed. Furthermore, the connection between mass media language and society is discussed.

The literature review explores the link between mass media and culture and indicates some of the shortfalls prevalent in the current mass media such as tabloidisation. This chapter explores how mass media helps in creating and promoting African identity formation. Scholars Callicanos (2006) Mayaba et al (2018) Magudulela (2014) McDonnell (2012) agree that Africa's media must use Africa's indigenous languages in communicating about development messages. Literature on information and communication technologies in Africa is also discussed in this chapter.

### 3.2 History of South African Newspapers

The historical development of African language newspapers in South Africa manifests in four phases, from 1830-1880, the missionary period; between 1886-1930, the independent elitist period; from 1930-1980 the white-owned period; 1980-1996 is the multiracial period (Ruggenberg 2007:13). The first African language newspapers were printed between 1830 and 1880 at the then mission stations in the Eastern Cape (Fourie 2009:36; De Beer 2011:90; Couzens 1976:2). During this phase, according to Fourie (2009:37) and De Beer (2011:90), the missionaries owned and controlled the necessary skills and equipment required for publishing. The missionaries also exhibited their Western Culture in the newspapers. The first black language newspaper is known as "*Umshumayeli Wendaba*", published in IsiXhosa by Methodist missionaries, launched in 1837 and lasted until 1841 (Fourie 2009:37; Couzens 1976:1).

Between the 1850s - 1870s, Lovedale Press played a huge role in the development of African language newspaper by launching publications such as *Ikwezi* (Morning Star), *Indaba Kaffir Express*, and *Isigidimi Sama Xhosa* (Fourie 2009:37 & De Beer 2011:90). In 1876, "*Isigidimi Sama Xhosa*" was launched, the first newspaper to be edited by Africans. From the year 1880 to 1930, during the independent elitist period, a minority black elite formed and influenced Western values; now seeking independence from missionaries (Fourie 2009:37) was on the rise. John Tengo

Jabavu founded the first African language newspaper in isiXhosa called *Izimvo Zabantsundu* in 1884 and became the first newspaper to be owned and controlled by black South Africans (Fourie 2009: 37; Couzens 1976:2). *Izimvo Zabantsundu* first appeared in Grahamstown. Because of intense competition, internal tensions and financial difficulties were some of main problems that resulted in the shutdown of the newspaper.

In 1897 while *Izimvo Zabantsundu* faced decline, *Izwi Labantu* was launched (Fourie 2009:38). In 1903, the first newspaper published in isiZulu *Ilanga lase Natal* was founded by John Dube. (Fourie 2009:38; Couzens 1976:3). During this period of the independent elitist, many other African language newspaper titles emerged. Amongst the Tswana people, Couzen (1976:5) notes Sol Plaatjie, a political journalist, who fought for the rights of black people and in 1901 became an editor for English/Setswana newspaper *Koeranta Ea Bachoana* in Mafikeng. Other titles to emerge around the time were *Indian Opinion* found by Mahtam Gandhi; *Mochochonono* in Basutoland by H.S Tladi, D.S Letanka found Moromou, and the Chamber of Mines launched *Umteteli wa Bantu*. (Couzens 1976:5; De Beer 2011:91).

The third phase in the history of South African newspaper is the white-owned period which persisted between 1930-1980 (Fourie 2009:38). However, South African language newspapers played a crucial role in political awareness amongst the black population. Fourie (2009:39) reiterates that South African language newspapers lacked the necessary capital, equipment, skilled workers, and a distribution network. Amidst all these challenges, Bertram Paver saw potential in the black market.

Bertram Paver, who was 30 in 1932, formed the company Bantu World LTD and the company established a national newspaper known as *Bantu World* (Couzens 1976:7; Fourie 2009:38). As a result of economic conditions, the Bantu press was taken over by the Argus Company (Fourie 2009:39). Percy Qoboza became the first editor of *Bantu World* without white supervision and the newspaper was later banned in 1977.

Another development in the South African journalism took place in 1951 with the start of Golden City Post and African Drum by Abe Bailey. Fourie (2009:39) states, that Bailey started a new trend in journalism, which was a combination of sport, sex, and crime stories that had a broad appeal among the black literate South Africans. *African Drum* was shortened to *Drum*, and by 1969 the magazine's weekly circulation was considerable at 470 000 readers (Fourie 2009:39).

The fourth phase in the development of the history of African language newspapers is the multiracial period which existed between 1980-1996 (Fourie 2009:40; DeBeer 2011:90). At the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> phase period, many titles shut down, *Rand Daily Mail* amongst others, while at the same time Sowetan is established (Fourie 2009:40).

With the dawn of the democratic dispensation in South Africa — the newspaper industry witnessed a wave of new trends. Black economic empowerment and black ownership ideas were promoted and implemented (De Beer 2011:100). A black-owned media company emerged, New Africa Investment Limited, founded by Dr Nthato Motloa in the early nineties (De Beer 2011:100). The company purchased Sowetan as part of the black empowerment deal. With a rise in Black Economic Empowerment deals in the 2000s came in new era of black media owners like Sekunjalo Media which owns 55% Independent news and media South Africa a company that publishes *Isolezwe* newspaper. The following section discusses the post-apartheid conditions of isiZulu language newspapers.

### **3.2.1 Post-apartheid isiZulu newspapers**

The print media in South Africa has few publications in indigenous languages (Maluleka 2004:13). Over 90% of daily newspapers are in English (OMD Media Facts 2016:56). This state of affairs does not reflect the multilingual/cultural nature of South Africa. As indicated earlier, there exist some regional newspapers in isiZulu and isiXhosa.

*Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* are the two isiZulu mass-market newspapers. *Isolezwe* is an isiZulu tabloid newspaper that was launched in 2002. The newspaper has shown phenomenal growth of 21% in the first five years of its launch (Wasserman & Ndlovu 2015:3). Comparatively, the Sunday edition of *Ilanga LangeSonto*, has also seen a rise at 61% per year (Wasserman & Ndlovu 2015:3). *Ilanga*, the bi-weekly newspaper, is doing well in terms of readership. The expansion of the isiZulu newspaper market is evident in the *Sunday Times's* launch of an isiZulu version of the newspaper, though this newspaper could not compete with existing tabloids until it ceased operations (Wasserman & Ndlovu 2015:3).

Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015) analyse the relationship between *Isolezwe* and its readers who are black isiZulu speakers. Wasserman and Ndlovu's (2015) study was based on the Western theoretical foundation. In this study the point of departure is the African discourse on mass media, society, and language. Their study aimed at discovering the factors that make *Isolezwe* popular amongst readers of the newspaper. Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015) used focus groups as the only data collection method. This study overlooks factors inherent in the newspaper, which could form

relationships with the readers. Content analysis could aid the study by examining content properties in the relationship between *Isolezwe* and its readers.

Findings from the focus group research revealed that the newspaper identifies with the readers' cultural identity; the news discourse and the rhetorical strategies employed by the newspaper appeal to the isiZulu readers. These are the major factors that could have led to the discontinuation of the Sunday Times isiZulu edition. The newspaper was a mere translation of the English version to isiZulu, and it lacked the cultural and identity vigour, as well as isiZulu rhetoric and discursive practice. The following discussion is based on the stipulations of the South African constitution regarding the South African indigenous languages.

### **3.3 South African Government and African Languages**

The South African Constitution recognises and embraces the multicultural nature of South Africa. The constitution has enacted legislation and statutory organisations to put into effect the promotion of local cultures and languages (Ngulube 2012:3-4). Relevant to the study of media is Section 16 of the constitution which stipulates the right to freedom of expression.

The South African Constitution recognises linguistic rights as human rights. To promote multilingualism in South Africa, Section 6 of the constitution declares all eleven languages as official languages in South Africa (Language Culture and South African Constitution 2011:3 & Ngulube 2012:4). This Section recognises all languages as equal, though in reality, it is not the case. The currency of indigenous South African languages is gradually diminishing in many spheres of society, media, politics, and education. Still, Section 6 maintains that South African indigenous languages must be advanced, and government communications must be conducted in these indigenous and official languages.

Also pertinent to language and culture studies are Sections 15, 18, 30 and 31 of the constitution. Section 15 of the constitution guarantees the individual's right to freedom of religion, belief, and opinion. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa's (1996) Section 18 guarantees the freedom of association. Section 30 guarantees the "right of every individual to choose his or her culture, language religion through free association to participate in a language, religious, or cultural community of choice".

Section 31 of the constitution "guarantees the right of members of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities to enjoy their culture, religion, and language and, for these purposes, may form, join

and maintain cultural, religious, and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society” (Language and Culture in the South African Constitution 2011:4).

Section 185 “provides for the establishment of a commission to promote rights of cultural, religious, and linguistic communities” (Language and Culture in the South African Constitution 2011:3). Section 29 (2) underscores the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions, which include institutions of higher learning (Language and Culture in the South African Constitution 2011:4).

In a democratic context, there are constitutional, legislative, and policy advances that are aimed at preserving and promoting marginalised South African languages. A discussion document on Language and Culture in the South African Constitution (2011:4) states that Section 185 of South African constitution makes provision for the establishment of a Commission of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) intending to monitor, research, educate, lobby, advise and report on issues concerning the rights of cultural, religious and linguistic communities.

In addition to the constitution, the South African government has established statutory bodies to maintain and safeguard South African languages. Relevant to South African language print media are two statutory bodies, namely, the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB), and Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). PanSALB was established by Section 6 of the South African constitution with the aim to maintain and safeguard South African languages. The MDDA role is to support community and small commercial media to develop a diverse media industry.

It appears in this literature review that the South Africa government has made provisions through legislation to preserve, monitor, and promote African languages and cultures. It can be argued that because of the decline in the usage of African languages; the constitution with all its legislation, commission and policies is excellent on paper but lack practical lustre, seeing that South African indigenous languages still diminish in use and prominence (Sotashe 2016:3). The constitutional advances in the promotion of South African languages imply that indigenous languages in South Africa have a purpose and have a place. The South African legislature has created enabling ground for indigenous South African language media to thrive. Literature on the role of media in Africa is discussed in the following section.

### 3.4 The Role of Mass Media in Africa

The African perspective on mass media, society, and language refocuses on the interface between these concepts from an African perspective. An orthodox but relevant perspective on mass communication in African society is that it fulfils certain functions. Mytton (1983:5) highlights three functions of mass communication in Africa: first, to keep people informed about their social, economic, political, and cultural environment. Second, to connect people from various parts of society. Lastly, the mass media in Africa is tasked with transforming the norms and values of a society (Mytton 1983:5). Ugangu (2012:125) adds that African media should be empowering and not be mere escapist.

In a study on news coverage of social issues by South African online media, van Grondelle (2019) outlines important functions of journalism in a developing state like South Africa. The information-instructive function holds the media responsible for providing information to society and enables citizens to participate in socio-political life. The analytical-deliberative function requires journalists to be politically aware and active. The advocative radical function closely resembles the former. Advocative radical function encourages journalists to become a countervailing force against political authority (van Grondelle 2019:23).

The critical-monitorial function is the role of media to be a watchdog by responding to political misconduct as they become aware of it. The developmental-educative function holds that journalist should participate in promoting human development and active citizen participation (van Grondelle 2019:24). Lastly, collaborative-facilitative function media assists the government in efforts to realise national building and national unity whilst improving communication between the government and its citizens (van Grondelle 2019:24).

Against the backdrop of these functions, the purpose of this study is to explore if isiZulu newspaper (*Isolezwe*) appeals to the audience by fulfilling functions expected of media in society. An understanding of the functions of media in society is crucial in examining the relationship between the newspaper and its readers.

It is important to note that language plays a fundamental role in mass media. Language is a universal means of communication through its usage of words (Fourie 2009:86). Furthermore, language describes objects and represents the world and its meaning (Fourie 2009:86). Thiongo (1993:30) maintains that language enables people to communicate with one another and provides meaning for people to make sense of themselves and their surroundings. Language acts as a collective memory bank that carries the culture and history of people (Thiongo 1993:30).

In addition to the functions stated above, the mass media in an African context is charged with disseminating and educating the masses about human rights issues and available institutions in society. Musa and Domatob (2011) observe that rules and institutions have been enacted by the international community to guide humans on how to behave towards each other. Musa and Domatob (2011:9) further emphasize that human rights ideals are natural to the African worldview. To substantiate the African worldview on human rights Musa and Domatob (2011:1) identify the following essential elements of African communal society. In an African society, the community is regarded as supreme. The authority is highly respected. Thirdly, the individual is regarded as useful. Furthermore, elders are treated with respect. Lastly, religion is a way of life.

Given the background on mass media role in an African context; this study will determine whether *Isolezwe* newspaper fulfils role of media by sharing information with people; connect people; transforming the norms and values of a society. As the role of media in African society is discussed above. This audience reception study seeks to understand if it is the role played by media one of factors attracting audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper. The following section discusses the relationship between media language and culture.

### **3.5 Africa Mass Media, Culture, Language and Society**

The description of the intersection between language, culture, and society is outlined in the discussion document (Language and Culture in the South African Constitution 2011:3). Language is defined as the use of vocabulary, including its own rule in a written and unwritten manner. Culture, according to Language and Culture in the South African Constitution (2011:3), is explained as that which reflects spirituality, habits, customs, and history of a man in material and non-material forms. The individual is the carrier of culture, and culture is recognised, experienced, and observed by a society or a group of people who possess a common language and religion, and history.

The relationship between language and media has attracted the attention of linguists and media professionals, mainly because media is an important linguistic institution (Bell 1995:1). In addition, Bell (1995:1) describes media as an important social institution through which culture and social life can be expressed. The intersection between language media and society is apparent in the fact that media are linguistic goods that promote and transmit culture and social life. This study on audience reception seeks to understand how culture, language and media comes together to attract audience to the *Isolezwe* newspaper.



It is important to note the confluence between language, society, and development. Magudulela (2014:14) notes that language rights are central to human rights because language is imperative to human interaction. Language and literacy are crucial for societal development. For society to develop, its members must be literate in the languages of the masses (Magudulela 2014:14). McDonnell (2012:1) emphasizes that there exists an integral link between culture and development. Looking at the continuous failures in Africa, McDonnell (2012:2) attributes this to the Euro-West cultural and political ideologies which influence development in Africa. With over eleven official languages, South Africa is a multilingual nation that possesses diverse cultures. South Africa's multilingualism and diverse cultures should be perceived as cultural assets that must be valued and celebrated (Quane & Stralitz 2010:15). South African indigenous languages are stagnating and under the threat of extinction (Maluleka 2004:1). This is evidence of linguistic genocide, which is referred to by Parmegiani (2012:79) as the extermination of language.

Thiongo (1993:37) and Coetzee and Roux (2003:345) provide compelling sentiments in support of the preservation and promotion of people's indigenous languages. Language is important as a product of human history and a transitory of culture (Thiongo 1993:37). For a person to fully know the self, Coetzee and Roux (2003:25) uphold the view that a person must acknowledge the ingenuity and uniqueness of one's culture. Moreover, language influences human's conceptual scheme, social circumstances, beliefs, emotions, and even expectations (Coetzee & Roux 2003:213).

The indigenous language is important because it bears traditions of morality and reasoning which inform how people experience and define the world (Coetzee & Roux 2003:345). Language determines the outlook and shapes people's perspective on life. In the same vein, social constructionism, as highlighted by Feltham-King and Macleod (2016: 3), describes the important role language plays in constructing reality.

It is a concern of most media scholars, particularly those inspired by decolonial thinking, that African languages do not have the same value as English (Callicanos 2006:3; Sotashe 2016:3). The unequal status of languages supports the reproduction of inequalities at a macro level of social interaction (Mayaba, Ralaralo & Angu 2018:2). To negate African languages means to suppress an African identity, history, and experience (Mayaba et al 2018:3).

Callicanos (2006:3) observes that this challenge is created by the historical colonial and apartheid regime, which neglected and inhibited South African languages from cultural, intellectual, and

economic development. Sotashe (2016:3) unequivocally states that South African languages should not be neglected because they do not fit the current technological and educational developments. The responsibility lies with the current generation to develop and empower South African languages.

The literature underscores the fact that it is necessary to shift the attitudes of African language speakers to value African indigenous languages. The presumption that many African language speakers mostly use English for communication is an indication of a dire need to re-instil pride in South African languages amongst native language speakers. Africans need to be reminded of the importance and be encouraged to make use of African languages. The following section elaborates on African mass media and culture.

### **3.5.1 African Mass Media and Culture**

In analysing the link between mass media, society, and language, it is important to consider culture. Mass media, according to McQuail (2010:80), is considered both a societal and a cultural phenomenon. The media form part of the social structures; the media's technology infrastructure is part of the economic and power base; ideas and information propagated by the media form part of human culture (McQuail 2010:80). In expanding the connection between mass media and culture, Fourie (2009:270) distinguishes two ways to interpret the relationship between media and culture: first is the media as culture; secondly, the media as a depiction of culture.

Culture is defined as something that has a symbolic form of expression and regularity (McQuail, 2010:113). Also, culture develops over time, and communication plays a key role in the evolution of culture. Fourie (2009:276) defines culture as everything that occurs in a society, all the beliefs, norms, values, ideas, practices, as well as material artefacts passed down from one generation to the next. Both definitions suffice in the context of this study.

Mass media is said to be responsible for creating and propagating popular culture (McQuail 2010:117). Television, films, newspapers, videos, and the internet have become widely spread and enjoyed popular culture forms. Media representations play an essential role in determining the picture that we have of the world, and our identities are partly constructed by the images portrayed in the media (Masebatlela 2009:18). This study explores if *Isolezwe* as an indigenous language newspaper attract audience through expressing African cultural understandings in news stories.

The use of English extends beyond business and now threatens indigenous language and culture (Maluleka 2004:47). The power of the English language has recently been advanced through cultural activities such as film, video, and, more recently, the internet. Scholars have come up with the term 'linguistic imperialism' to refer to the establishment of cultural and structural inequalities between English and other languages (Maluleka 2004:39). When media makes representations about objects, people, groups and place, events, social norms and cultural identities, as maintained by Masebatlela (2009:18) they play a central role in shaping public opinion and becoming powerful ideological institutions. Tabloidisation in African media is discussed in the next section.

### **3.5.2 Tabloidisation in African Media**

The South African newspaper industry has witnessed an increase in tabloid journalism, which has been met with strong criticism from media intellectuals amidst its success in the market. Tabloid newspapers usually focus on gossip, sensational, and entertainment news, instead of providing information that could contribute to democratic citizenship (Wasserman 2008:1, Masebatlela 2009:10). Tabloid journalism undermines the values of social responsibility and the development theory on which media is based (Masebatlela 2009:10).

According to Mapudzi (2009:13), tabloidisation is a contemporary trend in mass media that describes newspapers that focus on human interest and relying on graphics, pictures, and short prose. Tabloids focus more on human interest stories, celebrity gossip, entertainment, sports, scandals, crime, and disaster stories (Mapudzi 2009:13). This exploratory audience reception study seeks to discover how tabloidisation affects the relationship between *Isolezwe* newspaper and its audience.

Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015:141) point out that the success of tabloid newspapers in South Africa is due to the social context in which the media is situated and the audience demand for entertainment and information in the black population. In addition, Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015:142) observe that the failure of the *Sunday Times* isiZulu edition is due to the newspaper's inability to compete with tabloids as they appeal to specific audience interest.

Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015:153) further confirm the criticism levelled against tabloid newspapers that they divert from political news. In addition, Mapudzi (2009:13) maintains that with a lack of constructive coverage of political stories and depictions of sexual content, crime victims, and the sensational approach, tabloids are criticised for undermining South Africa's democratic human rights culture.

Tabloid newspapers devote less attention to economics and politics; focus more attention on sports, entertainment, celebrity gossip, and scandals; draws audience attention away from critical social issues (Mapudzi 2009:13). Likewise, Nyamnjoh (2005:2) maintains that the extent to which journalism is relevant to Africans is dependent on the value journalism bestows on African humanity and creativity.

Nyamnjoh (2005:3) criticises current African journalism and liberal democracy on the grounds of underplaying the rights of communities' cultural, religious, and overstress individual rights. For African journalism to thrive, Nyamnjoh (2005:3), perceives that it must recognise the fact that Africans are patriotic to their home village, cultural community, ethnic province, or region. The following discussion explains usage of African language in the media.

### ***3.5.3 African Language and Mass-Media***

Language is developed and used as a medium of communication and a system of signs used to produce and create meaning in society (Fourie 2009:84). Fourie (2009:84) explains that language is more than a mere medium of communication; and acknowledges that language provides the theory of reality by creating meaning and representations of society's images and ideas. Therefore, language and society mutually influence each other.

The mass media is characterised by numerous linguistic professions such as journalism, advertising and copywriting. All these professions are incumbent in the production of media, using language as a vital tool. Mass media is an important industry that creates products of a linguistic nature such as newspapers, radio, and television shows.

A number of scholars such as Ngulube (2012), Maluleka (2004), Callinicos (2006) and Machet (2002) are of the opinion that to revive African languages, the media should use marginalised African languages in disseminating development messages. Scholars such as McDonnell (2012), Phaahla (2011), and Moller (2014) underscore the importance of mobilising development using African language and indigenous knowledge systems. However, this is not the case in contemporary South African media as tabloidisation interrupts the development trajectory, and many South African newspapers do not cover stories on development news.

Although major African languages are used in electronic media, the print media in South Africa has very few publications in African languages (Maluleka 2004:13). It is noteworthy that over 90% of daily newspapers are mostly in English and Afrikaans (OMD Media Facts 2016:56). However,

there are a few regional newspapers published in isiZulu and isiXhosa. This status of affairs is not a true reflection of the multilingual/cultural nature of South Africa.

Publishing, whether traditionally or digitally, is vital for disseminating knowledge in society (Machet 2003:66). Machet (2003:67) notes that for culture to flourish, it is necessary to create printed material that reflects that culture. To develop and sustain African languages, publishing in these languages is important. Machet (2003:2) recommends that publishers targeting the indigenous language market must commit to attracting readership on the ground of ideology instead of profits. Ngulube (2012:3) adds that to revive the dying languages of South Africa, it is important to publish newspapers, pamphlets, literature, and books in South African languages. It is believed that indigenous languages facilitate the preservation of tangible and intangible value systems and preserve cultural identity for indigenous people (Ngulube 2012:3).

Indigenous languages are instrumental because they foster diversity in society and enable the acquisition of various information to develop high levels of literacy (Machet 2003:66). In hindsight, Ngulube (2012:3) notes that the preservation and promotion of African indigenous languages may result in the inclusion of these languages in communication for professional, educational, economic, and cultural purposes. Emanating from the discussion of African language and media, it is clear that African language media is a crucial tool in African society. African indigenous knowledge systems are discussed in the following section.

#### **3.5.4 African Languages, Identity, and Indigenous Knowledge Systems**

In support of the promotion and usage of indigenous languages, Mayaba et al. (2018:3) emphasize a strong sentiment that individuals' worldview is mediated through language; and the ability of an individual to conceptualise life and the world is characterised by the terminological, conceptual limitations of a language. This suggests that if an individual fully comprehends and uses his language, their ability of understanding and responding to the world and life situations becomes simpler.

As mentioned earlier, Africa is characterised by diverse values, sensibilities, beliefs and philosophies that inform African indigenous knowledge systems. It is these African philosophies and beliefs which must inform an African discourse and perspective in the study of mass communication. African philosophies include but are not limited to Ubuntu (humanness), Nchuyin (unity); Ma'at (justice); Ujamaa (Familyhood).

Parmegiani (2012:79) denounces English based on its function as a mechanism for spreading Western-centric worldviews that instil a sense of inferiority in speakers of marginalised languages. Suffice to state, language is more than just a social artefact. Fourie (2009:86) elaborates that language, through the usage of words, mediates knowledge and experience of the world to an individual.

An individual's knowledge and experience of the world is shaped by the words that language uses. An individual's mind interprets the representations made through language and in turn this interpretation influences the individual's worldview (Fourie 2009:86). People find meaning and balance in life by looking into their cultural heritage embodied in their language. This offers a strong motivation to create media products in isiZulu and a quest to discover how to get an audience or readership to an African language media product such as an isiZulu newspaper.

Callicanos (2006:3) propounds that language is not only for communicating, but it is also a structure of thinking. Callicanos (2006:3) believes that the ability to think conceptually is impaired without a mother-tongue foundation. This argument has been validated by education scholars who have expressed the importance of language in culture preservation and to advance cognitive development. It has also been argued that emancipation from a Western mindset unlocks the potential and creative talents of African writers, artists, and intellectuals (Callicanos 2006:3).

Another central feature of a study on mass media, language, and society is that of identity. Marx (2007:80) reiterates that South Africa is developing as a democratic country, with shifts in political, economic, and cultural spaces. This creates a need for a new national identity to be created and maintained (Marx 2007:80). The media and the government are equally important for the development of national identities in the context of a globalised community (Marx 2007:80).

An indigenous language is an "important vehicle for cultural transmission, identity building, and value creation" (Wa Mberia 2015:52). Using an indigenous language raises the self-esteem and confidence of people in society, and this leads to more productivity as people unlock creative and innovative responses to the social and physical environment (Wa Mberia 2015:58).

Indigenous knowledge systems denote the beliefs, skills, experience, and insights carried by indigenous people and used to maintain and improve their livelihood (Phaahla 2011:1). Indigenous knowledge cannot be evaluated through scientific epistemologies, and its beliefs contrast Western knowledge (Phaahla 2011:4). Indigenous knowledge is established in a certain community and according to local culture and traditions (Phaahla 2011:4). An indigenous knowledge system is explained by McDonnell (2012:21) in terms of three themes: The Spirit, which is the foundation of

the African indigenous knowledge system; Ecocentrism which denotes a spiritual relationship with nature and Sociocentrism, which refers to a spiritual connection to the community.

African languages are an important carrier of valuable African indigenous knowledge system (Wa Mberia 2015:58 & McDonnell 2012:28). This knowledge system is embedded in African proverbs, narratives, sayings, and philosophies encapsulating literal and metaphorical African meanings (Wa Mberia 2015:58 & McDonnell 2012:28). One of the South African traditional ideologies is Ubuntu which informs and shapes the identity of South Africans after the transition to democracy. The revitalisation of African development must take stock of the social, cultural, and spiritual value of indigenous knowledge (McDonnell, 2012:21). African languages are an important part of the African identity and knowledge and carrier of culture (McDonnell, 2012:21). From the literature reviewed, this study explores whether *Isolezwe* news stories manifest African indigenous knowledges to attract audience to the newspaper. Mass media and development is discussed in the following section.

### **3.5.5 Mass-Media and Development**

In previous sections, the idea of media and development has been explained. The use of media in development projects has been popular for a long time. Media organisations, through information provision, contribute to socio-economic and political development. Mass media is important because it creates awareness and disseminates messages about development issues (Ndlovu 2015:29).

Ndlovu (2015:30) points out that language has a huge impact on socio-economic development, and language cannot be separated from empowerment. To rephrase the link between media and development, Ndlovu (2015:25) reiterates that if used productively, mass media is an important tool for disseminating development messages and encouraging mass participation. Mass media plays a pivotal role in informing and mobilising people in the quest to achieve Sustainable development goals (SDGs). Ndlovu (2015) examines the SDGs and how the media are expected to assist in achieving these goals.

The United Nations hosted a Summit in 2000, and member states signed the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which embodies the SDGs (Ndlovu 2015:25). The SDGs, as summarised by Ndlovu (2015:25) and the United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 (2014:18) are: eradicate poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reducing child mortality rates, reduce inequalities; promote sustainable economic growth; combat HIV/AIDS - malaria and other communicable diseases, ensuring

environmental sustainability, and developing global partnerships for women; inclusive societies and global partnerships for development. It is imperative to analyse the presence or influences of the SDG in the content of the *Isolezwe* newspaper, because indigenous language newspapers are expected to play a key role in assisting society achieve SDGs.

The effectiveness of mass media in achieving SDG goals is influenced by choice of language in distributing messages by a media organisation. Ndlovu (2015:5) deduced that for mass media to be effective in assisting citizens in realising SDGs, educational and informative content on mass media must be in the indigenous languages of the majority. Indigenous languages are crucial and should be used by media organisations to achieve SDGs. These observations put into perspective, that literature on development is essential to this audience reception study. To explore what attracts an audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper, there is value for this study to explore the coverage of development news as a factor. Factors that determine news value is discussed in the next section.

### **3.5.6 Factors of News Value**

Masebatlela (2009:19) states that news is not fixed or gathered as already existing; news is a product of professional ways of thinking, writing and composing as learned by newsroom professionals. To illuminate this, Nel (2006:48) outlines factors that influence news selection in the South African context and these factors are understood globally as determiners of news value or worthiness.

News value is defined by Caple and Bednarek (2013:2) as a system of criteria that inform a decision on what will be selected as news. News value determines whether stories will be published. Media scholars globally agree on the factors which determine newsworthiness. The following discussion outlines nine most important news factors identified in the universal study of communication (Nel 2006:48; Tunez & Guevara 2009:5; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3).

Timespan or timeliness indicates that a story or event is considered newsworthy when it is new and fits the schedule of the medium involved (Nel 2006:48; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). Intensity is a criterion that requires that a story or event be of a magnitude and affect many people (Nel 2006:48; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). Cultural proximity and relevance indicate the tendency of stories or events to be newsworthy when they occur close to the audience community (Nel 2006:48; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). The closer the event or story to the audience, the more it is deemed newsworthy for the media serving that audience (Tunez & Guevara 2009:5). Proximity can be geographic, social, cultural, psychological, and ideological.



Unexpectedness or unusual events or stories make the news. Nel (2006:50) points out that modern journalism is in search of unusual or out of the ordinary, scarce events and stories. Frequency and continuity are criteria that select news based on momentum, continuity of the event, which is necessary for the event or story to make sense (Nel 2006:50, Tunez & Guevara 2009:6). A conflict is seen in a difference of viewpoints, approaches, or confrontation on an issue (Tunez & Guevara 2009:5; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). Conflict arising between nation; political parties or prominent public figures receives attention as news (Tunez & Guevara 2009:5; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3).

News of national significance is deemed newsworthy to be included in the news agenda of a newspaper. National significant dates and information that is necessary for the public to navigate the world are relevant and useful to be included as news items (Tunez & Guevara, 2009:5; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). Prominence is a newsworthy factor that is based on the social relevance or position of the news subject (Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). Prominence newsworthy criteria refer to stories about famous people or positions of power.

Knowledge of news value factors reveal important decisions or guidelines taken into consideration whether to publish certain stories and to exclude others. Knowing these news factors assists the researcher to understand the reasons why certain news stories are published in the *Isolezwe* newspaper. In addition, these news factors are explored to see whether they contribute to the newspaper appeal amongst the audience. Information communication technology as used in the African media is discussed in the next section.

### **3.5.7 Information Communication Technology in Africa**

An important observation made by Jeffreys (2015:52) is that the impact of technology has not only been experienced by individuals; but the global pattern of mass communication. Rodny-Gumede (2017:15) highlight that the media and communications industry is severely impacted by technological changes.

Pertinent to the study of audience reception of African language newspapers is the consideration of information technologies and how they have been utilised in a relationship between *Isolezwe* newspaper and its readers. An indication that the newspaper is moving with the times, *Isolezwe* online version has been launched with successful acclaim.

Likewise, in Africa, as in the rest of the world, modern communication technologies have brought about changes to mass communication content and engaging the audience in innovative ways (Rodny Gumede 2017:15). African countries, as observed by Willems and Mano (2017:1), are experiencing growth in access to digital technologies, as ICT has become essential to everyday life in Africa.

Within an African context, ICT is expected to contribute to the process of development. Onwumehili and Ndolo (2013:14) state that development scholars concur that for economies and industries to thrive, countries must absorb modern communication technologies. Klein and Urwin developed the term ICT4D to explain how ICT can accelerate and propagate modernisation and development in third-world countries (Onwumehili & Ndolo 2014:14). Similarly, modernisation and development are advanced by the acquisition of information technology. ICT presents a new channel for economic development.

Rodny-Gumede (2017:16) suggests that new media platforms enable a more participatory, responsive, and inclusive political process, where the audience is not perceived as a mass to be served with news but co-creators of messages and meaning in the societal formation process. Major characteristics of the latest digitised information communication technology are convergence and fragmentation (Rodny-Gumede 2017:15). Convergence refers to the integration or combination of platforms and technologies used to produce, distribute and consume media; fragmentation is the existence of numerous platforms and content providers (Rodny-Gumede 2017:15).

Nhedzi (2018:21) notes that access to online news depends on socio-economic status, age and educational attainment. People who are older, less educated and belonging to the lower socioeconomic status consume traditional media (Nhedzi 2018:21). In conclusion, ICT4D recognises that ICT might not ultimately resolve social problems, but its availability and application in society contributes to the development of economies and societies. The literature on information and communication technology is of relevance to this study as the study seeks to explore the relationship between *Isolozwe* and its audience as affected by information and communication technologies and the accessibility thereof. The relationship between education and African language is discussed in the next section.

### **3.5.8 Education and African Language**

The minister of higher education, Blade Nzimande proposed making African language modules compulsory in institutions of higher learning. According to Parmegiani (2012:79), it has been noted that within the education sector, the dominance of English as a medium of instruction reproduces socio-economic inequalities between students who have a good command of English and those who do not.

The minister's endeavour to promote African languages in Universities is a necessary initiative at executing the provisions of Section 6 of the constitution (recognising the historically diminished use and status of native languages). However, it was challenged by major criticism that this introduction of the native language is aimed at the wrong level (Oliver 2014:3). This implies that the introduction of compulsory African language education should be implemented in the earlier phases of education.

Oliver (2014) undertook a qualitative study that evaluates anonymous comments on online news articles covering the subject of the introduction of compulsory African language modules in universities. The majority of comments have shown disfavour towards this initiative (Oliver 2014). English is cited as a business and an international language. African languages are said to have limited terminology and do not have an extensive vocabulary to teach all degree programs (Oliver 2014).

This indicates the lack of value and awareness attached to African languages. In this regard, Moller (2014:2) postulates that many mother-tongue speakers of previously oppressed African languages prefer to read and communicate in English, as it is considered the language of power and used as the lingua franca. Many factors have been pointed out as causes for this superior sociolinguistic status of the English some of which are the history of colonialism, apartheid, globalisation, expansion of information and communication technology (Snail 2011:1; Moller 2014:8; Callicanos 2006:3).

Education, as observed by Maluleka (2014:18), is a key player in the creation of knowledge and provision of information. It is unfortunate that this sector ignores African languages. Higher education is at the centre of public, private and civil society, as it should at least provide citizens with a working force that is competent in African language. Since 2011 it is unclear on how institutions of higher learning have incorporated this recommendation in their operations. With the current re-curriculation underway in most South African universities, maybe the future will realise Nzimande's dream of African centred education system.

For South African languages to thrive, the entire school system should play a cardinal role in the preservation and promotion of South African languages through education. A research article, titled *Multilingualism in South African Schools* by Rasool and Edwards (2010), declares that fluency in learners' first language enables learners to acquire second and third languages with ease.

Promotion of African languages is seen to be taking shape also in the education sector. This is important to consider because education and the media are both responsible to produce knowledge. Publishing, as highlighted by Machet (2003:67), is essential not only to culture but also to the educational system of a country because of its inherent ability to communicate intellectual insights. Likewise, if education produces scholars interested in African languages, this translates to the growth of audiences and producers for African language media.

### **3.6. Conclusion**

This chapter traced the history of black newspapers as far back as 1830, with the arrival of missionaries in the Eastern Cape. Four stages of the development of the South African press, the missionary-period 1830-1880; the independent elitist 1880-1930; the white-owned period 1930-1980 and the multiracial 1980-1996. The literature review reveals that the South African Constitution established legislation and statutory organisations such as CRL Commission, PanSALB and MDDA to preserve and promote indigenous South African languages. Many scholars reviewed in the literature agree that language has a huge impact on socio-economic development. Mass media is expected to play a role in informing and mobilising people to achieve SDGs. Literature reveals that media is an important social institution that express social life and culture. There exists a strong relationship between media and society.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology employed in this audience reception study of the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. This study utilises the mixed methodology design, with a combination of focus group interviews, and content analysis as research methods. This chapter discusses the planning and implementation stages of the mixed methods research project from the definition of the problem, the research questions, and the hypothesis, as well as the variables to be analysed. This section further explains focus group interviews and content analysis research methods and how data will be analysed. Research sampling procedures are described in this section, as well as the important ethical considerations for a study of this nature. The next section describes the research design employed in this study.

### 4.2 Research Design

This research study which is focused on exploring the factors that attract readers to the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*, employs a mixed methods research design. Mixed methods design integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches of data collection and analysis in a single study. Thus, the use of multiple perspectives is the main idea behind mixed methods design (Creswell et al. 2007:165 & Creswell 2009:98). Furthermore, Creswell (2003:168) suggest that a mixed methodology study integrates data in different phases of research, such as the interpretation of results, data collection, data analysis, and research questions.

This study combined focus group interviews and content analysis as qualitative and quantitative research methods. This study integrated qualitative and quantitative methods in data analysis and interpretation through a combined discussion of results from both research methods. The motive for employing mixed-methods design to this study is based largely on the need for complementarity and confirmation. Small (2011:63) explains that complementarity is the ability of one type of data to compensate for the weaknesses of the other. Confirmation is the verification of findings from one type of data with those obtained from the other (Small 2011:63).

In line with the rationale of complementarity and confirmation, this study used content analysis to enhance and elaborate on the findings of the focus group interview. The focus group identified certain news themes that attract readership, and these news themes are measured and described in more depth through the content analysis. In addition, Patton (2006:2) elucidates

that the type of questions that warrant a mixed methods research are those that ask, 'what happened?', 'is there a systematic effect?' 'how and why is it happening?'. These types of questions collect quantitative and qualitative data forms. Such is the focus of this study which is to determine what factors attract readers to *Isolezwe* newspaper.

With mixed methods design, an important decision to be made is regarding which research design will receive priority (Creswell et al. 2007:172). In mixed methods, research priority or emphasis of the study may be placed on either a qualitative or a quantitative aspect of the study or even both. Quantitative data expand the logic of the qualitative explanations about the social world (Daniel & Onwuegbuzie 2006:2). In this study on audience reception of *Isolezwe* newspaper, emphasis is placed on the qualitative study, content analysis is used to describe and measure the frequency and prominence of certain news themes as they emerge from the qualitative research focus group interviews.

Having decided on which research design to prioritise; and the phase of the research process at which data integrates. Successively, the nature of data collection or type of mixed methods design must be specified (Creswell 2003:165; Daniel & Onwuegbuzie 2006:3). Mixed methods researchers distinguish between sequential and concurrent or simultaneous mixed methods design, each with various typologies (Creswell 2003:165; Terrell 2012:264). Sequential mixed methods denote the sequence in which data is collected (qualitative then quantitative or inversely) while concurrent or simultaneous indicates data that is collected at the same time (Creswell 2003:165; Terrell 2012:264).

This research study subscribes to the sequential exploratory strategy of mixed methods. Qualitative data through focus group interviews is generated and analysed first. This is followed by the collection and analysis of quantitative data from the content analysis research of this study. **Then the findings from the different research methods will be integrated into the discussion** of findings and conclusion chapters of the study (Creswell 2003:172). This mixed-method study is qualitatively driven; and utilised quantitative research to enhance qualitative explanations through measurements such as frequency counts.

An efficient way to discover what attracts readers to *Isolezwe* is undoubtedly to ask readers of the newspaper what they find appealing in the publication. In addition, to explore what attracts readership to *Isolezwe*, the content of the newspaper must be analysed. This type of research inherently studies the relationship between *Isolezwe* and its readers. An analysis of both phenomenon (readers) and the (media) produced relevant insights in response to the research

question. The following sections present detailed discussions on how focus group interviews and qualitative content analysis are used in this study. The research paradigms in which this study is based is discussed in the next section.

### **4.3 Research Paradigm**

This section describes the research paradigms used in this audience reception study of *Isolezwe* newspaper. This research study of *Isolezwe* newspaper employs two research paradigms. Shanti, Kean Wah and Lajium (2015:160) explain that to begin any research requires a decision on the philosophical ideas that underlie the background of a study, and that is described through a concept of paradigm. The researcher needs to select the correct research paradigm to best answer the research question. In the context of this study on audience reception of isiZulu language newspaper, the philosophical ideas which underlie this study are influenced by the pragmatic and the decolonial paradigms.

#### **4.3.1 Pragmatism paradigm**

As a philosophical foundation, this study adopts the pragmatism paradigm by virtue of its mixed methodological design. Mixed methods research emerges from what Terrell (2012:256) and Small (2011:62) explain as the pragmatism paradigm. The pragmatism paradigm defines the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches within the different phases of research. Terrell (2012:256) explains that mixed methods emerged during the end of wars between paradigms which was signalled by the acknowledgement among researchers that qualitative and quantitative methods are compatible.

The pragmatism paradigm is explained by Terrell (2012:258) as using whatever philosophical, methodological approach that works for the specific research problem. Furthermore, Small (2011:62) posits that pragmatism bestows liberty upon researchers to work without being inclined or restricted to prior knowledge or certain law or regulation that govern what is recognised as true or valid. This research study fit the description of a pragmatic paradigm. The researcher enjoys the liberty of drawing various forms of data from different methods and the integration of research methods in various phases of the study. Moreover, the study draws influence from a decolonial paradigm, demonstrating the flexibility permitted by the pragmatism paradigm.

#### **4.3.2 Decoloniality and Afrocentricity paradigm:**

The research topic on isiZulu language media situates this study within a decolonial paradigm. The decolonial Afrocentric paradigm is used in this research study that deals with African language

mass media. Chiumbu (2017:3) posits that through decolonisation, critical thinking, epistemic perspectives from the South are taken seriously. The decolonial paradigm has been developed to cultivate a decolonial imagination of research methodologies; to move beyond Western epistemologies (Savansky 2017:2).

Methodologies of this study embrace pluralism and diversity; also give voice to previously ignored groups like the participants in the study, who reside in the isiZulu community, Nobuhle Hostel in Alexandra township. The content analysis further quantifies constructive realities aimed at the isiZulu newspaper reader. Gautum and Luitel (2013:97) prioritise specific indigenous and local perspectives in methodology. It is the perspectives of the average reader of the *Isolezwe* newspaper that was generated through the focus group interviews conducted in isiZulu communities (IsiZulu hostels).

Corresponding to decoloniality theory is Molefe Kente Asante's Afrocentricity theory which according to Jackson & Givens (2006:12), has emerged as a paradigm on which scholars from across the world have engaged. Fourie (2009:177) defines Afrocentricity as a frame of reference which views a phenomenon from an African perspective. Afrocentricity studies ideas and events from an African standpoint.

Afro-centricity defines the world view that is found on African reality and experience, comprising African cultures, its people, belief systems, philosophies, family values, and knowledge of the world (Ugangu 2012:112). Furthermore, Afrocentricity creates awareness of African ways of communication; and the representation of Africa and Africans in the media (Fourie 2009:177). The influence of the Afrocentricity paradigm goes beyond academic discussions. People of African descent across cultures, belief systems, and generations draw forceful cultural identity influence from Afrocentricity (Jackson & Given 2006:13).

The ambit of this research study rests within the decolonial paradigm in that this study centres on audience reception of African language media. Through studying African media, this study re-looks at the creation of identity and information of indigenous African people. The following section presents the focus group interview research.

#### **4.4 Qualitative Fieldwork: Focus Group Interview**

The appropriate data generation method for this study on audience reception of isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe* is the focus group interview, which is part of qualitative fieldwork research. This method



is suitable to research topics, which study respondents' attitudes and behaviour (Babbie 2011:287). The focus group interview enabled the researcher to ask some questions to a group of individuals simultaneously about their attitudes and perceptions on the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. Mokoena (2018:56) maintains that qualitative researchers go to the field to gather data by interacting with people of interest in the study.

As discussed previously, this mixed-method study is qualitatively driven; it generates and analyses qualitative data first. To meet the exploratory objective embedded in this research, focus group interviews were used to generate qualitative data for this study. Focus group interviews are suitable for this study because, as a data generation method, focus groups are socially oriented to obtain real-life data in a social environment (Babbie 2011:316).

#### **4.4.1 Redefining research problem and questions:**

The research questions defined in chapter one, are the core research questions directing this study in its entirety. This section redefines research questions that direct the focus group inquiry which is the qualitative aspect in this mixed-methods study. The first step in planning for a focus group interview is redefining the research problem (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:135). With the definition of the problem statement, key research questions are then formulated. These questions are used to compose an interview schedule to guide the researcher as a moderator during the focus group interview (Du Plooy 2009:201).

The research problem in this study is to explore the factors that attract the audience to isiZulu newspaper like *Isolezwe*. The focus group interview focused on the following questions as appearing in the interview guide. What do readers of *Isolezwe* like about the newspaper? What type of news stories do readers prefer to read in *Isolezwe*? What type of stories would readers like to see? What factors do readers dislike about *Isolezwe* newspaper? What improvement will readers like to see in the newspaper? Do readers use the latest technology platforms like cell phones, social media and website to read the newspaper? The researcher was at liberty to ask follow-up questions based on responses received to these initial questions. The next section discusses the population and sampling techniques.

#### **4.4.2 Population and sampling**

After redefining the research problems and questions to be addressed. The second step involves selecting a sample and recruiting participants for the interview (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:135; Du Plooy 2009:201). This qualitative research adopts a non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling is described by Babbie (2011:178) and Wimmer and Dominick (2011:94) as a non-

probability sampling technique that selects respondents, subjects, or elements based on prior knowledge of the population's characteristics and the purpose of the study. Snowball sampling occurred in situations where interview participants were asked to suggest other individuals who might be willing to participate (Babbie 2011:180).

The target population for this study was *Isolezwe* newspaper readers, and the accessible population was *Isolezwe* newspaper readers who reside in Nobuhle hostel, situated at Alexandra township. The accessible population has common characteristics of residing in the isiZulu community in Nobuhle hostel and are readers of the *Isolezwe* newspaper.

Purposive sampling and snowball sampling were used to recruit participants residing in the hostel. The researcher purposively approached individuals who read *Isolezwe* newspaper and invited them to participate in the study. Snowball sampling became effective when these individuals were encouraged to recruit other community members who read the *Isolezwe* newspaper and invite them to the location to participate in the study.

Participants in the focus group interviews were readers of the *Isolezwe* newspaper, residing in Nobuhle Hostel in Alexandra. Two focus group interviews were conducted. The duration of each focus group interview was thirty minutes. Each focus group interview was composed of male and female participants between the ages of 18-60. Given the group dynamics in terms of gender, age, and education, it is worth noting that this research topic cuts across lifestyle measures such as these.

The combination of such participants did not pose a challenge; instead, was instrumental because such groups represent diverse interests concerning the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. Two focus group interviews were conducted. This ensured that responses were not group-specific but are representative of a wider population of readers. The next section discusses how data for the focus group interview was generated.

#### **4.4.3 Focus group interview data generation:**

Before the actual data generation through focus group interviews, a pre-test group consisting of six individuals was organised by the researcher. This group to whom interview questions were addressed; had the purpose of listening and interpreting the questions as participants in the interview. These individuals were not necessarily readers of *Isolezwe* nor speakers of the isiZulu language. Rather, their task was to interpret the questions and ensure they are comprehensive.

This strengthened the question items in the measuring instrument to measure what was set by the research questions, which improved the reliability of the study.

Two focus group interviews were conducted with participants who reside in the isiZulu community, Nobuhle hostel. The two focus group interviews were conducted on 27 July 2019 and 4 August 2019. The researcher invited different participants who expressed an interest in being involved in the study by completing consent forms to participate. Each focus group interview consisted of 7 members (see consent forms attached as ADDENDUM D).

The researcher identified Nobuhle Hostel, isiZulu community in Alexandra township North of Gauteng. The researcher had to sought access to the research site through the assistance of a personal contact referred to as a key informant. Participants were invited to participate voluntarily and informed about the study by the key informant and researcher. The research setting was the house where the key informant dwells. When each interview commenced, participants were offered *Isolezwe* newspapers to familiarise themselves with the newspaper content. Participants expressed no interest in reading the newspaper before the interview, as they read the newspaper daily.

The two pertinent components of focus group interviews are the moderator role and the interview guide (Hansen et al. 1998:272). The measuring instrument is the interview guide that was constructed to assist the moderator in facilitating research questions to participants. This interview guide contains questions that are guided by the research problem and research questions; to ensure that the focus group stays focused on the research issue (Du Plooy 2009:274). Mokoena (2018:60) maintains that to gain more clarity on research questions from participants, the researcher is allowed to ask follow up questions from responses emerging during the interview.

The researcher was assigned the moderator role by virtue of being knowledgeable on the research topic and research questions. In addition, the researcher, as the moderator, has the strength to listen critically and the ability to ask follow-up questions. The researcher must establish rapport with participants through good interpersonal and group communication skills.

Data collection tools during the focus group interview included field notes, audio, and video recorders, collectively used to capture the interviews. Participants were made aware of the recording of the focus group interview and were assured of the confidential and anonymous use of the recorded material. Once collected, all data was transcribed to notes which can be read. From these notes, the researcher then selected pertinent themes to analyse as findings of the

research, responsive to the research problem and questions. The interview guide is attached as an ADDENDUM B. The next section explains the data analysis of the focus group interviews.

#### **4.4.4 Data analysis of focus group interviews**

Babbie (2011:391) explains that qualitative data analysis is a non-numeric interpretation and examination of observations to discover patterns. Mokoena (2018:64) further notes that qualitative data analysis uses inductive reasoning to make an inference from empirical data to social life. Researchers need to plan how the generated data will be sorted, organised, indexed and analysed (Mokoena 2018:64). The purpose of the study and methodology used will determine the time and effort required for data analysis and interpretation (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:25).

This qualitative research on audience reception of the *Isolezwe* newspaper employed a thematic approach as a data analysis method. Thematic analysis was used in this study to critically analyse spoken words from the focus group discussions and to identify meaningful categories or themes. Du Plooy (2009:227) defines thematic analysis as a description of the main ideas in messages. Thematic analysis examines a data set for recurring patterns of meaning within data (Braun & Clarke 2006:86).

This study followed thematic analysis phases as prescribed by Braun and Clarke (2006:87). The first phase involved transcribing data generated from focus group interviews. Thereafter, in the second phase, initial codes were generated. The third phase involved searching for themes in which relevant data was coded. In the fourth phase, the researcher reviewed the themes to check if they are relevant to generate a map for analysis. After themes have been reviewed, clear definitions and names for themes were generated. The sixth last phase involved producing the report by looking at the themes selected, the research questions, and the literature reviewed for the study.

This study recognises that qualitative methods are flexible, and the six phases of analysis are not specific rules but fundamental guidelines in the thematic analysis process (Braun & Clarke 2006:86). This study applied flexibility to suit its research objective and questions. For conciseness, within the context of this study, the thematic analysis subscribed to the following steps:

The initial phase involved the researcher familiarising himself with the data generated through focus groups interviews. This phase involved the repeated reading of the transcriptions of interview recordings and field notes from the focus group interviews. It is this initial reading of data

that enabled the researcher to identify themes as communicated during focus group interactions. At this phase, the researcher already hinted ideas for coding.

The second phase generated a category of themes in which codes may be placed. Babbie (2011:397) highlights that when dealing with qualitative data, whether focus group interviews or content analysis, the result will yield a huge amount of textual data. Coding is the process where pieces of data are categorised or classified according to some retrieval system (Babbie 2011:397). Braun and Clarke (2006:82) illuminate that a theme represents an important aspect of data in relation to the research questions. The following themes are identified in this study: Types of news that hold readers interests; factors readers dislike about the newspaper; reasons readers favour *Isolezwe* newspaper; how readers utilise latest forms of technology to engage with the newspaper; developments readers want in the newspaper

Phase three involved searching for themes and placing different codes into their main themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke 2006:90). During this phase, the final analysis of themes occurred; and all extracts of data were collated into specific themes and sub-themes. The third phase was when the researcher outlined the themes and placed codes in each theme, respectively, as per the focus group interviews. The coding schedule with data themes and codes identified from the data collected is included and discussed further in the next chapter.

Once the analysis of field notes was completed, the researcher then prepared a report of the focus group interview results. This report was written in accordance with the questions outlined in the interview guide; these questions were drawn up in line with the research problem, hypothesis, and theoretical framework. The report outlined the research process by giving a full account of who the participants are, recruitment of participants, research location, and nature of the group question and discussions.

Given that this a qualitative study, data analysis used inductive reasoning to identify key characteristics of the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*, especially the ones that attract readership. When analysing data for this study, inductive reasoning is used to draw conclusions from specific to general premises (Babbie 2011:117; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:119). When data is collected, codes are extracted from and replaced into themes to reach general conclusions about the research question (Babbie 2011:117; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:119). The next section discusses the content analysis research.

#### 4.5 Quantitative Content Analysis

This section details the content analysis research method as used in this study. Content analysis as defined by Riffe et al. (2005:24) is a method that studies and analyse communication messages in an objective, systematic, and quantitative manner to measure variables. Additionally, content analysis is used to determine the emphasis or frequency of various communication phenomena (Riffe et al. 2005:24).

White and Marsh (2006:23) state that content analysis is based on quantifiable analysis of identifiable aspects of the text, which is sometimes referred to as manifest content. This is supported by Riffe's (2005:24) assertion that content analysis focuses on the manifest content rather than connotative or latent meaning. Babbie (2011:334) describes manifest content as the surface or visible content of the communication.

Content analysis, as a research method, is appropriate to this study because it examined the characteristic of communication content appearing in *Isolezwe* newspaper (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:157). Content analysis is well suited to this study because it answers the question: which factors attract readership to the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*? Content analysis, traditionally, is a quantitative research method, which is concerned with quantification and identification of a body of messages (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:157; Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold 1998:95).

According to Riffe (2005:178), decisions on data collection, measurement, and analysis are connected to the overall research design and the questions addressed by the study. Riffe et al. (2005:56), White and Marsh (2006:29) and Wimmer & Dominick (2011:160) are in agreement concerning the steps involved in conducting a quantitative content analysis study. Execution of this content analysis research on the *Isolezwe* newspaper is guided by these steps and consists of three stages, namely, conceptualisation, planning or research design, and data collection and analysis.

The following questions suffice the content analysis inquiry: what topics or themes are covered in the *Isolezwe* newspaper? What is the frequency of the different content topics? What topics appear on the front page of the newspaper? What is the geographic orientation of the newspaper stories? Are there any applications of digital platforms to the newspaper? The next discussion defines the population for the content analysis study.

The following section presents steps and processes involved in conceptualising and executing this content analysis study. This research aims to discover the factors that attract readers to the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*. The first step in planning for content analysis centres on formulating the research question or hypothesis (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:160; Hansen et al. 1998:99). Using content analysis, the researcher analysed newspapers to determine what kind of stories *Isolezwe* newspaper presents to its readers.

#### **4.5.1 Defining population**

This section presents the selection of the appropriate media and samples to be analysed for the study. In South Africa, there are currently three major isiZulu newspapers which are *Ilanga*, *Isolezwe*, *Bayede*. *Ilanga* is published twice weekly, Mondays and Thursdays, while *Isolezwe* is a daily newspaper. There are other regional and community titles in the isiZulu language, but for this study on mass communication, the focus is on the mass distributed isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*.

*Isolezwe* and *Ilanga* are both thriving in terms of circulation and readership (OMD Media Facts 2018:8). *Ilanga* is the oldest isiZulu newspaper and one of the earliest newspapers in South Africa. *Isolezwe* was launched in 2007 and has experienced an annual growth of over 20%. According to the *Isolezwe* newspaper website, the newspaper has a circulation of 86 342 throughout South Africa. Although most of the sales are counted in KwaZulu-Natal this newspaper is also distributed in Gauteng, Free State, Mpumalanga, Eastern, and Western Cape.

The *Isolezwe* newspaper is the title selected for this content analysis because it is a widely read and circulated isiZulu newspaper. Rowley (2016:43) writes that media researchers select media to analyse based on circulation and readership figures of the media. Readership and circulation figures capture dominant perspectives and allow insight into the popularity of the publication (Rowley 2016:43). The next section present sampling techniques used in this study.

#### **4.5.2 Sampling techniques**

This content analysis makes use of non-probability, purposive sampling in selecting the title of the newspaper and the dates to be analysed. Purposive sampling, as described by Babbie (2011:178); Wimmer and Dominick (2011:94), is a non-probability sampling technique that selects respondents, subjects, or elements based on prior knowledge of the population's characteristics and the purpose of the study.

In addition, purposive sampling was used to select dates or issues of the newspaper to be analysed. Against the background of the researcher’s knowledge of the purpose of the study and the theoretical framework, this study selected dates during which the aspects of national building, development, and information surveillance, are more prevalent in the newspaper.

Considering the national calendar and South Africa’s significant dates, the newspaper issues selected were from August to September of 2019. August is significant in South Africa as a national Women month, which celebrates the contribution made by women towards the liberation struggle of this country. September is heritage month, which celebrates the country’s diverse cultures. A total of six issues of the *Isolezwe* newspaper are analysed as part of this content analysis. The following table outlines the selected dates of the *Isolezwe* newspaper issues and the day on which it was published. The following section discusses the selection of the units of analysis.

Date	Day of the week
13 August 2019	Tuesday
15 August 2019	Thursday
17 August 2019	Saturday
25 September 2019	Wednesday
27 September 2019	Friday
29 September 2019	Sunday

TABLE 1: Dates of newspaper issues selected

#### 4.5.3 Units of analysis

Selecting units of analysis is another important step in content analysis. Units of analysis refer to the smallest parts of elements of the content being studied (Wimmer & Dominick 2011:164). The key objective of this study is to explore what factors attract readership to the isiZulu newspaper, *Isolezwe*.

Content analysis is conducted to examine the type of news content in the newspaper. Correspondingly Riffe, et al. (2005:65) observes that in its orthodox form content analysis involves text because the text is the means by which mass-produced content is preserved. Units of analysis



for this study are the stories appearing in *Isolezwe* as they are seen as the main factors captivating the audience.

Babbie (2011:330) pronounces that determining units of analysis can be difficult. A content analysis study, according to White and Marsh (2006:23), needs to be broken down into units of sampling, collecting, analysis, and reporting. Simplified identification of the units of analysis appropriate for this content analysis study is proposed by Riffe et al. (2005:70) as study units and information units.

Study units are explained by Riffe et al. (2005:70) as elements of content defined before units can be categorised with a coding protocol, which are identified as the content to be selected, analysed, and recorded. Information units relate specifically to the meaning and production of content, which affects the receiver of the message (Riffe et al. 2005:70). Having identified the units of analysis for this study as news stories appearing in *Isolezwe* newspaper. Inevitably, the study units for this content analysis are news stories appearing in the newspaper. The information units are the various topics or themes covered in *Isolezwe* news articles. Discussion on data collection follows.

#### **4.5.4 Content analysis data collection**

The following section presents steps and processes undertaken in collecting data for this study.

##### **4.5.4.1 Operationalisation and conceptualisation of study:**

The starting point for content analysis studies is the classification of topics or themes to be covered during the analysis of content (Hansen et al. 1998:112). Content analysis, according to Babbie (2011:333), relies on a coding operation. The process of coding transforms written or oral communication according to some classified predetermined conceptual framework (Babbie 2011:333; Hansen et al. 1998:106).

Conceptualisation and operationalisation, as explained by Babbie (2011:333), are central to the coding process because they involve interaction between theoretical concerns and empirical observations. Riffe et al. (2005:125) indicates that the conceptual and operational definitions detail how the concepts of interest can be identified in the selected content.

Riffe et al. (2005:26) explain operationalisation as the process of defining terms of the measured variable. The operational definitions rely on keywords identified in the news articles and headlines, which are in line with the theoretical framework of this study—Africa development communication, the uses and gratifications theory, social responsibility and the critical theory,

A concept, as explained by Riffe et al. (2005:125), is an abstract and a broad idea about the way things are. In this mixed-method exploratory study on factors attracting audience to the *Isolezwe* newspaper, the conceptual definition is understood as news content factors that appeal to the audience. The next section discusses how the content to be analysed will be selected through coding.

#### **4.5.4.2 Coding process:**

In content analysis, the step that follows data collection is coding. The two important aspects of data capturing in the content analysis are defining the categories to be analysed and constructing a coding schedule (Hansen et al. 1998:116). According to Riffe et al. (2005:82), it is important to identify the correct information units for defining various study units.

After defining the chosen characteristics of newspaper content into categories, a coding schedule was constructed to outline variables to be coded. In the context of this study, newspaper articles were coded according to the topic or theme of the story and the position in which they appear; front page headline story, or story inside the newspaper. Newspaper stories in *Isolezwe* are the study units, and the topics or themes covered in *Isolezwe* newspaper are the information units. To select the content to be analysed in this study, the following pre-coded and post coded categories were identified.

Pre-coded, also referred to as priori codes, are categories produced as a function of the theoretical framework, the literature review and the research questions (Du Plooy 2009:225; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:165). Thereafter, during the preliminary analysis of the newspaper, post coded or emergent categories are further developed, which are a function of the preliminary examination of the actual data collected (Du Plooy 2009:225; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:165).

In the context of this study the following pre-coded content categories were drawn from the theoretical framework and the research question:

- Entertainment news stories covering areas of sports, music, and other entertainment cultures. Relative to the uses and gratifications theory, affective needs refer to audiences' needs to escape from reality and personal problems, relax, seek aesthetic and enjoyable experiences, pass the time.
- Development news, which deals with development related issues (sustainable development goals; education; health; poverty eradication; international news). This refers to the media's

role in the promotion of social and economic development, supporting government development efforts.

- Politics and government news stories emanating from the political or government space: Stories about government officials, political figures, political parties, and international politics. This is akin to the social responsibility theory of the press in accord with the ideals of freedom and democracy.
- Economics, finance, and business news stories dealing with the topics of economy, finances, and business. Embodies the character of development and social responsibility theories.
- Social and community news stories focusing on community issues as well as human rights topics, current affairs; local community news; crime stories. Remnants of social responsibility theory, cognitive needs are apparent. Audience seeking information about the environment, society, and the world. The social responsibility in society to report the day's events in a manner that is truthful, accurate, objective, and balanced.

After the elementary examination of the data collected, the following post-coded/emergent codes were obtained with associated keywords:

- Entertainment, music; broadcast television; celebrity news: News about celebrities; broadcast media; music, and other entertainment cultures.
- Sports: Sports news reviews, news about people in sports.
- Social issues/community news: News affecting the society such as service delivery; human rights news, crime stories, news happening in the community, current affairs
- Politics/Government:
- Economics business and finance: News relating to the economy, finances, and business.
- Development news: News about development issues, health, education, technology news.

Within the context of this study, the researcher used post-coded emergent codes. As the researcher reads through the *Isolezwe* newspaper, he began to tag key articles in the newspaper that correspond with the above news content topics or themes.

Consistent with the premise by Riffe et al. (2005:77) that the more space devoted to a topic by a gatekeeper, the more important the topic is to the gatekeeper. Furthermore, the variables of this study examined the appearance of headlines on the front page to gauge the prominence given to various topics. Front page headlines relate to all news stories appearing on the cover page. Stories

inside the newspaper are all the news featured inside the newspaper not appearing on the front page. Level of measurement is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.5.4.3 Level of measurement:**

To assist with defining and categorising variables of this study, a measurement system is used to assign numbers to variables being studied. Riffe et al. (2005:84) maintain that after units have been determined, researchers must develop a system for assigning numbers to the units. Four levels of measurement are identified; ordinal, nominal, ratio, and interval (Du Plooy 2009:127). Attributes that constitute variables are assigned numbers and represent diverse levels of measurement.

This research study uses a nominal level of measurement. The nominal level of measurement is described by Du Plooy (2009:127) as allocating numerals to variables in order to identify, label, or name them. The nominal level of measurement is prevalent in this study because the topics and themes of newspaper articles can be identified and counted. Also, a description and count of the news stories appearing on the front page of *Isolezwe* describe prominence given to certain news topics.

In the context of this *Isolezwe* newspaper content analysis, selected content categories were assigned a number to differentiate them from all other categories. Thereafter, each content factor was assigned a number to indicate its appearance or absence from the newspaper front page headline stories. Different content categories based on various newspaper topics were given numbers from 1 to 7 as in the coding schedule below. Frontpage stories were assigned 01, and feature stories are assigned 00.

Riffe et al. (2005:93) indicate that quantitative content analysis requires rules for connecting recording units with numbers. These numbers indicate the level of measurement selected by the researcher. This research utilised a system of classifying news articles according to topic or theme and also according to the position of articles in the newspaper, such as a front-page story or inside story. Du Plooy (2009:219) declares that nominal coding does not count the frequency in which content categories occur. However, counting is appropriate when nominal categories such as present-absent are used.

The classification system adheres to the requirements of classification that variables that reflect the purpose of research are mutually exclusive, exhaustive, and reliable. Wimmer and Dominick

(2011:166) explain that mutually exclusivity is when a unit of analysis can be placed only in one category. Exhaustiveness refers to an existing slot where every unit of analysis can be placed.

Exploring the audience reception of the isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe* through content analysis, newspaper articles are the units of analysis. In total, 174 articles from six issues of *Isolezwe* are the cases that are examined. To indicate the type of new story, numerical values are assigned to the selected newspaper topics: entertainment (1); sports (2); social and community issues (3), Politics and government (4); development issues (5); finance economy and business (6). Thereafter the position of the story variable is assigned (0) to indicate inside page articles and (1) to indicate front page news articles. Lastly, the variable of the geographic focus of the story is represented by values, stories focused on the KwaZulu-Natal region are indicated by (1) stories of national interest is represented by (2). The sample tally sheet is attached below.

ARTICLE NUMBER	ISSUE DATE	NEWS TYPE 1=Entertainment 2=Sports 3=Social community 4= Government politics 5= Development news 6= Economics, business, finance	STORY POSITION 0=Inside page 1=Front page	GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS 1= KwaZulu-Natal 2=National stories
1	13 August 2019			
2	15 August 2019			
3	17 August 2019			
5	25 September 2019			
6	27 September 2019			

7	29 September 2019			
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TABLE 2: Tally sheet

Babbie (2011:129) explains that it is important for a measurement to be precise and accurate. Social researchers pay attention to reliability and validity in order to construct and evaluate measurements. Reliability depends on whether a repeated measure of the same object using the same technique will yield the same result (Babbie 2011:129; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:170). Reliability is achieved when various coders agree in many instances about the proper category and definition of each unit of analysis (White & Marsh 2006:32; Riffe et al., 2005:124 Mapudzi 2009:46).

To achieve reliability, this study ensured that the coding scheme has categories that meet the requirements of the classification system such as mutually exclusive and exhaustive. To be precise, news stories analysed can only be identified and defined into only one existing news category and does not relate to any other. In addition, this study achieved reliability by ensuring that the coding scheme has clear definitions of concepts and easy coding instructions (White & Marsh 2006:32). In this study, reliability was also achieved by ensuring that content categories have clear definitions and are explained in maximum detail.

Babbie (2011:132) indicates that validity refers to actually measuring what the researcher says is being measured. The validity of the study results is increased by its reliability (Riffe et al. 2005:160). Likewise, in this study, reliability that is already established strengthens validity of the findings. Furthermore, Riffe et al. (2005:162) expound that to strengthen validity, other research methods may be incorporated into the study. By design, this mixed-methods study, in addition to content analysis, uses focus group interviews as another research method in the exploration of the audience reception of *Isolezwe* newspaper.

Validity refers to the extent to which the instrument genuinely measures what it intends (Mapudzi 2009:46; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:175). Amongst various validity tests, one more relevant to this study is construct validity. Construct validity ensures measurement is related to relevant message characteristics by relating measuring instrument to a theoretical framework (Du Plooy 2009:136; Wimmer & Dominick 2011:177). This study relates closely to construct validity; the researcher achieves validity by linking the content characteristics of *Isolezwe* newspaper to the theoretical framework. How data from the content analysis study will be analysed is discussed in the next section.

#### **4.5.5 Data analysis of the content analysis**

This section describes data analysis process for the content analysis study. Riffe et al. (2005:182) explain that after data has been collected, using the correct level of measurement, relevant summarising techniques used frequency to count and display values of a variable. Numbers are crucial to quantitative content analysis (Riffe et al. 2005:182). Data from the nominal category can be visually presented in tables and graphs (Du Plooy 2009:219).

The goal of data analysis in quantitative research is to describe characteristics of a population or a sample (Riffe et al. 2005:179). This quantitative content analysis used basic techniques in data analysis such as descriptive measures of means, proportions, and frequency counts (Riffe et al. 2005:177). The rationale for selecting descriptive statistics as an analysis method is that they allow close attention to be paid to the type and number of articles in the *Isolezwe* newspaper and the type of news articles that receive prominence.

To aid data analysis and management, this study used the IBM SPSS statistics program. This software allows the researcher to quantify different variables analysed. This software stored and counted 174 news articles appearing in six issues of the *Isolezwe* newspaper. News articles are coded according to story type, the position of the story in the newspaper, geographic focus of the story.

Babbie (2011:424) explains that a codebook is a guideline used in the coding process, to locate variables, and describe attributes composing those variables. In the codebook each variable is identified by an abbreviated variable name: News type; Story\_pos; Story\_geo\_int. Next, each variable is given a full definition, and all its attributes included. The news type refers to the central themes or ideas covered in all the selected articles. Story position indicates the location of the article in the newspaper, whether a front page or inside page article. Lastly is the variable of story geographic interest, whether the geographic focus of the articles is in the KwaZulu-Natal region or of national interest.

All the variables and respective data analysed from all selected cases of articles were carried over to SPSS software. In presenting the results, the researcher used tables and graphs to show frequency distribution and numbers to express percentages.

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2011:26), researchers need to determine if their work is internal and externally valid. Internal validity is the ability of an experiment to bring to light casual relationships, and external validity denotes the relevance of the findings to the pattern of casual

relationships in the world (Riffe et al., 2005:161). The incorporation of the focus group as another research method in this mixed-method design also strengthens the validity of the study. Du Plooy (2009:90) explains that external validity can be increased by using various kinds of units of analysis such as people or mass media messages. The following discussion focuses on ethical issues material to this study.

#### **4.6 Ethical Issues**

Ethical issues are an important consideration for any research project. Barbie (2011:478) maintains that it is necessary for a social science researcher to know the “general agreements shared by researchers about what is proper and improper conduct in the scientific inquiry.” This research was subjected to ethical requirements of social science inquiry since it deals with human beings as subjects. Consent was obtained from individuals who participate in the focus group interviews; their participation is sort voluntarily.

The researcher guaranteed participant protection through anonymity and confidentiality. In addition, the researcher guaranteed that the research bears no harm or injury in any way to the participants. To obtain participants for the study; university of South African conferred ethical clearance certificate that allows researcher to use humans as subjects for the study ADDENDUM C.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

This research is a mixed-methods design, which utilises focus group interviews and content analysis as research methods. Content analysis is suitable because it enables the researcher to analyse or examine the content of the newspaper, which is the subject to be researched. Another effective method used in this study to explore the audience reception of IsiZulu newspaper is the focus group interviews. The focus group interviews ask the participants what they find appealing about isiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe*.

To select samples for both the focus group interviews and content analysis, purposive sampling is used. In addition, the focus group interview also uses snowball sampling to select the research participants. The researcher purposively selects and recruit participants for the focus group interview; and then encourages these participants to recruit other interested members. Purposive sampling is also apparent in the content analysis, where the researcher selects the newspaper with the knowledge that it will be responsive to the research question.



## CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented research design used in this study. This chapter discusses the findings of this study. Since this study is a sequential mixed methods design, this chapter discusses the result of each research method separately (focus group and content analysis) and then integrates these findings on the discussion of the main findings in the last section of this chapter. In this chapter, the first section of the findings reports on results from the focus group interviews. The second section deals with findings from the content analysis method. The last section details the main findings of the study in which results from the content analysis and the focus group interviews are analysed in relation to the theoretical framework and the literature review.

### 5.2 Findings: Qualitative Focus Group Interviews

The following results are drawn from focus group interviews conducted at Nobuhle hostel on 27 July 2019 and 4 August 2019. Focus group interviews were conducted in the isiZulu language, and commentary extracts included in this section are translations from isiZulu to English. The main research question is: what factors attract readers to the *Isolezwe* newspaper? Different questions contained in the interview schedule aim to elicit responses to this question. Below are themes that emerged during the analysis of data obtained from two focus group interviews.

Participants' names were not identified in the discussion; when referring to their quotes, the researcher uses the following codes focus group A 27 July and B 4 August. Gender is indicated by (1) male & (2) female, and participant number 1 – 7. The first male participant from the first focus group interview is indicated as A(1)P1.

#### **5.2.1 What appeal to readers in *Isolezwe* newspaper:**

In the responses obtained from the focus group interviews, three main reasons stand out for the favour towards *Isolezwe* newspaper by its readers: first, it is published in isiZulu, the native language of the readers; and readers like the newspaper because it carries news stories that focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region. Another reason why readers like the *Isolezwe* newspapers is that it is a daily newspaper that publishes current news.

These three main factors are echoed from both focus group interviews. Participant A(1)P1 expressed “*I like Isolezwe because it is written in IsiZulu, our language, and keeps me up to date with events happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region where I am from*”. “*I enjoy reading the newspaper because Isolezwe keeps me up to date with current events, and reading expands the minds and gives me conversational skills using IsiZulu language*” participant B(2)P3 expressed.

Participant A(1)P2 emphasised “*Isolezwe is a daily newspaper, so it always publishes fresh news that is currently happening, unlike the Ilanga newspaper that publishes bi-weekly*”. Participant A(1)P4 also supports A(1)P2 assertion that “*Isolezwe, as a daily newspaper, offers news that is happening currently, Ilanga sometimes because it publishes twice a week; writes outdated stories*”.

As seen in the responses of the focus group interviews. The main reasons readers like *Isolezwe* newspaper are espoused in the proximity factor of news value as highlighted by Nel (2006:48), Caple & Bednarek (2013:3) which influence selection of news stories to be included in the newspaper. Cultural proximity is evident as readers expressed that they like *Isolezwe* newspaper because it is published in isiZulu. Cultural proximity maintains that stories are deemed newsworthy if they are close to the culture of the reader. Geographic proximity is another factor that appeal to readers as *Isolezwe* writes stories of events happening in the geographic area where the readers have an interest. *Isolezwe* newspaper appeals to readers because it publishes news stories within proximity of the readers culture and geographic interest.

*Isolezwe* being a daily newspaper, participants in the focus group interviews indicate they like the fact that it publishes current news. This fact defines the news value of timeliness or timespan. Certain news stories are selected because they are happening currently or still new. This finding reflects that *Isolezwe* newspaper is in line with the stipulations of the CDMT theory that indigenous language media in Africa must focus attention on national culture and language factors (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:80).

### **5.2.2 Story types preferred by *Isolezwe* readers**

To further probe the factors that appeal to readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper, participants were asked a more specific question on the type of news stories they like to read in the newspaper. Responses to this question point to different news story types as a major attraction of readership.

Types of news stories favoured by most participants are social and community issues happening in and around KwaZulu-Natal, sports stories, and entertainment news. Participant A(1)P5 replied,

*"I like to read about news that is happening in communities around KwaZulu-Natal, where I am from. I also enjoy reading about everyday social issues people face".* Participant A(1)P5 added that *"I like reading the sports section of the newspaper because I am a huge soccer supporter"*.

Participant A(1)P6 said, *"Like most people here, I like the way Isolezwe covers stories of current issues in the KwaZulu-Natal region. I also want to know what is happening, any crime stories, accidents happening on the roads, social problems faced by people. Then after I go straight to sports, I enjoy reading the sports section in the newspaper"*.

What also emerged during the discussion is that the *Isolezwe* newspaper is preferred by female readers because of its sections and stories on women issues. Participant A(2)P7 highlights that *"Isolezwe newspaper writes about women's issues regularly. The newspaper keeps us women up to date on crimes in which women have been victims, or perpetrators. The newspaper also writes about women empowerment issues to encourage women to be economically independent of men"*.

*Isolezwe* is a good source of information about news and events of national significance. With the interview happening during national Women's month, both male and female participants indicated their interest towards stories covering such news events of national significance. Participant B(2)P1 alluded that *"In the month of August, I read stories about women doing wonderful deeds and health issues and advice relevant for women"*.

Some readers enjoy reading about entertainment stories relating to music and other entertainment culture. Participant B(2)P2 said, *"I like to read about entertainment news, like maskandi (Zulu traditional music), artists, and other musicians"*. B(1)P3 adds that *"I enjoy reading about radio and television entertainment in the newspaper"*.

This finding on types of news readers prefer to read in *Isolezwe* is situated within the uses and gratifications theory of mass communication. Uses and gratifications upholds the idea that media audience select media in order to fulfil certain needs (Fourie 2017:392; Branson & Stafford 2010:382; Lin 1999:201). As readers of the newspaper have indicated in the focus group interviews, three types of content emerging as favoured are news on social issues, sports and entertainment.

Within uses and gratifications theory; readers preference for news on social issues is defined as a cognitive need. Cognitive needs relate to readers desire for information and news about their environment, society, and the world (Fourie 2017:392; Branson & Stafford 2010:382; Lin

1999:201). *Isolezwe* readers prefer the newspaper because it satisfy their need for information and news about their environment, society and the world.

In addition to social issues, other news types preferred are news on sports and entertainment. This news type illustrates the affective needs of the uses and gratifications theory. Affective needs refer to the audience's emotional experience when interacting with the media and their needs to escape from reality and pass time with an enjoyable experience (Fourie 2017:392; Branson & Stafford 2010:382; Lin 1999:201). *Isolezwe* newspaper uses sports and entertainment news stories to capture readers who seek to satisfy their emotional needs through reading the newspaper.

### **5.2.3 Factors readers of *Isolezwe* dislike about the newspaper**

To comprehend what appeals to readers in *Isolezwe* newspaper, it is equally relevant to discover the attributes of the newspaper that readers dislike. To this question, participants from both focus group interviews raised facts with which they are not happy as readers. These mainly border on excessive advertising in the newspaper; coverage of certain news, the price of buying the newspaper, and accessibility to the newspaper.

Participants highlight that there are many advertisements in the *Isolezwe* newspaper. Although not a grave concern to many participants but the price of the newspaper emerged as another point of discontent amongst few participants in the interviews. Readers of the newspaper pointed out that sometimes they find the news stories in *Isolezwe* newspaper inconsistent. Readers of the newspaper from both focus group interviews point out that sometimes *Isolezwe's* headline would not match stories and the poor continuation or development of certain news stories.

Participant B(1)P4 noted "*On Thursdays, Isolezwe newspaper carries more advertisements and less news. And most of the products advertised relate more to women than men. Also, the price of the newspaper increases all the time*". Participant B(2)P5 remarked that, "*I feel the price of the newspaper rises quarterly, and I would like more news than advertisements in the newspaper*". One copy of *Isolezwe* newspaper costs five Rands.

Participant B(2)P7 mentions that "*The newspaper is so thick you think it's news, but advertisements. Sometimes the news headline or front-page headline does not match the narrative of the article. Isolezwe uses exaggerated headlines to attract the reader's attention.*" Demonstrating inconsistencies in the news reporting A(2)P7 illustrated "*The Zondo commission*

*story was covered on one day, then the next day not covered at all. We end up not knowing the progress of the story, that when next time the story is written, we cannot connect the dots”.*

Besides content, *Isolezwe* readers complain about the poor distribution of the newspaper. Participant A(1)P6, who has been reading the newspaper since inception, notes that “*It is very difficult to find Isolezwe in townships around Gauteng than back home in Claremont*”. Readers said the newspaper is not available in their area in Alexandra township, and they must buy it in the towns in which they work.

This finding on factors unappealing to readers is in tandem with the critical theory which focus on how political and economic relationships influence the media in a given society (Smith 2011:65; Salawu 2017:195; Fuchs 2016:7). Advertising and the price of the newspaper as they emerge as factors of discontent amongst readers; are situated within the critical theory of mass media. Advertising and commodification are observed within the critical theory perspective (Fuchs 2016:7).

Readers of the newspaper point out that they are not happy with the excessive advertisements appearing in *Isolezwe* newspaper. The price of the newspaper is also seen by some readers to be unreasonable. These factors highlight the plight of advertising and commodification of news. As noted by Fuchs (2016:10), the media in capitalist society thrives on advertising. With the price factor, literature supports the observation of some readers on the price of the newspaper that increases constantly. Nhedzi (2018:21) has pointed out that the media is not only interested in producing and distributing knowledge and culture, but media is driven by profit motives.

On the contrary, some readers of *Isolezwe* indicated that there is nothing about the newspaper that they dislike. Participant B(1)P2 said, “*There is nothing I dislike about the newspaper. Not even the price. I am happy with Isolezwe and wish they can continue their great work in journalism and succeed*”. Participant B(1)P6 agrees with Participant B(1)P2 that “*There is nothing I would like to see improved in Isolezwe newspaper, I am satisfied with the current content of the newspaper as it is*”.

#### **5.2.4 Types of stories readers would like to see in *Isolezwe* newspaper:**

When asked about the type of stories readers would like to see in the newspaper, respondents indicate that they like more coverage of in-depth political news, international news, and international sports news. A self-professed sports fanatic participant A(1)P2 explains that “*Isolezwe usually writes about national soccer, and as supporters of the sport, we would also like*

*to see coverage of international sports tournaments*". Soccer supporters also want to know what is happening in international tournaments like the UEFA and news about FIFA.

To the question of what type of news stories readers would like to see in the newspaper, participant B(2)P7 expressed, *"I would like to see more news of national interest and also more news than advertisements"*. Participant A(1)P6 added that *"I would also like to see news about the taxi industry as an everyday taxi commuter"*.

Although the editorial focus in the KwaZulu-Natal region does appeal to some readers, another factor raised by the readers as not favoured is the geographic focus of stories in the newspaper, which seem to focus exclusively on the KwaZulu-Natal region. Participant B(2)P7 says *"I feel the newspaper must balance news with stories happening in other regions and not only in the KwaZulu-Natal region. It would be great if Isolezwe also writes news stories about happenings in other provinces and of national interest"*.

This finding indicates readers willingness to read about news happening outside of their geographic area of interest or residence. Although theories like CDMT and social responsibility advocate publishing news happening in the local regional and national area. It is necessary for media to connect people from various parts of the world (Mytton 1983:5). This is supported by the findings which readers express their desire for news emanating from the international community.

### **5.2.5 Usage of digital communication platforms**

Finally, when asked about access to *Isolezwe* newspaper via digital platforms of the internet and social media. All participants in this study from both focus group interviews did not have access to smartphones or regular internet connection. This is due to socio-economic factors associated with participants and access to recent communication technologies. A younger participant B(2)P6 notes, *"I know Isolezwe is available on the internet and the social media, but most of us here do not have a smart phone, and at work have no internet access"*. Much older participant B(1)P4 replied *"I cannot use the computer or the internet"*.

This finding confirms the observation made by Nhedzi (2018:21) that access to news online depends on the socioeconomic status, age and educational attainment. The readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper from Nobuhle hostel in Alexandra township reflect Nhedzi (2018:21) assertion that older people, who are less educated and belonging to the lower socioeconomic status consume traditional media.

### **5.3 Findings: Quantitative Content Analysis**

The focus group research, as discussed in the previous chapter, produced an informed view of the content characteristics of the *Isolezwe* newspaper. This section explores the relationship between readers and the *Isolezwe* newspaper by examining content appearing in the newspaper. The aim of the content analysis is to describe the various types and frequency of stories appearing in the newspaper.

This content analysis examined seven *Isolezwe* newspaper issues from a total of 174 news articles. Selected dates of the newspaper issues are 13 August, 15 August, 17 August, 25 September, 27 September, and 29 September all these issues from the year 2019. The statistics contained herein are based on the count of 174 articles as cases of analysis for this research.

#### **5.3.1 Types of stories appearing as cover page stories:**

Elements of a cover page include the price of the newspaper, the name and image of the newspaper in bold, and the date and the day of the newspaper issue. On the front page of the *Isolezwe* newspaper appear headlines of the news on various themes. Some headline news appearing on the front page are supported by pictures to clarify or illustrate the story.

Bold headlines of stories appear on the front page with small captions of the page number where the story is located. Advertisements dominate a sizable portion of the newspaper front page. The large-sized advertisement appears at the bottom of the page, and other small sizes appear in certain spaces on the front page. Advertisements use bold fonts with images or graphics of the advertised product or service. The sample cover page is attached as ADDENDUM H.

Articles on social and community issues gain prominence on the front page of the newspaper, with 36% of these featured as front-page headlines. News on entertainment and sports are frequently featured on the front page of the *Isolezwe* newspaper too. On the front page of the newspaper, 28% of headlines are on sports stories, and an equal 28% of entertainment headlines appear.

Some of the headlines on social issues that appeared in the newspaper include:

*Community members getting shot during protests (Isolezwe 15 August 2019 Page 4)*

*Another story about a community in KwaZulu-Natal proposes rapists must have their manhood removed. (Isolezwe 25 September 2019 Page 3); and mentally ill person killing community members (Isolezwe Ngomgqibelo 17 August 2019 Page 3).*

Sport stories also appear as front-page news with headlines such as *AmaZulu let Chiefs go at last* (*Isolezwe* 25 September 2019 Page 32). Another sports story seen on the newspaper cover page is on *Percy Tau in action against Madrid* (*Isolezwe NgeSonto* 29 September 2019 Page 20)

Some entertainment news that made front-page news include *Somizi's wedding* (*Isolezwe NgeSonto* 29 September 2019 Page 3). Celebrity gossip ended on the front page include *a celebrity who won't pay damages for a girl he impregnated* (*Isolezwe NgeSonto* 29 September 2019 Page 3) and *a broadcaster who has opened up about substance abuse* (*Isolezwe Ngomgqibelo* 17 August 2019 Page 6).

It is clear that in order to lure readers to *Isolezwe*, the front-page headlines give prominence to three most favoured content themes, social and community, sports, and entertainment news. In the *Isolezwe* newspaper, political and government news rarely make it to the front page, with only 4% of headlines on the front page devoted to politics and government news.

From the observations of the content analysis, it becomes clear that *Isolezwe* newspaper by writing about social issue, sports and entertainment news headlines on the front page not only give prominence to such stories but capture readers emotions by showing entertainment and sports headlines.

Only 4% of front-page headlines examined covered some news on development issues. On the front page of the *Isolezwe* newspaper, there are no stories relating to economics, business, and finance.



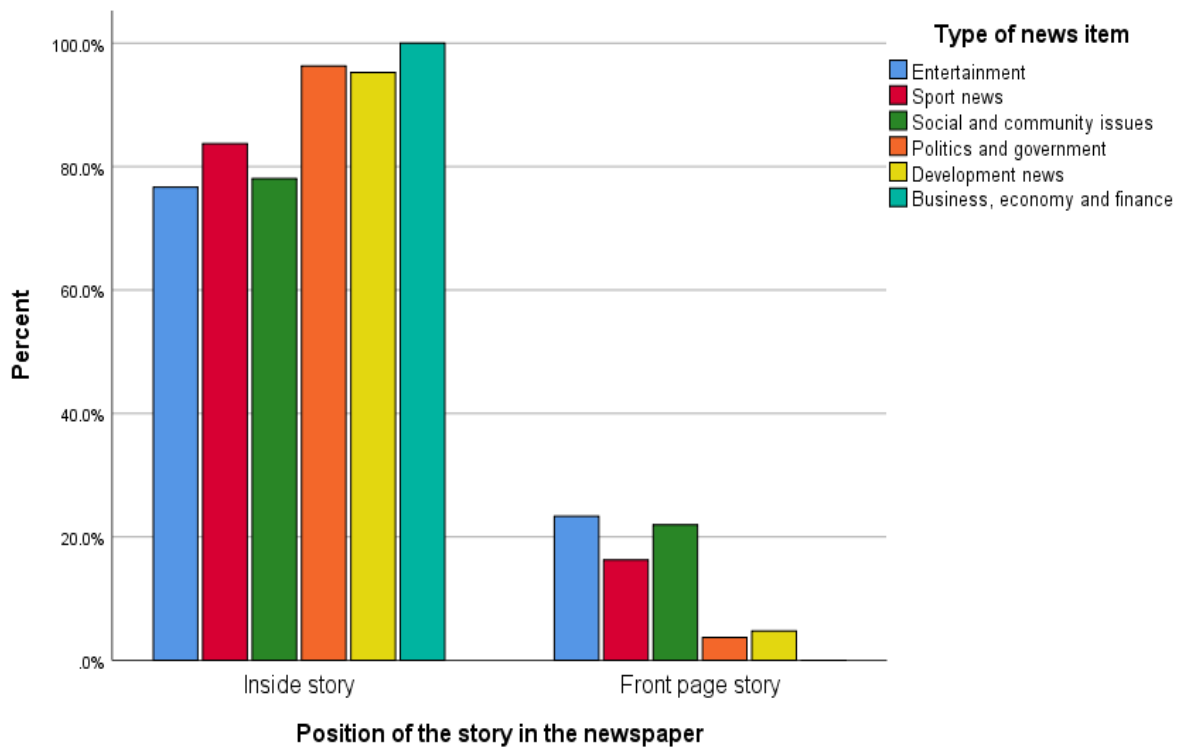


Figure 1 Position of the story in the newspaper reveals news themes dominating the front page of *Isolezwe*

### 5.3.2 Geographic focus of content:

A total of 174 news articles appeared in the *Isolezwe* newspaper, 40% of these articles focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region, and 60% of articles are about stories of national interests. A large percentage of stories in *Isolezwe* which focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region are usually on social and community issues. Out of all stories written with a focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region, 83% are based on social and community issues. Only 17% of community and social issues covered in the newspaper are of national interest.

A large concentration of stories of national interest is on sports news, with 90% of sports stories having a national focus, and only 10% of sports stories are devoted to KwaZulu-Natal local sports. *Isolezwe* promotes KwaZulu-Natal's local entertainment industry by dedicating 33% of stories about entertainment to local news. Entertainment stories of national interest are 67% of the total stories on entertainment.

This finding reflects CDMT theory which maintains that indigenous language media content should focus attention on national culture and cover news of developments happening in a local or regional context (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:84).

Stories on business, finance, and economy from the KwaZulu-Natal region are at 17%, while 83% of stories are based on national business and economic issues. KwaZulu-Natal development news appears at 38% coverage while national development issues are at 62%. Below is a bar graph representing the percentages of story types appearing on the front page. Geographic focus is another factor used by *Isolezwe* newspaper to attract readership. *Isolezwe* newspaper publishes in the isiZulu language, as this is the language of the majority of people in KwaZulu-Natal region. It comes as no surprise that the newspaper focuses on stories happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region. The frequency table is attached as ADDENDUM I.

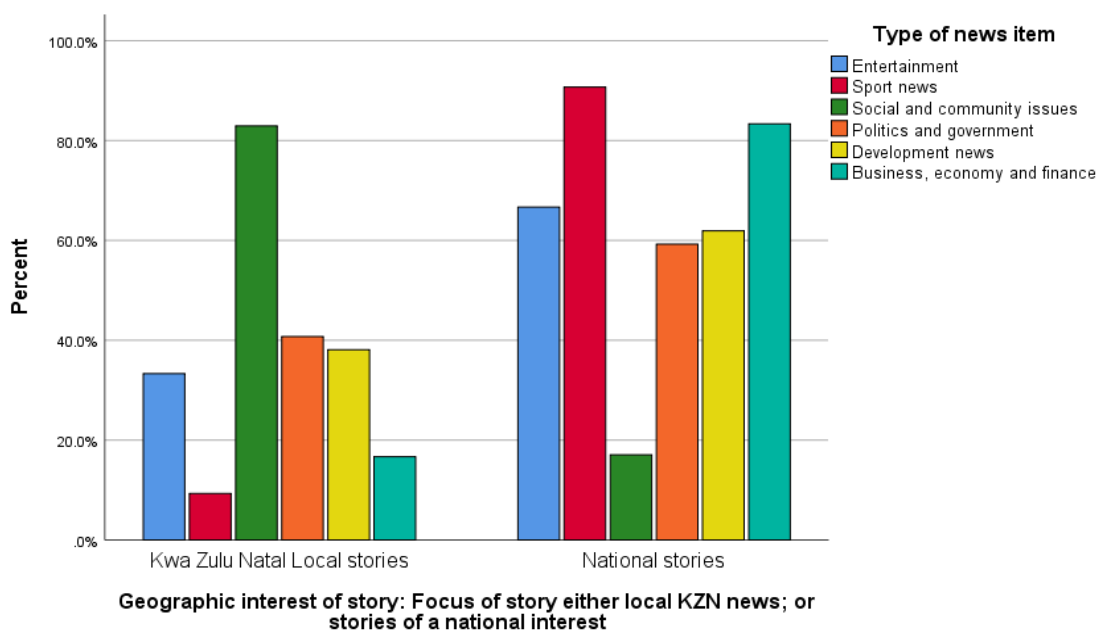


Figure 2: Geographic interest reveals the number of news stories focus KwaZulu-Natal region, and stories of national interest

### 5.3.3 Type of stories appearing as content in *Isolezwe* newspaper:

This section presents findings obtained through content analysis. The following findings are in response to the question of what type of content is appearing in *Isolezwe* newspaper.

#### 5.3.3.1 Sports stories:

The *Isolezwe* newspaper covers stories on sports news. Out of 174 news articles analysed, 25% of stories cover sports news. On the front page of *Isolezwe*, 28% of headlines are on sports stories. In terms of the geographic focus of stories, only 10% focus on local sports while 90% focus on national sports news.

This finding proves that *Isolezwe* prioritise the coverage of sports news. According to the uses and gratifications theory, this fact relates to affective needs. Affective needs refer to emotional experience gained by reader through an enjoyable experience to relax or pass time such as sports. With the amount of sport headlines appearing on the front page and news stories covering sports, *Isolezwe* newspaper coverage of sports news attract readership.

*Isolezwe* is biased towards soccer, as it is this type of sport that dominates the sports section of the newspaper. Soccer games are being reviewed and analysed in the stories. The newspaper sports sections cover stories on the soccer teams and players, developments concerning sports coaches. In *Isolezwe*, there is a short feature called *Racegoer* that is dedicated to giving results of horse racing sport. This is evident of the pastime enjoyed by older readers of newspaper on horse race betting. It is a tradition of many newspapers including English titles targeted at the black market to feature results from horse racing games in their publications.

Some examples of the articles on soccer are: *soccer player in conflict with Bobby Motaung and Kaizer Chiefs (Isolezwe NgeSonto 29 September 2019 Page 18)*; *Eric Tinkler, Maritzburg United coach, is impressed with the performance of his club against Chippa United in the Absa premiership league (Isolezwe NgeSonto 29 September 2019 Page 18)*.

Some of the stories that made sports news include: *Mamelodi Sundowns players vow to keep their coaches word to win the MTN 8 after he has not been winning this tournament in a long time and the Bafana Bafana national soccer team looking for a new coach to assist the team's 2022 vision (Isolezwe 15 August 2019 Page 31)*. Soccer is a widely supported sport in South Africa, this is evident in the number of stories published by *Isolezwe* on this type of sport.

In some issues, there are news on major events on other sports such as rugby, boxing, tennis, golf, and swimming. News on other sports that appear in the newspaper are usually about large international tournaments, the coverage of *South Africa versus Namibia at the 2019 rugby world cup is included, news on an international golf tournament. KwaZulu-Natal amateur boxing champion plans to make it in professional boxing*.

#### **5.3.3.2 Social and community issues**

This category of stories refers to news emanating from the public and community space. The *Isolezwe* newspaper covers a wide range of stories on social issues such as crime and legal proceedings, local community news, public service issues and public announcements. There are

also stories on community heroes doing good deeds such as stories about public protests for service delivery.

Many stories on social and community issues focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region. Out of 174 articles analysed, 24% of these articles focus on social and community issues. On the front page of *Isolezwe*, articles on social and community issues gain prominence at 36% of news featured as front-page headlines. Interestingly, the length of the stories on social and community issues varies. Other news stories are short and offer a factual report of the news event. At the same time, other news stories devote much attention and cover in-depth a certain issue. These are found to occupy half or full page.

Social and community issues has a high percentage of stories focusing on the KwaZulu-Natal region. With regards to the geographic focus of stories, 83% of stories on social and community issues focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region, and only 17% of social issues are of national interest, thus, some of the stories that were featured focused on *water issues in South Africa*. (*Isolezwe* 15 August 2019 Page 8). Public services issues also appear such as story about a *woman given ARV instead of BP prescription*; (*Isolezwe* 17 August 2019 Page 5). *The story on Pastor Timothy Omotoso's rape case in Port Elizabeth*. (*Isolezwe* 15 August 2019 Page 13).

Relating to social issues, another story is seen of a *Grade R learner from Udumo primary school in Claremont, who sustains burn injuries in school* (*Isolezwe NgeSonto* 29 September 2019 Page 11). There is also a section displaying photos of events attended and submitted by the readers of the newspaper *Imicimbi events*, every Thursday. The *Isolezwe* newspaper writes stories about social issues happening in the KwaZulu Natal region, as the area of interest. There are limited stories of social issues of national interest.

This finding of social and community news coverage in *Isolezwe* newspaper is aligned with the social responsibility theory that is concerned with the ideal role and responsibility the media is expected to fulfill in society to achieve certain social values for the benefit of individuals and society (McQuail 2010:162 & Fourie 2009:179). The content analysis reveals that *Isolezwe's* coverage of such news stories shows a commitment of the newspaper to giving an account of the day's news.

#### **5.3.3.3 Entertainment news:**

Entertainment news is another theme that appears in the newspaper frequently. Entertainment news makes up 17% of the 174 articles analysed. On the front page of *Isolezwe*, 28% of headlines are on entertainment news. KwaZulu-Natal local entertainment stories constitutes 33% of news

on entertainment. Entertainment stories of national interest are at 67%. *Isolezwe* newspaper gives sizeable attention to entertainment news stories. The newspaper contains entertainment stories ranging from entertainment news, celebrity gossip; broadcast soap previews; broadcast schedule, and popular culture (music; poems) reviews. Some of the entertainment stories that were featured included *the war between maskandi (isiZulu traditional music) artist Bahube and Thwasa Le Khansela (Isolezwe NgeSonto 29 September 2019 Page 16)*.

*Mlindo The Vocalist* has been accused of using a song by another artist without giving them credit (*Isolezwe 27 September 2019 Page 5*). In other entertainment news stories, Professor, a musician, invites submission of songs from people willing to work with him. News on three South African musicians who obtained at the Afrikan Music Magazine Awards (*Isolezwe Ngo Mqibelo 17 August 2019 Page 12*).

Some stories in *Isolezwe* appear to be sensational. Such stories included a story of *a traditional healer from Pietermaritzburg who claimed that there is a rise in the number of men who want traditional medicine (muti) to control and make their women submissive (Isolezwe 17 August 2019 Page 5)*. A woman complains about a lack of intimacy in her relationship with a pastor, as they are not married yet (*Isolezwe 15 August 2019 Page 18*). Its clear *Isolezwe* newspaper relies on entertainment, gossip and sensational news story to attract readers to the publication.

This finding proves that *Isolezwe* prioritise the coverage of entertainment news. According to the uses and gratifications theory, this fact relates to affective needs. Affective needs refer to emotional experience gained by reader through escaping reality with enjoyable experience to pass time such as entertainment. The amount of entertainment headlines appearing on the front page and news stories covering entertainment shows that *Isolezwe* newspaper appeals to readers emotions.

#### **5.3.3.4 Politics/government:**

Following the entertainment, another news content theme appearing in *Isolezwe* is stories about politics and government issues. It is found that out of 174 *Isolezwe* newspaper articles analysed, 16% are articles covering political and government news. On the front page of *Isolezwe* newspaper, political headlines rarely appear at only 4% of headlines on the front page devoted to politics and government news.

Concerning the geographic focus of political and government news, it is found that *Isolezwe* covers 40% of local politics in KwaZulu-Natal and 60% national politics. Some political stories

analysed in the selected newspaper issues included the *story on the Zondo Commission (Isolezwe 13 August 2019 Page 11)*, *ANC wants to build unity in the KwaZulu-Natal region (Isolezwe 27 September 2019 Page 14)*, *Supra Mahomapelo, former North West Premier open a case against other officials in the province (Isolezwe 27 September 2019 Page 6)*, *IFP, UDM verbal altercation in KwaZulu-Natal (Isolezwe NgeSonto 29 September 2019 Page 6)* and a story about a *Mayor beaten at a meeting in Newcastle by municipal workers (Isolezwe 27 September 2019 Page 5.)*

Through news reports on other media, the researcher learns that the political landscape in KwaZulu-Natal is controversial, with many political killings happening. However, the study has found that stories of such magnitude are rarely covered in the newspaper. The insufficient coverage of political news stories as seen in the content analysis of *Isolezwe* newspaper is in opposition to critical-monitorial function of media in developing states. According to van Grondelle (2019:23) the role of media in developing states like South Africa is to be watchdog by reporting political misconduct as they become aware of it.

#### **5.3.3.5 Economics/business/finance**

Various news stories on the economy and business appear in the newspaper. *Isolezwe* covers the challenges faced by various economic sectors, and opportunities available. With regards to economics, business and finance, the study has found that out of 174 newspaper articles, only 7% communicate stories on the economy, business, or finance. News on the economy, business, and finance did not appear on the front page of the issues analysed. Stories on business, finance, and economy focus on 17% of local news, while 83% of stories are based on national business and economic issues.

*Isolezwe* appear to be a newspaper that is active participant in the economic issues of the country and empowers its reader with publishing news on economics and business. This finding proves that *Isolezwe* newspaper is concerned with poverty reduction and economic development. The CDMT and Africa development communication theory hold the media accountable for supporting efforts geared towards economic development and poverty reduction (Fourie 2009:198; McQuail 2010:92; Baran & Davis 2012:149).

Every Thursday, there is a section on economics publishing stories on business and finance. The agriculture sector gets regular features in the economics section. Some of the news stories that made into the economics section of *Isolezwe* include *Internet banking scam alert (Isolezwe 15 August 2019 Page 24)*, *Financial assistance for the agricultural sector (Isolezwe 13 August 2019*

Page 17), *Fixing the ailing SABC* story on the financial crisis faced by the national broadcaster (*Isolezwe NgeSonto* 29 September 2019 Page 14) and *the protests in the banking sector* (*Isolezwe* 25 September 2019 Page 8).

The *Isolezwe* newspaper presents economic and business stories of various kinds from educational pieces on specific industries such as agriculture to updates on economic issues such as protests and latest information on business and economic markets. Although these stories appear to be scant, but to have a section devoted to business and economics intellectually entices the reader.

#### **5.3.3.6 Development news**

Development news appear in sections and columns that deal with issues on women empowerment, social, cultural, moral development, education, health, and lifestyle. Out of the 174 *Isolezwe* newspaper articles, it is noted that only 12% communicate development issues. Only 4% of front-page headlines analysed cover news on development issues. KwaZulu-Natal development news appears at 38% coverage while national development issues are at 62%. It is commendable for *Isolezwe* newspaper as an indigenous language tabloid to publish stories on development issues. However, the *Isolezwe* newspaper publishes development news of different themes, ranging from education to women empowerment, health issues as well as cultural and moral issues.

Every Wednesday, there is a section on education. This section features news on the latest developments in the education sector and schools. There is a story on *a rural primary school Ready to teach Maths and Science*" (*Isolezwe* 25 September 2019 Page 10). In *Isolezwe ngomQgibelo*, the Saturday version of the paper, there is a lifestyle section carrying news on health issues and other lifestyle issues such as dating and travelling.

A female columnist Zonke Shazi Hlongwane writes a regular column on morality issues titled the *Future is mine*. In *Isolezwe Ngo Mgqibelo* (17 August 2019 Page 24), she writes a column about how South African youth has lost faith. Also, on the Saturday edition, there is a column by *Buza Ku Magumede* dedicated to women's lifestyle issues such as women's health, sex, and relationship issues. On the issue, *Isolezwe Ngo Mgqibelo*, there appears a story about how women can satisfy men sexually and a feature that presents some questions and answers about relationships.

The *Isolezwe ngeSonto* (Sunday edition) newspaper has a column *Ngokubona Kwami* (in my view) written by a female columnist Jacinta Ngobese and focuses on issues affecting women. This

column presents current affairs relating to women. There is a story on the release of Nobabalo, a South African female who was sentenced for drug trafficking in Thailand (*Isolezwe NgeSonto* 29 September 2019 Page 12).

During women's month, in August, there are stories about women achieving great strides. *Mroza Ukhozi Fm Dj climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, representing women in a project with the Nelson Mandela foundation* (*Isolezwe* 13 August 2019 Page 18). On women's development and lifestyle issues, there is a story about a woman bodybuilder from the University of Johannesburg (*Isolezwe* 17 August 2019 Page 5). On heritage month, some of the headlines appearing on the newspaper are *the President promoting the use of native language*" (*Isolezwe* 25 September 2019 Page 6); *Virginity testing celebrated in Kwa- Dukuza* (*Isolezwe* 25 September 2019 Page 3).

The *Isolezwe* newspaper adheres to the conditions of the CDMT and Africa's development communication theory. That indigenous language media is an important tool to be used to inform the public about development projects and the SDGs (Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:25; Ndlovu 2015:29). As seen in the content analysis of newspaper issues from months of national significance August and September. *Isolezwe* newspaper coverage of development news is in agreement with Fourie (2009:198) that indigenous language media must be used to facilitate the promotion of government-set national goals and cultural identity.

*Isolezwe* newspaper is imbued with opinion sections, where readers write articles to the editor. In this section, readers express their thoughts and feelings on various topics. Articles on the opinion section focus mainly on social, development, and moral stories. Below is the bar graph and the frequency table counting types of news stories appearing in *Isolezwe*. For a tabloid newspaper, *Isolezwe* appears to be a great source of information, because through its columns and sections on development topics; it keeps readers abreast on development issues.



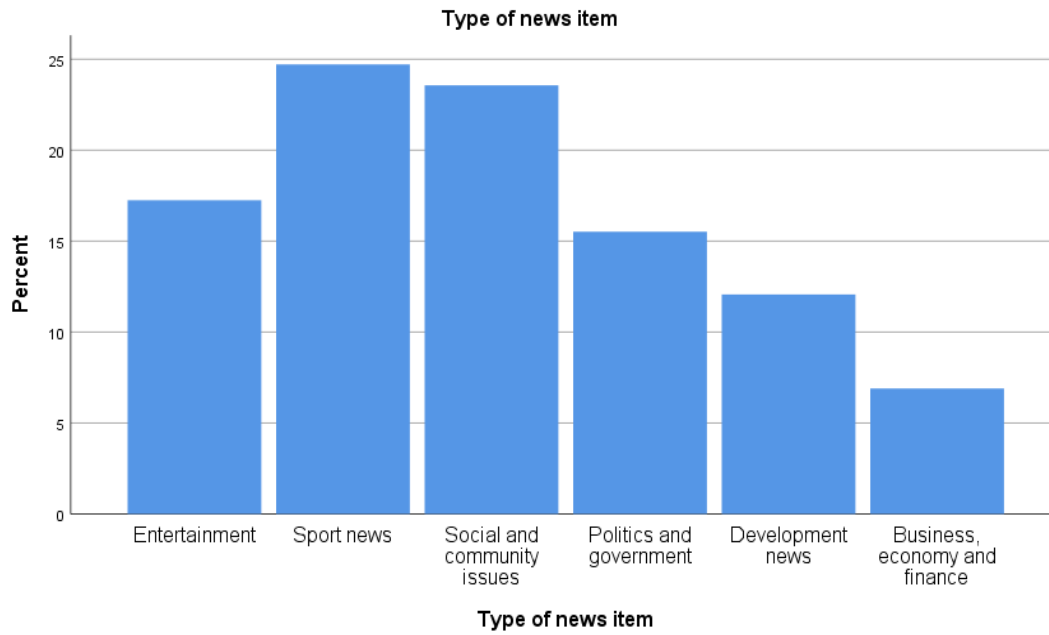


Figure 3 Type of news item reveals the frequency of various news themes in the selected sample of newspapers

Type of news themes appearing in 174 articles from seven issues of <i>Isolezwe</i>		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	1 Entertainment	30	17.2	17.2
	2 Sport news	43	24.7	24.7
	3 Social and community issues	41	23.6	23.6
	4 Politics and government	27	15.5	15.5
	5 Development news	21	12.1	12.1
	6 Business, economy and Finance	12	6.9	6.9
	Total	174	100.0	100.0

TABLE 3: Frequency of news themes

#### **5.4 Advertising in *Isolezwe* Newspaper**

There are various types of newspaper advertisements displayed in the *Isolezwe* newspaper. As a result, quantifying all advertisements may be a challenge. For ease of exploring advertising in *Isolezwe* newspaper, the researcher excludes classified advertisements because they appear in the newspaper section only devoted to classifieds, and no news stories appear in the classifieds section.

Classified advertisements usually appear across two to four pages in the back pages of the newspaper. The argument is that readers may opt to read the classified or not. This section only explores and counts advertisements appearing on the front page, the sports section, and the inside pages of the newspaper and excludes those in the classified section.

Various types of advertisements of different sizes and objectives appear in the *Isolezwe* newspaper. A regular advertisement type is that of display advertisements, and these usually occupy half or full page. It is usually grocery and furniture stores as well as products such as cosmetics and electronics who purchase such advertisements. Insert advertisements in the newspaper include a product or service for car dealerships; herbal products; and funeral services. There are many sale advertisements promoting special offers of certain products and services including clothing stores, and hotel hardware suppliers.

Business card advertisements appear in the newspaper, which usually introduce certain companies and services (Bed and breakfast business, driving school). The front page of the *Isolezwe* newspaper has leading stories, headlines, and advertisements of various sorts. Display advertisements occupy a substantial part of the page, and business card adverts appear on every front page of the newspaper issues that have been analysed.

Proceeding pages contain display advertisements, business card advertisements, and sale advertisements. Inside pages of the newspaper are also decorated with various types of advertisements, and every page in all the issues analysed contained an advertisement or more. Inside pages of *Isolezwe* newspaper seen carrying insert ads of certain products which are full page in length and half-page and full-page display advertisements.

The sports section at the back of the newspaper is flooded with two pages of classified advertisements, coupons providing information about product offers; sale ads which promote special sales of product and services. Business card ads also appear, which mainly contain a short description of the business and contact details. Other advertisements that appear in sports pages include display advertisements which are usually large and fit half to a full page. On every page in the sports section, advertisements appear.

The following are the number of newspaper advertisements counted in the selected *Isolezwe* newspaper issues.

<b>NEWSPAPER DATE</b>	<b>DAY OF THE WEEK</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ADVERTS</b>
13 August 2019	Tuesday	<b>23</b>
15 August 2019	Thursday	<b>40</b>
17 August 2019	<i>Isolezwe ngo Mqgibelo</i> (Saturday edition)	<b>30</b>
25 September 2019	Wednesday	<b>29</b>
27 September 2019	Friday	<b>39</b>
29 September 2019)	<i>Isolezwe nge Sonto</i> (Sunday edition)	<b>32</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>193</b>

TABLE 4: Number of newspaper advertisements per issue

This finding on advertising in *Isolezwe* newspaper illuminates the prevalence of commodification of news and its associated profit accumulation objective of media operating in capitalist societies. Li (2015:14) and Fuchs (2016:10). The media in a capitalist society thrives on profit accumulated through commodification of news and advertising in the media.

## **5.5 Digital Communication Properties in the Print Newspaper:**

*Isolezwe* newspaper is also available online with a growing readership of the digital versions of the newspaper. In addition to the newspaper website, *Isolezwe* has an e-version (digital version replica) of the newspaper, which is available for subscription. The *Isolezwe* print version of the newspaper contains handles or links to the digital platforms of *Isolezwe* Facebook, Twitter, and number for short message service. Publisher Audience Measurement Survey (2017) states that only 51% of *Isolezwe* readers have access to a smartphone, and 81% use their smartphones to access *Isolezwe* newspaper online.

This finding proves an observation by Jeffreys (2015:52), Rodny-Gumede (2017:15) that mass media has also experienced the impact of expanding communication technologies. Through this content analysis it is discovered that *Isolezwe* is rich in digital assets and is active in the relevant digital platforms of communication. Furthermore, the adaptation and development of digital communication assets demonstrates that African countries as explained by Willems & Mano (2017:1) experience growth in access to digital technologies and ICT is essential to everyday life in Africa. The next section integrates main findings from both research methods into one discussion of main findings.

## **5.6 Discussion of Main Findings**

This discussion of main findings combines findings from both research methods, the focus group and the content analysis. These findings connect the research results to the theoretical framework and the literature reviewed in the study.

### **5.6.1 *Isolezwe* fulfils media functions in society**

The *Isolezwe* newspaper derives its popularity from its power to fulfil the expected role of African media in society. A close examination of the results from two focus group interviews and the content analysis revealed three main reasons readers favour the *Isolezwe* newspaper. These reasons are summed up in the factors of geographic and cultural proximity, as well as news timeliness. The reasons mentioned above reflect the role *Isolezwe* is playing in society.

#### **5.6.1.1 Cultural identity**

Another central feature of a study on mass media, language, and society is that of identity. Marx (2007:80) and Bell (1995:23), reiterate that South Africa is a developing democratic country, with shifts in political, economic, and cultural spaces; media usage shape and reflect the language and culture of the nation. The focus group interviews showed that language is one of the main reasons

readers like the newspaper. It was seen in the results of the content analysis that all 174 articles published in seven issues of *Isolezwe* newspapers are written in the isiZulu language.

This finding of the study reflects the description of media as an important social institution that promotes and transmit culture (Bell 1995:1). The decision by the newspaper organisation to publish in the isiZulu language and the readers' voluntary selection of the *Isolezwe* newspaper indicates identification with the reader's culture and a reflection that media and language are important carriers of culture (Thiongo 1993:37; Cotzee & Roux 2003:345).

African language newspapers play a role in language and cultural preservation. Ngulube (2012:3) argues that to revive the dying indigenous languages of South Africa, it is important to publish newspapers in South African languages. As seen in the literature review section of this study, publishing newspapers in African languages revives the culture and the language. The isiZulu language is a South African language with the most mass published newspapers (Madlala 2014:59). However, there are local newspapers in other African languages. The *Isolezwe* newspaper is a mass-distributed newspaper, and its success emanates from the financial muscle of its founding company Independent newspapers (Moller 2014:4).

It stands that more effort must be exercised towards developing more mass distributed newspapers in other South African indigenous languages such as Sesotho, Sepedi, isiSwati, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, Setswana, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga. Strong reasons why African languages should be promoted are advanced by Ngulube (2012:3). It is believed that African languages facilitate the preservation of tangible and intangible value systems, preserve cultural identity for indigenous people and are a carrier of valuable African indigenous knowledge systems (Ngulube 2012:3; Wa Mberia 2015:58 & McDonnell 2012:28).

In support of the revival of African languages, Wa Mberia (2015:52) and Coetzee and Roux (2003:213) indicate that using an African language raises the self-esteem and confidence of people in society, and this leads to more productivity as people unlock creative and innovative responses to the social and physical environment (Wa Mberia 2015:58). In addition, Ndlovu (2015:30) points out that language has a huge impact on socio-economic development, and that language cannot be separated from empowerment. The growth of the *Isolezwe* newspaper readership and responses from the focus group interviews indicate a strong identification with the isiZulu culture and language are factors which attract readers to the *Isolezwe* newspaper.

### **5.6.1.2 Geographic proximity**

Nel (2006), Caple and Bednarek (2013), Tunez and Guevara (2009) outline important factors that determine news value or newsworthiness. A newsworthy factor salient in the findings of this study is the geographic proximity factor. Participants rely on the *Isolezwe* newspaper because the publication relays news events happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region. The content analysis found that out of 174 news articles analysed, 40% of news articles focused on the KwaZulu-Natal region.

This finding indicates that, in addition to the language factor, the geographic focus of stories in the KZN region attracts readership. This resonates with the theorem of the CDMT Africa development theory that regional media must cover news happening in a regional context than national stories. To be considered newsworthy, Nel (2006:49), Caple and Bednarek (2013:6), Tunez and Guevara (2009:5), state that a topic must focus on the geographic area of interest to the audience served by the newspaper.

Although this puts the newspaper in an advantageous position, some readers in the focus group interviews expressed an interest in news of national and international interest. This is supported by findings from previous studies which indicate that it is necessary for indigenous media to strive to connect people from various parts of society (Mytton 1983:5, Ugangu 2012:125).

### **5.6.1.3 News timeliness**

Readers of *Isolezwe* indicated that they like the newspaper because it reports recent news events. The content analysis findings corroborate that of focus group interviews with an observation that *Isolezwe* is a daily newspaper with weekend editions. The timeliness of the news is another factor that appeals to readers. An event is considered newsworthy if it is happening currently and fits the schedule of the media organisation (Caple & Bednarek 2013:6, Tunez & Guevara 2009:5). Since *Isolezwe* newspaper publishes daily and has weekend editions, the news is often current and relevant. The timeliness of news covered in the newspaper is another appeal *Isolezwe* has with its readers.

### **5.6.1.4 Development communication**

Ndlovu (2015:25) reiterates that if used productively, mass media is an important tool for disseminating development messages and encouraging mass participation. In African countries, Onwumechili and Ndolo (2013:25) maintain that private and public media are expected to support the government's development goals. African media should be empowering, not mere escapist (Mytton 1983:49; Ugangu 2012:83). Mass media plays a pivotal role in informing and mobilising people in the quest to achieve SDG (Ndlovu 2015:25).

From the literature, various scholars such as Ngulube (2012), Maluleka (2004), Callinicos (2006) and (Machet 2002) agree that African languages must be promoted through the media by using them to distribute development messages. As indicated by Ndlovu (2015), the media is expected to assist society in achieving SDGs.

The content analysis has revealed that *Isolezwe* newspaper publishes news stories on development issues. In the focus group interviews many readers seem to not be aware of the advent of development communication, to which newspapers are obliged. Not many themes related to development news were raised during focus group interviews. The content analysis counted development news in the *Isolezwe* newspaper to be at 12% out of the 174 articles that were analysed.

Findings of the content analysis reveal that development news appear in some exclusive sections and columns in *Isolezwe* and deal with various development issues from women empowerment, social and moral development. Articles on development that appear in the newspaper cover news on education, health, lifestyle, women, and children. In line with the recommendations by UNESCO and Africa's development theory as postulated by Onwumechili and Ndolo (2013:25), and Ndlovu (2015:25), women issues are prioritised in the *Isolezwe* newspaper, as there are three regular columns written by women and oriented towards women issues in the newspaper.

Stories in the *Isolezwe* newspaper empower and liberate women. The *Isolezwe* newspaper reflects a particular discourse of autonomy that characterises feminist studies in critical theory (Feltham-King and Macleod 2016:4). Women are portrayed as resourceful people. There are few stories where women are portrayed as victims, usually crime stories against women and stories of abuse.

Within the social space, *Isolezwe* contains information about news and events of national significance. South African public holidays constitute the significant national days analysed in this study; 1 January New Year; 21 March Human Rights; 10 April Good Friday; 13 April Family day 27 April Freedom Day; 1 May Workers Day; 16 June Youth Day; 9 August Women's Day; 24 September Heritage Day; 16 December Day of Reconciliation; 25 December Christmas Day; 26 December Day of Goodwill. The focus group interview took place in August, the National Women's month and simultaneous content analysis happened in September, South Arica's heritage month.

Both research methods arrived at the finding that the *Isolezwe* newspaper published news relating to these significant national days. This finding espouses the principles of the African development

theory that media content should focus on issues of national cultural identity and government development goals as symbolised by various significant national days (Fourie 2009:198 Onwumechili & Ndolo 2013:80).

From the focus group interviews, both male and female participants indicate their appreciation of news that are of national significance. Participants agree that *Isolezwe* writes stories on national significant events or news such as South African significant dates: Heritage month and Women month as seen during data collection. The content analysis also identified stories relating to these significant national events, women's month and heritage month.

Although traces of development communication are not vocal from the focus group interviews, the content analysis identified the development of communication messages. This finding demonstrate that the *Isolezwe* newspaper is oriented towards Africa development communication theory which maintains that messages of development; emanating from various sources must focus on different subjects, health, education, poverty reduction, women, and children.

These finding prove that the *Isolezwe* newspaper is aligned with the theorem of CMDT that media must focus on coverage of private and public events that contribute to development. With this finding it is clear that the *Isolezwe* newspaper communicates messages on development communication. This makes the newspaper a great source of information about such issues and a perfect choice for readers because they identify not only with the stories but also the language in which they are written.

As seen in the content analysis results, development news is covered only at 12%. This appears to be insufficient in a developing country with limited African language media with an obligation to use African languages in the communication of development messages. Perhaps coverage of more development news in *Isolezwe* newspaper might benefit the readers.

Also, with development news, certain development topics are falling under SDG not being covered in the newspaper. News relating to sustainable development goals such as climate change, conservation, and promotion of the environment; and creating partnerships for sustainable development and women is not covered in the newspaper.



### **5.6.2 *Isolezwe* satisfy individual readers' needs**

The literature review discovered that exposure to media content is the main source of media gratification (Lin 1999:201). This means the content is what attracts the audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper. This is confirmed by focus group findings where all respondents from both interviews expressed satisfaction with the content of the newspaper as a motivation for regular consumption.

With regards to news content in *Isolezwe* newspaper, responses from the focus group interviews and the content analysis indicate various types of stories appear in *Isolezwe* newspaper. Desired story types include sports news, entertainment, social and community issues; erupt from the focus group interviews as favourites among readers.

*Isolezwe* newspaper satisfies a need for entertainment news. Readers expressed an interest in *Isolezwe* coverage of entertainment news. The newspaper contains entertainment stories ranging from entertainment news, celebrity gossip; broadcast soap previews; broadcast schedule, and popular culture (music; TV, radio, literature) reviews. Both male and female participants find entertainment news in the *Isolezwe* newspaper appealing. Content analysis of 174 articles from seven issues of *Isolezwe* newspaper finds that 17% of stories focus on entertainment news.

This finding illustrates that readers select *Isolezwe* newspaper to satisfy their needs for entertainment stories. This finding lends credence to the uses and gratifications theory, affective needs. Readers actively select *Isolezwe* newspapers because of entertainment stories covered in the newspaper, which provide an escape from reality and an enjoyable experience and an outlet for relaxation or to relieve anger (Pitout 2017:393).

The male readers of the newspaper expressed favour towards *Isolezwe* newspaper because it covers sports stories. Upon close scrutiny of content in the newspaper, it is found that another theme that frequently appears in the newspaper is sports news. Out of 174 news articles analysed, 25% of news cover sports stories.

Uses and gratifications theory, which maintains that the audience selects media to satisfy needs (Lin 1999:201). Readers select *Isolezwe* newspaper because they want to satisfy their reading appetite for sports news in their own isiZulu language. This demonstrates readers' affective needs for entertainment and sports to pass time with enjoyable experiences (Pitout 2017:393). Furthermore, with sports, readers of the newspaper also have a personal integrative need where they belong to a support group of a certain sports team, i.e. Kaizer Chiefs or Orlando Pirates fans.

News on social and community issues appears to be another favoured theme in the *Isolezwe* newspaper. From focus group interviews, readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper expressed favour towards stories on social and community issues ranging from crime stories and legal proceedings, social problems, community news, and current affairs. The content analysis found that most news stories appearing in the *Isolezwe* newspaper focus on social and community issues. Also seen that most social and community issues are drawn from the KwaZulu-Natal region. The front page of the newspaper also features a high number of stories on social and community issues.

Findings from the focus group interviews and content analysis point to an intersection between uses and gratifications theory as well as the social responsibility theory. Cognitive needs as a typology of the uses and gratifications theory maintain that readers consume media because they seek information about the environment, society, and the world (Fourie 2017:392; Branson & Stafford 2010:382, Lin 1999:201). In the context of the social responsibility theory, the press must give an accurate, truthful, fair, and objective news reporting of the day's events (Skerjodol 2001:34 & Yadava 2017:54).

### **5.6.3 Criticism against *Isolezwe* newspaper**

Inherent in a research study that explores what attracts the audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper is a question of what detracts the audience from *Isolezwe* newspaper. Answers to this question expressed a few points of criticism against the newspaper under study. Fourie (2017), Fuchs (2016), and McQuail (2010) confirm the existence of a rebellion against the influence of media and society in the creation of culture, known as the critical theory of media. Findings to the question of what detracts or does not appeal to the audience are in tune with principles of the critical theory. Advertising, commodification, and ideological content are observed when analysing media from a political economy perspective of the critical theory (Fuchs 2016:7).

#### **5.6.3.1 Advertising and commodification**

Findings from the focus group interview revealed that readers of *Isolezwe* are discontent with the number of advertisements in the newspaper. The newspaper is seen by its readers to contain excessive advertisements than news. This is testimonial of an assertion by Fourie (2017:135) that in a capitalist economy, the media as a social structure is motivated by the idea of making a profit. In addition, Fuchs (2016:10) maintain that mass media in capitalist society thrives on advertising.

With this finding, the commodification of the *Isolezwe* newspaper is evident. Within cultural studies, media is seen as a cultural product that embodies characteristics of a commodity that prioritises exchange over value (Liz 2015:14). The presence of advertisements in the newspaper is an

indication of the commodification of the *Isolezwe* newspaper. Seeing the rejection of excessive advertising by readers, it stands true the assertion made that commodification and advertising are detrimental to the media audience because media audiences are seen as an object for economic profit accumulation (Liz 2015:14).

The findings of the content analysis indicate that advertisements in the selected *Isolezwe* newspaper were counted to determine the truth of the critic by readers from the focus group interviews. It is found true that *Isolezwe* newspaper contains excessive advertisements than news. Out of the six selected *Isolezwe* newspaper issues, there are 193 advertisements, excluding the classified pages, whilst there are 174 news stories. Commodification and advertising in *Isolezwe* are seen to generate a profit to meet the business needs of the publishing organisation Independent Media.

The newspaper must strike a healthy balance between advertisements and news stories. The value derived from advertising and commodification does not translate to the satisfaction of readers' needs and preferences. It should also be acknowledged that consumers are buying this newspaper. This entails that the newspaper is making money from both the consumers and advertisers.

### **5.6.3.2 Tabloidisation**

Another criticism levelled against *Isolezwe* is the insufficient coverage of political news and international news. This is not surprising considering that tabloid newspaper is characterised by a focus on human interest stories and diversion from economic and political issues. Mapudzi (2009:13) observes that tabloids focus more on human interest stories, celebrity gossip, entertainment sports, scandals, and crime stories; than serious news like politics and the economy.

*Isolezwe*, being a modern daily newspaper, fits the description of tabloid newspapers in that it focuses more on news stories about scandals, entertainment, and sports. The defendants of tabloid journalism have pointed out that tabloids provide an alternative view of reality and benefit the public sphere by undermining the elite to dominate mediated debate (Wasserman 2008:5). However, *Isolezwe*, as a tabloid with a growing number of isiZulu readers, has wide appeal for readers. This is on account of the finding by Wasserman and Ndlovu (2015:142) that tabloids appeal to specific reader interest. As noted in the previous section, *Isolezwe* appeals to readers of the newspaper on factors of culture, geographic proximity, and satisfaction with the content.

Readers of *Isolezwe*, although they raise some criticism, they are generally satisfied with the newspaper.

Criticism against the critical theory lie in the fact it discounts the informative, educational and entertainment value of media (Fourie 2017:143). This is the case with *Isolezwe*, despite being a tabloid, the newspaper holds strong identification with its readers because it fulfils the role of mass communication in society. The finding reveals that *Isolezwe* is a tabloid, but with strong ideals of social, cultural, and economic development, as seen in the variety of news stories covered in the newspaper.

It is found that although readers of the *Isolezwe* newspaper are satisfied with the newspaper, there exists a need for in-depth political news coverage as well as more national and international news stories. The researcher also noted that KwaZulu-Natal is a province with many political related killings, but none of these stories makes it to *Isolezwe* newspaper. Although geographic proximity is a factor of attraction for readers, the findings reveal other readers need stories of national and international focus. With this finding, it becomes imperative that *Isolezwe* newspaper strives for political news coverage and a balance between local, national, and international news.

#### **5.6.3.3 Newspaper availability**

This study discovered that *Isolezwe* newspaper is hard to find in local shops at Alexandra township. The researcher took the initiative to discuss this with the *Isolezwe* distribution office. It is found that newspaper distribution, especially to townships in Gauteng, is disturbed by crime to which the delivery team has been a target. *Isolezwe* distribution office confirmed that Alexandra township is not on the list of areas in which the newspaper is delivered around Gauteng. This study focuses on *Isolezwe* newspaper published by Independent News, therefore cannot conclude whether other newspapers are subject to the same distribution problem.

#### **5.6.3.4 African language media and the digital divide**

Participants from both focus group interviews did not have access to smartphones or regular internet connection. This is due to socio-economic factors to which participants are subject and the digital divide apparent in various societies. Therefore, it becomes imperative that in a discussion of the technology used for the development and empowerment of native languages, the concept of a digital divide must be considered as it reflects the disparities of access to the latest information communication technologies.

As highlighted in the previous section, the *Isolezwe* newspaper poor distribution channels to Gauteng townships. The use of the internet enables readers to access the newspaper online and could offset challenges of distribution. Because of the lower LSM measures prevalent in the hostels or indigenous isiZulu communities, many residents who are indigenous readers do not have access to smartphones or regular internet.

The *Isolezwe* newspaper is also available online with a growing readership of digital versions of the newspaper. In addition to the newspaper website, *Isolezwe* has an e-version (digital version replica) of the newspaper, which is available for subscription, and the *Isolezwe* website. Every issue of *Isolezwe* print version of the newspaper contains links to the digital platforms of *Isolezwe* Facebook, Twitter and a subscription number for short message service. With the evidence of *Isolezwe* digital platforms, it is clear that *Isolezwe* recognises the role of the internet and ICT in empowering native languages. It is also evident that the internet is a central part of the life of information communication technologies.

It is believed by the proponents of Information communication technology for development theory that adopting the latest information and communication technology helps develop industries, economies, and countries (Onwumehili & Ndolo 2014:14). A theorem in CDMT Africa development theory postulates that the latest forms of communication, such as new media, are important because they add to the variety of message types. *Isolezwe* newspaper takes advantage of digital communication technologies, as it is available in numerous digital platforms of various sorts.

Previous studies reveal that, in South Africa, internet connectivity is unevenly spread according to socio-economic class factors as indicated in the literature by (Wasserman 2002:14, Martindale 2007:1, Ouane & Glanz 2010:19). Nhedzi (2018:21) attests that access to the news online depends on the socioeconomic status, age and educational attainment. People who are older, less educated and belonging to the lower socioeconomic status consume traditional media (Nhedzi 2018:21). In addition to being a domain for the privileged in society, digital media is largely adopted by younger generations with high social status.

South Africa's black population has limited access to the internet which largely is a result of the apartheid and post-apartheid inequities. To support this, Nhedzi (2018:35) emphasises that economic conditions faced by a majority of the black population minimise access to digital media as a result of the issue of exposure and affordability.

On the issue of African languages and digital media, this study settles that if the latest forms of communication technology and native languages will empower South African society, poorer segments of the population must be equipped with the technology and skills for using technology. In addition, the latest forms of digital communication must also adopt South African indigenous languages as alternative forms of communication.

Lastly, it has been established that indigenous language print newspaper in South Africa is still sustainable in the tough industry challenged by technological developments. This is consistent with Nhedzi (2018:36) findings that Africa cannot replace traditional media with digital media yet, because more readers of indigenous South African languages are still semi-illiterate without access to digital media. This means perhaps newspaper and publication targeted at a niche market or specific community or cultural group might thrive in the time of declining newspaper sales.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the processes involved in analysing and interpreting findings from two research methods: focus group interviews and content analysis. Findings from both research methods are harmonised with theoretical framework and literature review in the discussion of main findings. Thematic analysis, as used in the focus group interviews, identifies, and describes content factors that appeal to readers. The content analysis describes and count the frequency of the main themes appearing in *Isolezwe* newspaper.

Readers of the newspaper like *Isolezwe* because it is written in isiZulu and covers news events happening in the KwaZulu Natal region. Participants in the focus group interviews enjoy reading sports and entertainment news as well as news stories on social and community issues. Content analysis discovered that the newspaper publishes stories on various social issues ranging from crime stories, community news, public service news, legal proceedings, with a strong focus on the KwaZulu-Natal region. Entertainment holds a strong presence in the newspaper with stories of entertainment news, celebrity gossip, broadcast television previews, and broadcast schedule.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The conclusion chapter provides a summative overview of this study. It is imperative that the concluding chapter in this study responds to research questions by integrating findings with theoretical framework and literature review. The first section of this chapter summarises all chapters within this research report. This section is followed by conclusions that are drawn from the responses to the research questions. This chapter is concluded by the recommendations, which are influenced by the research findings. Limitations borne to this study are also discussed. This concluding chapter also makes suggestions for future research avenues.

### **6.2 Chapter/Summaries**

#### **6.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction**

In this chapter, an introduction to this research study, is presented and the context in which this study is situated is explained. This chapter outlines the study by defining the research question and the context in which this study is situated. This chapter further identifies the research design and methods used in the study. More importantly, in chapter one the research objectives are formulated.

#### **6.2.2 Chapter 2: Theoretical framework**

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that directs this study. The theoretical framework is informed by mass media theories of Africa communication development theory, the normative theories, the uses and gratifications theory, social responsibility theory and the critical theory.

African development communication draws analytical insights from decoloniality and post-coloniality perspectives. Many scholars agree that, mass communication should facilitate the promotion of social and economic development and must hold the media accountable for supporting government development efforts (Onwumehili & Ndolo 2013:25). CDMT maintains that media content should focus attention on national culture and language factors.

The theoretical framework reveals that the social responsibility theory upholds the idea of a free and responsible press. According to the social responsibility theory, the media should give an accurate and comprehensive account of the day's news, presentation and clarification of societal goals and values and serve as a forum for exchanging comments.

Critical theory studies political economy, power, ideology, and exploitation inherent in media within a society (Fuchs 2016:1; McQuail 2010:132). The critical theory, as illuminated by Fourie (2017:126), is concerned with resistance against the influence of modern media as a cultural industry circulating capitalist ideology.

Uses and gratifications theory was adopted for the purposes of this study because it provides useful analytical tools for analysing factors that attract people to certain media and the benefits they derive from consuming certain media. By combining this extensive body of theories and the available literature, the researcher is better informed on possible explanations on what attracts the audience to native language newspaper.

### **6.2.3 Chapter 3: Literature Review**

The literature review was conducted to identify relevant insights into African language newspaper publishing in South Africa. The researcher engaged with various literature sources from communication scholars local and abroad. History of mass communication in South Africa was discussed according to the four phases of the press development. Roles of mass communication in Africa were outlined as: to keep people informed about their social, economic, political, and cultural environment.

Furthermore, it is imperative for a study on communication to examine technology used in communication. Digitisation and latest technologies of communication were thus discussed in this study. Within an African context, ICT is expected to contribute to the process of development. ICT4D is the theory reviewed in order explain how ICT can accelerate and propagate modernisation and development in third-world countries.

The literature revealed a relationship between language, society and development. Language rights are central to human rights because language is imperative to human interaction. Language and literacy are crucial for societal development. South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural nation. Television, films, newspapers, videos, and the internet have become widely spread and enjoyed popular culture forms. Therefore, the mass media is charged with the responsibility to create cultural products in African languages.

The literature reviewed has motivated for the support, promotion and usage of African languages. The way an individual perceives the world is created through language and limitations of the conceptual terminology of that language. The literature revealed that language plays a role in



socio-economic development. Mass media is an important tool for disseminating development messages and encouraging mass participation. It stands out from the literature that publishing newspapers, pamphlets, literature, and books in African languages helps in the revival and preservation of the language.

#### **6.2.4 Chapter 4: Research methodology**

This section elaborates on the research methods used in the study. Sections covered here include the identification and definition of the research design, the research methods, sampling techniques, and data analysis and interpretation. This study uses sequential mixed methods, and the researcher firstly collected and analysed qualitative data, then successively the collection and analyses of quantitative data occurred.

This study employs a mixed-methods research design with focus group interviews and content analysis as research methods. Two focus group interviews were conducted with participants who reside in IsiZulu community Nobuhle hostel in Alexandra township North of Gauteng. A content analysis examined six *Isol ezwe* newspaper issues selected from the months of August (2019) and September (2019). Non-probability purposive sampling is used in recruiting participants in a focus group interview and content analysis. Quantitative content analysis use frequency to count and display values of a variable. Data obtained from the analysis can be visually presented in tables and graphs.

Thematic analysis is used in this study to critically analyse spoken words from the focus group discussions and to identify meaningful categories or themes. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical implications to which it is subject, considering both media content and humans as research subjects.

#### **6.2.5 Chapter 5: Presentation of findings**

This chapter presented the findings obtained through the research methods of focus group interviews and content analysis. Since this study is a mixed-methods design, this chapter discusses the result of each research method separately (focus group; content analysis); thereafter integrates these findings on the discussion of the main findings in the last section of this chapter.

The main findings in this chapter encapsulate data from focus group interviews and content analysis. Then interprets this data in relation to the theoretical framework and literature review. The main findings contained in this chapter are responsive to the research questions of the study.

The study found out that both news and non-news factors attract an audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper. Non-news factors that attract the audience to the newspaper include the fact that the newspaper is written in isiZulu, the recent news published in the newspaper, and the fact *Isolezwe* publishes stories of news happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region. Readers favour *Isolezwe* newspaper because it is published in isiZulu language; writes fresh updated current news since it's a daily newspaper; also, because *Isolezwe* covers news events happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

The content analysis described and counted news themes raised in the focus group interviews and also prevalent in the newspaper articles. Sports news, social and community issues, and entertainment are themes that mostly emerged from the focus group interviews as favourites among readers.

This mixed methodology identifies themes coming out in the focus group interviews, and these themes are further quantified through the content analysis. Some news content themes were found to have an appeal with the readers of *Isolezwe* newspaper as it was raised during focus group interviews, and examined in the content analysis include Sports news, social and community issues, and entertainment. Readers indicated they would like to read more in-depth political stories and international news, and international sports stories *Isolezwe* newspaper. Findings also reveal that *Isolezwe* newspaper has fully adapted to the digital communication platforms, seen it's the newspaper available in various online platforms *Isolezwe* online version; *Isolezwe* website; *Isolezwe* Facebook; Twitter; WhatsApp and Short Message service.

### **6.3 General Conclusion of the Study**

The general conclusion is drawn to determine whether the findings obtained in chapter four meet the objectives of the study. The objectives of the study are to explore and describe what factors attract the audience to *Isolezwe* newspaper. Findings from two focus group interviews and the content analysis revealed three main reasons readers favour *Isolezwe* newspaper. The fact that the newspaper is written is IsiZulu, the recent news published in the newspaper and the fact *Isolezwe* publishes news happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region.

These factors confirm the literature reviewed, which states media and language are important carriers of culture. *Isolezwe* indicates identification with the reader's culture of isizulu, and this appeals to readers of the newspaper. Identification with isiZulu culture and the news stories

covering the KwaZulu-Natal region indicate the news value factor of proximity; geographic, and cultural proximity.

To be considered newsworthy, according to Nel (2006:49), Caple and Bednarek (2013:6), Tunez and Guevara (2009:5), a story must occur close to the audience's cultural or geographic community (Nel 2006:48; Caple & Bednarek 2013:3). Cultural proximity is apparent as readers like *Isolezwe* newspaper because it is written in their home language isiZulu. As an indigenous language newspaper, *Isolezwe* fulfils the role of language and cultural preservation.

KwaZulu-Natal appears to be the geographic area of interest to the audience served by the newspaper. IsiZulu newspaper *Isolezwe* is seen to cover news happening in the KwaZulu-Natal region, and this factor appeal to readers who identify with the newspaper because of its geographic proximity.

*Isolezwe*, as a daily newspaper, holds a strong appeal with readers because it covers recent news stories. *Isolezwe* newspaper publishes every weekday with weekend editions; the newspaper's capacity to cover recent news is no surprise. An event is considered newsworthy if it is happening currently and fits the schedule of the media organisation (Caple & Bednarek 2013:6, Tunez & Guevara 2009:5).

In addition to the above news value factors, Africa's development communication theory encourages that media must be in a language that is understood by the masses. *Isolezwe* newspaper is thriving in a multi-cultural and diverse country where language and cultural rights are promoted in the South African constitution.

Readers like *Isolezwe* newspaper because it appeals to specific readers' needs, as seen in the discussion of findings. This is to say, content is another major attraction for readers. Readers like to read various types of stories appearing in *Isolezwe* newspaper, sports news, entertainment, social and community issues are some news themes constantly emerging.

*Isolezwe* newspaper satisfies readers' appetite for stories on community and social issues, sports, and entertainment. Readers select *Isolezwe* newspaper they want to satisfy their affective needs for news on the above-mentioned themes.

The findings of this research reflect *Isolezwe* is oriented towards social responsibility and the uses and gratifications theories. *Isolezwe* news stories are found to report on the day's events and

provide information on events of social significance. Readers actively select *Isolezwe* newspaper to satisfy their information needs.

Although findings do not point serious criticism against *Isolezwe* newspaper, a lack of political coverage and excessive advertisements are some of the newspaper lowlights. This criticism relates to the critical theory and the advent of tabloidisation. It could benefit *Isolezwe* to cover in-depth political news and be mindful of the amount of advertising placed in the newspaper.

As African language newspaper, *Isolezwe* is in tune with principles of Africa development communication. With its language of publishing and geographic focus of news, *Isolezwe* newspaper has sections devoted to the development communication news. *Isolezwe* newspaper publishes news of development communication acoustical, and this is seen in news stories covering topics such as health, education, poverty reduction women, and children. These factors appear to attract readership to the newspaper.

In addition, *Isolezwe* relays messages on news and events of national significance, such as public holidays or events that contribute to development. In conclusion, *Isolezwe* readers prefer the newspaper because of the language in which it is published, the geographic focus of stories, and the type of news stories covered in the *Isolezwe* newspaper. Based on these findings, it is concluded that this study meets its exploratory and descriptive objectives. The following recommendations are made.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

In lieu of the research findings, this section provides recommendations to *Isolezwe* newspaper. These recommendations are formulated by relating findings in the study to the available literature. It is recommended that *Isolezwe* newspaper increase coverage of in-depth political stories. This recommendation is in tandem with stipulations of Africa mass development theory and the social responsibility theory that holds media under obligation to promote democratic political principles.

In addition to political news stories, another news type recommended for inclusion in *Isolezwe* is that of international news. Africa development theory and sustainable development goals hold that for development to accelerate, indigenous language readers must be informed about news happening in other countries with which they have close relations. The newspaper must strike a balance between the local and the global news.

*Isolezwe* newspaper must be consistent in the news production. With consistency in news reporting, it is recommended that *Isolezwe* follow up on the progress of news stories. In publishing consistent news stories, it is recommended *Isolezwe* must write stories congruent to the headline; avoid unnecessary exaggeration with an intent to capture the reader.

This paper must determine the appropriate amount of advertising in the newspaper. This recommendation indicates problems associated with the commodification of the newspaper. It is recommended that *Isolezwe* must attempt to write more news stories in the paper and display fewer advertisements.

Attempt to strengthen distribution channels of the newspaper. While print is relevant, the media house publishing *Isolezwe* newspaper must strive to ensure the paper reaches the reader. In addition, *Isolezwe* must attempt to migrate their readers by introducing and encouraging usage of digital media to access the publication.

South African government efforts to promote indigenous languages are noticeable with the constitution and the establishment of legislative bodies to preserve and promote native African language media such as MDDA and PanSALB. Another endeavour by government towards African languages could be conscientising the nation about the importance of promoting and preserving African languages. The following section discusses limitations of the study.

## **6.5 Limitations of the Study**

This study being a mixed methods design, certain limitations borne in one research method are compensated by the other. The content analysis focuses only on one isiZulu newspaper, and more could be gained through a comparative study with another IsiZulu newspaper. Focus group interviews supplement this research method by identifying themes to be analysed according to the readers' perspective.

Focus group interviews were conducted in the same location. Although the researcher targeted different isizulu communities, due to time and participant access constraints, the research is conducted in a single location, Nobuhle Hostel in Alexandra township, north of Gauteng. The following section discusses direction for future research.

## **6.6 Direction for Future Research**

With the expansion in communication technologies and *Isolezwe* maintaining a presence in these platforms, future research could look into how messages differ between online platforms and the print version. Online research may also examine how content is created to appeal to the audience on the platforms.

A study similar to this may be conducted as a comparative analysis between isiZulu newspapers, i.e., *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe*. Such a study can provide insight into how African language newspapers differ or shared commonalities. Furthermore, a study of this sort may be conducted as a discourse analysis looking at how meaning is constructed in the newspaper through the usage of isiZulu language. With the commercialisation and tabloidisation of newspapers, another relevant study could examine how advertisements in newspapers affect readership.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This research study on audience analysis of isiZulu language newspaper (*Isolezwe*) acknowledges the diminishing value of African languages. However, this study concludes that indigenous African languages have a promising future; and the mass media plays a major role. Mass media should prioritise development communication in indigenous African languages. In Africa, digital divide and economic status limits other segments of the population from access to latest communication technologies of internet and digital media. The South African government should strive incessantly to promote and preserve indigenous African languages.

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