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An analysis of pre-recorded street audio adverts in Zimbabwe: A *dariro* perspective

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Street vending has become the order of the day in Zimbabwe. Because of the popularity of vending, vendors have come up with various ways of making their goods visible in a highly populated market. Audio advertising is one of the most prominent ways used by vendors to reach their customers. Through an Afrocentric lens of the *dariro* theory of performance and participation, the study analyses the presentation and usage of discourse in the advertisement of goods by street vendors in the city of Gweru, Zimbabwe, through pre-recorded street audio adverts. The study analyses discourse and makes a critical appraisal of the implications of the discourse to the target audience. Steeped in discourse analysis, the study analyses recorded audio adverts in the context of their power to attract clients. The study establishes that vendors creatively and strategically deploy street audio adverts to attract customers in an environment that is densely populated and marked by stiff competition. The adverts are meant to draw the attention of consumers to the advertised goods. It concludes that using audio adverts conveys messages regarding goods on the market to the target audience, who upon receiving the messages act accordingly, which epitomises *dariro*.

Keywords: Street vending, market, economic, advertisements, customers, discourse

Introduction

Street vending is a reality the world over and it dates back to time immemorial. According to Sibhat (2014) it is necessitated by many factors, among which the state of the economy is one. The economic downturn in Zimbabwe over the past two decades has provided fertile ground for the proliferation of street vending. The policies that were enacted by the government of Zimbabwe beginning in 2000 have had a debilitating impact on citizens who among other things have turned to street vending to eke out a living. The economic quagmire that is being experienced by Zimbabweans today has its roots in the failure of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). Kanyenze et al. (2003) aver that the failure of ESAP to shift the economy into a better and sustainable growth path, especially its underperformance in terms of economic development and employment creation, left a legacy of poverty and marginalisation in urban areas. The economic conditions generated by ESAP contributed to a surge in street vending across Zimbabwe. Njaya (2014) notes that the economic turndown which followed structural adjustment programmes and led to unemployment and an increase in urban poverty left people with very few options, with street vending being among low capital potential livelihoods for poor urban dwellers. Several other policies and government programmes that included the compensation of war veterans, the land reform programme and the intervention of the government in the Democratic

Republic of Congo war has also exacerbated the crisis. These programmes resulted in high inflation and the closure of various firms. Because of these factors, the majority of Zimbabweans were left jobless and were subjected to abject poverty. Thousands graduate from universities and colleges each year, but there are no industries to employ them. This has resulted in astronomically high unemployment levels. Consequently, people have turned to street vending for survival. Among these street vendors are university and college graduates. Marapira (2013) says the economic meltdown has thrown citizens into cycles of outright poverty and socio-economic deterioration, prompting scores of urbanites to turn to street vending as a survival strategy. The economic situation has seen an unprecedented influx of street vendors in the urban centres of Zimbabwe. Street vending has become the only option for many given the limited options in Zimbabwe. Jimu (2004) argues that if correctly controlled in as far as liberty of economic opportunity is concerned, street vending could be a positive driver for socio-economic transformation and economic development for poor urban societies. The surge has resulted in the flooding of streets by vendors, a situation that calls for vendors to devise various means to increase their visibility.

The business environment in which vendors find themselves is characterised by intense competition prompting the development of new marketing strategies to ensure business growth. Consequently, advertising becomes an indispensable aspect of their daily operations.

While advertising has always been a part of business, it has evolved significantly in response to market changes and business demands. Madziba (2017: 51) tells us that '[i]n actual fact various studies have noted that not only has street vending grown exponentially in the diversity of its wares, but it has also taken some innovative dimensions in terms of scope, composition, shape and modes of operation'.

Among other innovations, street vendors have resorted to the use of audio advertisements as a strategy to capture the attention of consumers in a saturated market environment. Due to intense competition, vendors have adopted pre-recorded audio adverts to make their products known and to attract customers from a distance.

While advertising in general is not a new phenomenon, pre-recorded street audio advertisement is a relatively new development. It is used by street vendors as a solution to the stiff competition that they are exposed to in the streets. The economic environment that produces street language as a survival strategy has created a unique culture of street vending in Zimbabwe. Pre-recorded street audio advertisements can be defined as the recorded language articulated by vendors which has an interactional function as it does not merely inform the customers about the goods, but also capture their attention, encouraging them to purchase the goods. These are unique in the sense that they can be heard from a distance and they save the vendor the energy of physically calling for customers. Drawing examples from Gweru (the third largest city in Zimbabwe), we analyse the efficacy of the street audio advertisements.

Theoretical framework

Broadly, this study provides a discourse analysis of street audio adverts. Itai Muwati, among other Afrocentric scholars, accentuate the critical need for utilising African theories in understanding African reality. Ncube and Tomaselli (2019: 1) assert that 'studies employing indigenous African communication platforms and symbols are scarce', prompting Zimbabwean philosopher Tafataona Mahoso in Ncube and Tomaselli (2019) to argue that we have become so illiterate that we cannot read our constructions and symbols. In our rendition, we deploy *dariro* to make a critical appraisal of pre-recorded street audio adverts. Our preference for *dariro* is a response to the dearth of studies in communication that are anchored in indigenous African platforms. By so insisting, we seek to produce relevant knowledge that draws traction from African experiential needs. According to Hudson-Weems, in Muwati (n.d.), *dariro* is a term used by the Shona of Zimbabwe to connote or denote a circle. For the Shona, a circle is symbolic of the essence of African societal practices and processes. This circle is omnipresent in all aspects of the Shona people's culture. Muwati (n.d.), cited in Tembo et al. (2022: 4) conceptualizes *dariro* as follows:

Philosophically, *dariro* is a perspective, a paradigm and a world view. As both perspective and paradigm, *dariro* privileges agency and action in everyday

human experiences. It invokes strategic partnership with action. It is a world view because it defines a way of life and provides a framework of participation and performance.

Dariro is an Afrocentric theory of participation and performance that was propounded by Muwati (n.d.). Muwati in Muwati (n.d.: 15) notes that '[i]t is a perfect ontological blueprint for guiding politics, economics, religion and a host of everyday life experiences. Muwati further observes that *dariro* is the performance platform or zone for leveraging agency and for imbuing life with meaning. In our examination of pre-recorded audio adverts in the streets of Gweru city, we view the streets as a performance space that exhibits characteristics of *dariro*. The participants in this circle are the vendors and the customers. The vendors produce the adverts to which the customers respond. Hudson-Weems in Muwati (n.d.: 5) categorically notes that 'the circle can be observed in virtually every aspect of life recognised in our myriad daily activities which reflects our spiritual, cultural, social, political and economic lives'. The street therefore becomes the *dariro* in which a people's economic activities are enacted, thus a circle of performance and participation. The street reflects the participative and performative nature that characterises *dariro*. It is also important to note that street vending is characterised by agency and inclusiveness which are virtues of Muwati's *dariro* theory. Everyone in the *dariro* is an actor, and for that reason the street embodies the ideals of *dariro*. It is a site of performance, participation and interaction. In our rendition, we view the street as *dariro* since it is a site of performance, participation and interaction. Generally, the theory accounts for the performative, participative and inclusivity of the street as vendors strive to reach out to customers through their audio advertisements.

Definition of advertising

Advertising is an inalienable part of business. It is used for communicating business information to customers. It is a form of discourse that is used to promote goods. Khan (2007) states that advertising is a paid and non-personal form of presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor. Advertisements usually provide information about the product, and it cannot be separated from the seller and the buyer. The seller plays the role of putting words together to form an advertisement, and the buyer is the target of the advertisements.

Advertising is a very old phenomenon. According to Frolova (2014: 2),

its existence in prehistoric times is confirmed, for example, by an Egyptian papyrus with the information of the upcoming sale of a slave. It was presented by written or oral announcement touting a particular product or service.

This suggests that advertising can be traced back to the era of the slave trade where it was used to inform buyers about the slaves that were on the market. During that time, it was

in verbal form. It is important to recognise that the form and nature of advertising has not remained the same. It has responded to changes in the market which include new technology. Advertising has indeed embraced technological advancements and this has significantly changed the field of advertising. Frolova (2014: 3) holds that

[i]t is no exaggeration to say that the 20th century was the 'century of advertising' – at that time there were profound changes and innovations in the field of technology and advertising. It was in the 20th century when advertising became so popular – primarily due to the unprecedented growth rate of world industrial production, as well as due to the appearance of more and more sophisticated means of creating and distributing advertisements: multicolor printing, analog and then digital radio, television, satellite communications, and finally, computers and the Internet.

This suggests that advertising has not remained the same throughout the years. It has responded to times and has adopted changes that were brought in by technology. Today, pre-recorded audio advertising, particularly in Zimbabwe, is a common feature of street vending. This is a form of advertising where audio promoting goods is recorded and then played. The study therefore makes a critical appraisal of this form of advertising since it is widely used in street vending in the city of Gweru, Zimbabwe.

Research methodology

The study is qualitative in nature since it is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. The research consists of an investigation that needs answers to questions and it also provides findings that were not determined in advance. The qualitative design facilitates for the understanding of perspectives or meanings from the view of the researcher through textual interpretation. Through the qualitative approach, insights into the experiences of the developers of pre-recorded audio adverts and their perspectives can be ascertained. Qualitative research also provides findings which are applicable beyond the boundary of the study. The study specifically uses discourse analysis. Nine randomly selected pre-recorded audio adverts used in the streets of Gweru central business district were analysed through the discourse analysis approach. Discourse analysis is used in a wide range of academic pursuits and is concerned with how communities make meaning and communicate within and across varying cultural and social groups (Gee, 2011). In other words, discourse analysis is an approach that reveals how individuals imbue reality with meaning, and hence its applicability in this study. Used in the qualitative design paradigm, discourse analysis can provide a deeper understanding of audio adverts. Largely descriptive in nature, the approach enables the construction of appropriate localised interventions (Creswell et al., 2007). Such an approach explores the subject in more depth and leads to a holistic understanding of street audio advertisements.

Street audio adverts as informative and persuasive discourse

Some audio advertisements that are used by street vendors in the city of Gweru are informative in nature. They provide information to the consumers about the goods on the market, and then how the products work. The content of informative advertisements is largely factual and mainly focuses on capturing the attention of customers. Informative discourse aims at engaging people on the streets so that they know about the goods that are on the market.

Persuasive discourse is also used in the adverts, and is defined by Osborn and Osborn (1997) as the art of convincing others to give favourable attention to a point of view. This definition implies that the goal of persuasive advertisements is to convince the customers to buy the goods. The discourse, therefore, must focus on the positive aspects of the products being sold. This suggests that street audio advertisements are not designed haphazardly, but are carefully planned so that they are able to attract the admiring gaze of consumers. In the end, the discourse should be able to convince customers to buy the product.

In persuasive discourse, vendors should be creative to convince the customers to buy the product or goods on the market. Figurative language, like metaphors, similes and repetition are often used to convince the customers. Brown and Yule (1983) argue that the discourse of advertising is based on the assumption that text is produced with the intention to attract and persuade customers. This means that the discourse that is found in these pre-recorded audio advertisements play on the emotions of the consumers. It is a discourse that drives consumers towards the product. The street, we contend, aptly presents a stage where participation, performance and interaction find expression through adverts that are both informative and persuasive.

One such discourse was used by a vendor who sells second-hand clothing. The audio says

Huya uhodhe bhero.
Tine quality bales here.
Richangovhurwa.
Huya uhodhere mwana wako.
Kuvhura nekudhingura.
Dollar pamwana wako
Hodha bhero! Hodha bhero!
Tavhurawo pano.
Richangovhurwa
Kuvhura nekudhingura.
Hona mwana wako Hona mwana wako.
Dollar pamwana wako.
Mucheno wako woga.
Usatengera mwana uniform. Huya uhodhe.
 ('Come and buy clothes in bulk
 We have quality second-hand clothes here
 It has just been opened
 Come and buy for your baby on order price
 The bale has just been opened and is selling at a low price
 Buy your children's clothes for one dollar
 Buy clothes in bulk
 We have just opened
 Recently opened

Opening and selling at low price
 Look, they are good for your children
 Your children's clothes at one dollar
 Your own unique fashion
 Do not buy your child uniforms
 Come and buy at reduced price').

The advertisement provides information regarding what the vendor has on offer. In this case, the information in the advert shows that the vendor is selling second-hand children clothing. The word *bhero* (bale) in the advert refers to second-hand clothing packed in bales. Consequently, all second-hand clothing is referred to as *bhero*. There is also information regarding the quality of the clothes that are being sold, which the advertiser says is high. A price is mentioned as well. The intended meaning of the advertisement is that the clothing is very affordable; thus, the vendor says *kuvhura nekudhingura* ('opening and selling at low price') or *dollar pamwana wako* ('children's clothing for one dollar') which means that the clothes are being sold at very affordable prices. When the advertiser says *kuvhura nekudhingura*, they are drawing the attention of buyers to the clothes because consumers are more interested in recently opened bales because there is a better chance that they get good items before others come. The issue with second-hand clothing is that those who had a chance to view clothes soon after the bale is opened are likely to get the good quality clothing.

In most circumstances, the advertisements from vendors tell everything that one needs to know about the product because those intending to buy are directed towards what they need. The discourse in the advertisement is, therefore, largely informative as it seeks to enlighten the consumers on what is on the market. Such information serves to invite people to join the *dairi* through their participation as buyers. The logic behind informative discourse is to capture the attention of customers so that they inquire further about the goods that are on the market.

To persuade customers, repetition is another device that is deployed in pre-recorded street audio advertisements. Most of the advertisements are composed of repeated information, for example, *Hodha bhero, huya uhodhe bhero, bhero pano* ('buy second-hand clothes on order price...Come and buy second-hand clothes...second-hand clothes here'). In some advertisements, information is repeated verbatim, and in others information is repeated with different words. Repetition is used for emphasis. By repeatedly highlighting the same messages or phrases, advertisers aim to draw attention towards their products or services. This approach is meant to engage consumers more effectively, capturing their interest and encouraging them to interact with the products. Repetition can therefore help to mitigate potential resistance from consumers.

Repetition is deployed to draw the attention of customers to the goods on sale: *Hodha bhero! Hodha bhero!* ('Buy clothes in bulk! Buy clothes in bulk'). By emphasizing bulk buying, advertisers imply that their products are priced low enough to encourage larger purchases. Given the current economic hardships affecting Zimbabweans, the advertisements are meant to lure customers from buying from regular shops

which are more expensive. Repetition is also important in helping advertisers to develop associations between brands and specific attributes, benefits, or emotions in the minds of consumers' (Duff et al, 2019: 21)

The pricing of goods on the streets is therefore one of the variables that draw people to buy there. The advertiser is cognisant of the competition that is posed by regular clothing shops and flea markets which sell new clothes; hence they provide information in the advertisements that attract customers to their products. They present their products not as an alternative, but as the preferred choice. The underlying meaning of *usatengere mwana uniform* ('Do not buy your child a uniform') is that clothes from bales are distinctive, as there is little chance of someone else having the same item. This serves as a strategic approach to entice customers to choose bales over regular shops.

Customers are also attracted to recently opened bales which in most cases provide them an opportunity of getting the best clothes since they would not have been selected. Hence, the advert says *Tavhurawo, richangovhurwa* ('We have opened, recently opened').

Mobile telephone sim cards are also sold in the streets of Gweru. In Gweru, as in other cities and towns in Zimbabwe, several network providers, including Telecel, Econet and Netone compete for clients. This creates the stiff competition that is experienced, some of the service providers have turned to the streets. For example, one informative pre-recorded audio advertisement states:

Phone line dollar.

Tinoregister ipapo ipapo

robva ratanga kushanda ipapo ipapo

(Sim card for one dollar.

We register it and it becomes active immediately').

The advertisement informs the public about the product that is on the market. It goes on to inform potential buyers about the registering process ('it becomes active immediately'). From the advertisement, the customers are informed about the price of the product. They are informed of the idea that they do not have to go through the trouble of joining long queues to buy and register the line. The advert informs potential customers who need mobile phone lines that they are on the streets, bringing the service closer to the people for their convenience.

In the sim card advertisement, there is use of repetition whose goal is to show and emphasise the convenience of the product. In the advertisement, the lines *Phone line dollar. Tinorejisita ipapo ipapo robva ratanga kushanda ipapo ipapo* (Sim card line for one dollar, we register it and it becomes active immediately), *ipapo ipapo* (immediately) are used to valorise the immediate benefit of buying the line. The advertisement shows that the consumer does not have to undergo any trouble once they buy the line because all the processes, including registering the line are done instantly. The advertisement encourages consumers to buy the 'Phone line' as compared to some other service providers in Zimbabwe because of the convenience associated with buying this line. The advertisement promotes the advertised Sim card as a convenient option where one does not need to join long

queues to buy and register the line. The advertisement, therefore emphasises the ease of buying the sim card from the street. The advertisement emphasises that theirs is a one-stop shop where everything is done at the same place. The attractiveness of the advertisement is also sealed by the idea that the street is close to people as compared to regular shops. The advertisement also makes reference to the cost of the sim card where it says 'Phone line dollar.' It is crucial to note that these messages are actually repeated again and again. Advertising repetition, it is argued 'leads to increased preference.'

Another street audio advertisement focuses on pest control. In an advertisement which goes *Mushonga wemapete, makonzo, tsikidzi unouraya ipapo ipapo* ('pesticide for cockroach, rat, bugs which kills instantly'). The net effect of the phrase *ipapo ipapo* (instantly) in the advertisement is to highlight the effectiveness of the pesticide and consequently persuade customers to buy the pesticide for good results. The advertisement shows that whatever problem one is facing, be it rats, cockroaches or bugs, the problem will be solved instantly. The advertiser presents the product as effective and worth buying to attract the attention of buyers. Cellular phone accessories like screen guards are also some of the goods that are sold on the streets. An advertisement for screen guards goes *Screen guard pafoni yese, dollar* ('Screen guard for all types of phones for one dollar'). This advertisement informs customers that there are screen guards for all phone sizes and types, costing one dollar. The advertisement notifies customers that the vendors provide excellent service at the lowest price.

The advertisement also seeks to attract a wide audience since it targets anyone with a cell phone that is not protected without discrimination.

Informative discourse is also used by street vendors to advertise toothpaste. One advert goes as follows:

Chabvondoka

Vane mazino ane mhango, anorwadza, anobuda ropa, asingacheni

Mushonga wacho uripo pano nhasi

('Hell has broken loose

Those with tooth cavities, painful teeth, bleeding gums as well as teeth that have lost whiteness

We have the remedy here')

From this advert, the vendor is informing people with teeth problems that they have the panacea to all the problems and challenges. In fact, it is some kind of one-stop shop. Potential customers that have any of the teeth problems mentioned are informed of the availability of remedies to their problems on that very day. The vendor as a performer provides information to prospective clients who, after receiving the information, are expected to participate as customers. The advert targets people who have all sorts of challenges with their teeth from those with teeth that have lost whiteness to those whose teeth have decayed and those with bleeding gums. Because of the multiplicity of the functions of the toothpaste, the attention of a number of people in the streets is likely to be captured by the advert and prompt them to visit the vendor. When the customer

visits the vendor, they get information about how the toothpaste works. For example, if one has a problem with tooth decay, they are informed about how to use the tooth paste to treat it, and others with teeth problems get more information on how to protect their teeth.

Vendors strategically use audio adverts to capture consumer attention and persuade potential buyers to purchase their products. These advertisements, often used in busy urban areas, are designed to enhance vendor visibility and attract customers effectively. According to Chivivi et al. (2014), entrepreneurship is characterised by innovation, creativity, and imagination. The authors argue that informal traders devise various strategies to engage consumers, thereby influencing their purchasing behaviors.

The information that is in the advertisement shows that the toothpaste is not just an agent for cleaning teeth, but has extra benefits, which are medicinal. The toothpaste is presented as an indispensable alternative that can cushion customers from visiting expensive dentists.

Street vendors also use pre-recorded audio advertisements to market floor polish. They inform customers about their floor polish by shouting,

Yauya kobhura

Zvauya zvinopenya-penya

Mukadzi anoonekwa akapoda asi mumba mune shena

Yauya Kobhura

(Here is floor polish

Sparkling polish!

A woman is seen wearing makeup while her house is full of dust!

Here is floor polish)

Through the audio advert, customers are informed about the readily available product and how it works after applying it to the floor. It is also clear in the discourse that the advertisement for floor polish targets women. The advert does not only direct the attention of women to the product on sale, but also encourages them to pay due attention to the beauty of their homes. The advert criticises women who only focus on the beauty of their bodies while ignoring an essential part of their lives, the home which is the base and site of agency. Like charity, the advert stresses that beauty begins at home. The advertisement subtly attacks women by portraying them as lacking agency. This framing suggests that their primary role is to maintain the home, thereby undermining their autonomy and individuality. By emphasizing domestic responsibilities over personal achievements, the advertisement reinforces the stereotype that a woman's value is intrinsically linked to her role within the household. This narrative diminishes their capacity for self-determination, reducing them to caretakers rather than empowered individuals.

The advertiser uses the word 'sparkles' to capture the attention of the consumers. The vendor uses the word to describe how the polish works and this creates a mental picture in the consumer's mind attracting the consumer towards the product. The way the information is presented draws a picture where the job of cleaning the floors is made easier by simply using the polish. The advertiser's expression

implies that the moment one polishes the floor, it begins to sparkle without any extra effort. As a result, the consumer is likely to buy it to find out and to see how sparkling the polish is. The way the advertisement is designed, therefore, draws people into the *dariro*. Muwati (nd: 20) says, '*dariro* privileges engagement rather than avoidance, immersion in and not withdrawal, participation instead of resignation and surrender, critical engagement rather than critical distance or detachment.' The consumers buy the products due to the attractiveness of the advertisement.

The same advertisement goes on to encourage ladies to buy the polish by way of using pressure tactics. Through the advert, the vendor exerts pressure especially in the line *Mukadzi anoonekwa akapoda asi mumba mune shena. Yauya kobhura* ('A woman is seen wearing make-up while her house is full of dust. We have floor polish'). The advertisers condemn women who concentrate on their bodies but not their homes. The advert is meant to make women feel guilty for prioritising their own self-care over the upkeep of their homes, thereby motivating them to buy floor polish.

Another advert focuses on toilet cleaning products. In the advert, the price and functions of the product is given. The product is cast as efficacious in as far as it kills germs, refreshes the toilet and maintains the whiteness of the toilet bowl and more importantly it is used in very small quantities. That means it can last a long time. The advert attempts to give all relevant information that can positively influence potential customers so that they can participate through buying. The advert goes;

*Dollar for two mushonga wemutoilet unouraya utachiona
Unopedza kunhuwa uye unochenesa machemba
Kungoisa kadomwe zvese zvinenge zvatoita*
(Dollar-for-two toilet cleaner that kills germs,
That refreshes your toilet and maintains the whiteness of
the toilet bowl
With just a drop, all is done)

Street vendors also use informative discourse as a way to sell products like torches. An advert on torches goes as follows:

*Auya matochi anobaka.
Matochi anobaka zvakapetwa katatu kudarika mabulb
emagetsi
Dollar ari maviri.*
(Here they come!
Torches that light three times more than the electric bulb!
Dollar for two!)

The utility value of the torch is given. In the advertisement, the way the torch functions is compared to that of electric bulbs. The advert underlines the idea that the torches are not the usual faulty torches, but that the ones on offer are fit for the purpose of lighting. By juxtaposing torches and electric bulbs, the advert creates the impression that the torches on offer are far better than electric bulbs. This is

intended not just to inform but convince and attract potential customers into purchasing the torches. The advert rallies members of the public into considering buying the torches.

This section established that pre-recorded audio adverts deployed by street vendors are informative and the street is a site of participation, performance and interaction. They provide the consumers with information about the products on the market and are designed in such a way that they persuade customers to join the *dariro*. The pre-recorded adverts are a powerful and innovative strategy of inviting and challenging potential customers to the goods on the streets in a highly competitive and congested environment. Since the *dariro* is a site of participation and performance, the adverts help stir potential customers to action through their involvement in transacting on the streets. They move from being mere passersby to becoming key participants and performers whose agency is unlocked by the enticing adverts. Basic information is provided in the advertisements to furnish the clients with the kind of goods and their functions, as well as the kind of results that customers should expect after using the products. The advertisements are designed using simple language that people can easily understand. The purpose of these advertisements is largely to engage people on the streets so that they know what is offered by the vendors. Through the use of informative and persuasive discourse that is found in pre-recorded audio advertisements used by street vendors, people join, perform and participate in the *dariro*.

Conclusion

Guided and oriented by *dariro* theory of performance and participation, the governing interest in this article has been a critical engagement with street audio adverts in the streets of Gweru, Zimbabwe. The article viewed the street as a space that is coterminous with the characteristics of *dariro*, namely performance, participation and interaction. The findings of this critical engagement are that in a street environment where crowding and stiff competition are the order of the day, pre-recorded audio adverts are strategically crafted, not only to provide key information about the goods on sale, but also that persuasion is the *modus operandi* and *sine qua non*. The street is therefore a site of performance, participation and interaction. Graham and Gunner (1995: 3) stress that 'in all this, the concentration on social action demands that the performance, the people, and the text are seen, together in the [social and economic] context...meaning cannot be unravelled outside the interactive dimension of texts, performer and audience'. The audio advertisements turn the street into an arena where both the vendor and the buyer become subjects who exercise their agency on the streets. The pre-recorded audio adverts have both a cognitive and conative effect in as far as they provide information and instil a craving for purchasing goods.

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