The Minibus Taxi Industry's Communication Strategies in Dealing with Linguistic Diversity on the Way to Business Leadership: The Case of South Africa

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Abstract: *Informal businesses, such as the minibus taxi industry, positively contribute to the country's economy whilst providing an essential public transport service to the linguistically diverse communities of multilingual South Africa. The systematisation of the scientific literature on the development of the minibus taxi industry proved the absence of comprehensive studies aimed at understanding the communication strategies that taxi operators use among themselves and when interacting with passengers. This paper aims to investigate the types of language strategies that take place in six taxi associations in which IsiZulu and English are the two dominant languages. This investigation is conducted against the multilingual context of the country and its attractiveness as an international and domestic tourist destination to determine how the business leadership in the taxi industry responds. The article's theoretical framework draws from the transformative paradigm as it enables one to explore the experiences of marginalised communities. In this case, the marginalised communities are the taxi operators who stand to benefit from appropriate communication strategies. By taking the initiative and showing "agency", they direct their efforts to solve existing problems in communication with passengers. The qualitative approach was adopted as a research methodology in which the researcher selected a structured interview approach. It involved interviews with twenty-four taxi operators and drivers who were purposefully selected in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. The participants gave an account of their experiences of bi-/multilingualism in the taxi industry during taxi association meetings, when interacting informally among themselves and in their communication with passengers. The results of the analysis of the responses of the respondents showed that the communication strategies used to mediate challenges posed by linguistic diversity are translation, interpretation, slang and language dominance. It is concluded that through their agency and by taking initiatives to deal with linguistic challenges in the eThekwini taxi industry, the economically marginalised are to be commended for being able to resolve impediments to their economic growth.*
Keywords: agency, business leadership, communication strategies, multilingualism, taxi operators.
JEL Classification: E26, J46, D83.

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Introduction

The informal sector has globally been recognised as positively contributing to its country's economy (Etim & Daramola, 2020). Women entrepreneurs can also venture into this unregistered sector and make a name for themselves and their low-income families (Hossain et al., 2023; Singh & Lall, 2018). It is more so in developing nations where the informal sector provides essential services and products and contributes towards alleviating poverty by creating employment opportunities for many citizens (Darbi, Hall, & Knott, 2018). In this sense, the informal sector ends up addressing socio-economic challenges, such as unemployment, that should be resolved by the governments (Salisu, 2022). For these reasons, it is important to safeguard the survival of the informal sector, even through policy, against many possible challenges it can face (Narula, 2020). The informal economy thrives in the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (Durban's Informal Economy Policy, 2001). It includes the minibus taxi industry (henceforth the taxi industry), street traders, hair salons, spaza shops, and others. As far back as 2001, the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality (Durban's Informal Economy Policy, 2001) developed a policy for the informal economy and how the municipality would approach it. This development came out of a realisation that the informal economy had become an integral part of the South African economy in general, and the eThekwini economy in particular.

However, the transformative nature of a policy is in its implementation at the grassroots level. A policy of interest in this context is the Republic of South Africa's Constitution (RSA, 1996), which promulgates the use of 11 official languages as a form of transformation in recognition of the multilingual and multicultural nature of the country (Winter et al., 2023). It was after many colonial and apartheid years in which the only official languages were English and Afrikaans. The transformative Constitution has been hailed for making official these two languages together with nine previously marginalised African languages: IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Northern Sotho, Southern Sotho, Tswana, IsiNdebele, SiSwati, Xitsonga, and Tshivenda. The amendment of this policy has recently ushered in sign language as the twelfth official language (SAnews, 2023). The Constitution's multilingual stance is also evident in its recognition of foreign languages and their development, such as Arabic, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hindi, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Tamil. True to this liberal Constitution, the country has attracted many foreign nationals, especially across the African continent. The absence of accurate figures has led to many estimations in which Statistics South Africa (StatsSA, 2021) evaluates documented and undocumented foreign nationals at 3.95 million using the previous three Census reports compiled since 1996, immediately after the country became democratic. There has also been a surge in the number of tourists visiting the country. The StatsSA (2022) report notes that the majority (89,2%) of the May 2021-May 2022 tourists from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region countries relied on road transportation in visiting South Africa. Moreover, South Africa's domestic tourism has recovered after the 2019 coronavirus restrictions, which means more inter-provincial visits (Nyikana & Bama, 2023). This broad multilingual context presents exciting formal and informal business opportunities that can simultaneously be challenging when dealing with clients who might not be familiar with local languages.

There are indeed provincial and municipal language policies specific to community needs over and above the national Constitution. The policy of interest for this article is the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Provincial Language Policy (2009: Section 2.1.1), which identifies IsiZulu, English, IsiXhosa, and Afrikaans, including South African Sign Language, as official languages for KZN. However, this KZN Provincial Language Policy (2009: Section 2.4.5.3) describes IsiZulu and English as the two main languages of business and publication. Taking the cue from this policy, the eThekwini Municipality Language Policy (2009) adopts English and IsiZulu as business languages while it requires that residents' preferences and diversity should be considered when communicating. It again leaves informal businesses with a challenge because their clients and themselves would not be inclined to rely on English as a common language of communication due to either low levels of education or unfamiliarity with the daily use of English as one might expect in a formal business structure. These circumstances make the taxi industry a curious study environment to determine the communication strategies used for survival and interaction among its diverse stakeholders.

Despite having 12 languages as official on policy documents, formal businesses tend to adopt English as the dominant language of communication. The linguistically diverse nature of South African society also makes English the common language of business communication. However, the social and informal use of English as a common language becomes a challenge when the interlocutors have different levels of English command or education. One or more African languages could be a better option in such circumstances. In certain parts of South Africa, like the cosmopolitan Gauteng province, all 12 official languages, including foreign languages (3.2%), are spoken in households.

However, the most prevalent informal language is IsiZulu (25%), followed by Sesotho (13.4%), Sepedi (12%), and English (10%) (Khanyile & Ballard, 2022). This finding is confirmed by Statista Research Department (2023), which found that households across South Africa ranked IsiZulu as the dominant informal language (25.3%), with IsiXhosa coming second (14.8%). These are some of the reasons that have made IsiZulu and its speakers be perceived to dominate other South African Black language speakers through their uncompromising attitude towards learning other languages (Keet & Khumalo, 2017; Ngcobo & Mvuyana, 2022). The print and visual media have also intensified this IsiZulu dominance by using it more than other South African languages (Aiseng, 2022; Buthelezi, 2016).

English was ranked sixth (8.1%) at homes but acknowledged as the second (16.6%) common language used outside homes (Statista Research Department, 2023). The dominance of English as the lingua-franca in South Africa and globally can be attributed to its high socio-economic status influenced by its use in education (Ngcobo & Mvuyana, 2022). Unequal levels of education, however complicate the use of English as a common spoken language. The illiteracy rate among adults in South Africa is 12.1% and highest among Black Africans, most of whom (980 000) are located in the KwaZulu-Natal region (Khuluvhe, 2021). Reading in English is more complex because it sometimes defies levels of education. Studies on reading levels in South Africa have shown that the country is in a crisis because many of the children read below their level of study (Kell, Tyler, & Guzula, 2023).

Kell et al. (2023) attribute this crisis, among others, to a lack of quality education for speakers of African languages due to the dominant use of the Second English Language as the medium of instruction. It has intensified the need for translation as a tool to improve access to reading materials, reading and spoken fluency among English Second Language speakers in South Africa and across the globe (Carrim & Nkomo, 2023; Ismail, Syahruza, & Basuki, 2017; Kabir, 2020; Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2022; Mgijima, 2021; Ngcobo et al., 2016; Qureshi & Aljanadbah, 2022; Yafele, 2021). This approach can potentially develop and maintain both Home Languages and Second English Language, resulting in bi-/multilingual citizens. Indeed, multilingualism in the 21st century is deemed more desirable in the global village than monolingualism (Alisaari et al., 2019; Lo Bianco, 2021; Prosper & Nomlomo, 2016; Stojanovic, 2021). Ngcobo and Makumane (2019) note that English-dominant countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia now encourage learning foreign languages because of their value in matters of trade, jobs, and international diplomacy.

Although the taxi industry has been studied from different perspectives, such as looking at violence in the industry, safety, social life, and the economy (Mezulanik et al., 2019), the issue of language and its impact on the operations in the industry has not received attention. The problem of different languages in a business has been previously explored (Forbes Insights, 2017) outside the context of the taxi industry. The study revealed that communication gaps or miscommunication in a business can negatively affect it. It has implications for the taxi industry because a failed conversation among taxi operators can result in some taxi operators no longer fully participating in the association's activities. It may cause a loss of income for both the taxi operator and the taxi association. Worse, because taxi operators pay a monthly fee to a taxi association, a feeling that they do not receive concomitant services may result in taxi operators withdrawing from the association and forming a rival association. It may have dire consequences, given the volatile nature of the taxi industry. What started as a language problem may escalate into full-blown conflict. In tackling the communication problem, the main question to be answered in this article is how communication takes place in the taxi industry. In a cosmopolitan environment such as eThekwini Municipality, with people speaking diverse languages, what language(s) do taxi operators use among themselves and the drivers with passengers to communicate? Furthermore, how is written communication handled, especially minutes of meetings, memoranda, notices, and many other operational documents?

Literature Review

This article investigates communication strategies in the eThekwini taxi industry. It contextualises the taxi industry as part of the informal economy (Gibbs, 2014). In exploring the taxi industry, it is therefore important to examine the informal economy and locate it within that paradigm. The characterisation and definition of the informal economy on which this article is from the resolution of The General Conference of the International Labour Organization, meeting in its 90th Session, 2002. In its "Resolution concerning decent work and the informal economy", the conference made some conclusions. The 2002 Conclusions, as they came to be known, explain that the term 'informal economy' refers to "all economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements". Their activities are not covered in the law, which means that they are operating outside the formal reach of the law; or they are not included in practice, which means that – although they conduct their business within the formal reach of the law, "the law is not applied or not enforced; or the law discourages compliance because it is inappropriate, burdensome, or imposes excessive costs" (International Labour Organization, 2002). According to this definition, two elements are crucial in inclusion or exclusion in the definition of the informal economy. The first is that the activities fall under the jurisdiction of a particular law. The second is that the law is being adhered to when economic activity occurs. If an economic activity does not satisfy both requirements, it falls under the informal economy.

Throughout the world, dozens of people eke out a living selling goods on the streets, on the internet and via other means (Skinner, 2008). It is the informal economy. Furthermore, Skinner (2005) defines the informal economy as one in which economic activities are relatively small-scale and cannot be subjected to government requirements such as registration, tax and social security obligations, and health and safety regulations for workers. Another commentator, Becker (2004), defines the informal economy as "part of the economy that is not taxed, monitored by any form of government and is challenging to include in the country's Gross National Product (GNP)".
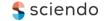
In examining the features of the informal economy as discussed above, the taxi industry contains most of them. Just as in the rest of the informal economy, economic activity is relatively small, and there is very little regulation regarding tax, safety, and other regulations. Therefore, it is apt to consider the taxi industry as part of the informal economy. Like other major urban areas in South Africa, the eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality has several main taxi ranks within the city centre and smaller ones in remote areas. These are called "taxi ranks". This 'ranking system' is based on the principle of turn-taking. Each taxi is expected to wait in line to be filled with passengers before the next taxi can be filled. Additionally, taxi operators pick up passengers along designated routes in the outlying areas. In the townships where the taxis pick up passengers and for which routes, they are licensed, the same turn-taking system operates. It is the context in which the taxi associations of Umlazi Taxi Association, Chatsworth Taxi Association, KwaMashu Taxi Association, Phoenix Taxi Association, Pinetown Taxi Association, and Sydenham Taxi Association that are the case study of this article operate.

Theoretical Framework: Transformative Paradigm

In trying to understand the nature of the communication in the six taxi associations, this article seeks to consider the role of translation within the context of the consensus advanced by thinkers like Marais (2014) and others. Translation is of interest because it serves as one of the communication strategies, together with interpretation, in linguistically diverse contexts (Doerr, 2017; Soyoof et al., 2023; Wadensjo, 2014; Zahner & Aquino-Sterling, 2022). For instance, Soyoof et al. (2023: 624) aver that informal translation and interpreting have emerged as an interdisciplinary field in understanding interlinguistic activities as a form of language learning and mediation.

These communication strategies are examined within the theoretical framework of the "transformative paradigm" to explore the experiences of marginalised communities (Mertens, 1999). In this case, the marginalised communities are the taxi operators who stand to benefit from appropriate translation and interpreting strategies. By taking initiative and showing "agency", they act to transform their circumstances. Similarly, the communication strategies that broadly take place within the six taxi associations are explored within the transformative paradigm, which has agency at its centre. Specifically, the translation activities in the informal economy, as described by Marais (2014), are investigated using Tyulenev's argument (2014) that "translation is a critical phenomenon as it offers alternatives coming from outside a given society". Even though Tyulenev approaches translation from a sociological approach, his assertions on the "outsider"

are relevant to the main thrust of translation in the taxi associations that are part of the informal economy. As Tyulenev (2014) notes, "translation can provide something that would give one of the peripheral discourses means for stating their cause in a clearer way or in a way that would make it accessible and visible to layers of the society ignorant about or unsympathetic to the cause". It means there is room in the translation field for translators to advance views and mainstream peripheral discourses. This theoretical position is in line with the transformative paradigm.

Methodology

The methodology that is followed in the study is the qualitative approach. Aspers and Corte (2019: 155) define qualitative research as a process undertaken by the scientific community to gain a deeper understanding of a phenomenon by getting closer to it. It relies on words generated from the phenomenon in the form of interviews or read materials (Punch, 2013). It enables researchers to gain detailed knowledge of how the persons involved in the research create their social world. Similarly, the study that informed this article selected six taxi association members in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality who were then interviewed about their communication strategies in this linguistically diverse municipality. These are associations where the dominant languages spoken are English and IsiZulu.

To gain depth and appropriate quality, the researcher selected a structured interview approach, using an interview guide as a preferred research instrument. This interview guide consisted of standard questions that traversed some themes to be covered in the interviews. The interview guide had two main sections. The first section (section A) had three questions that sought information about the participants' demographics, intending to establish participants' eligibility for the study and confirm the characteristics of the participants (e.g., experience and positions in the association) during interviews. The second section of the interview guide (section B) consisted of four open-ended questions. These questions were standard across all interviews, regarding which official languages are used in the taxi association; how these languages are used in minutes, memoranda, notices and other documents of the taxi association and how does the use of any of the official languages affect the taxi drivers and owners who do not understand the language and how are the language challenges mediated.

In each of the six taxi associations, two members of the association's executive (office-bearers) were selected for interviews. In addition to the office-bearers, two taxi drivers were selected in each of the six taxi ranks. In total, a minimum of twenty-four (24) participants were interviewed. The following steps involved identifying the taxi ranks to be focussed on, locating participants and, establishing rapport, and planning for and executing data collection. It was meant to assist in uncovering the communication activities that take place in this informal economy. Therefore, the nature of sampling used in this study is purposive sampling in that the participants selected for the study matched the study's purpose and objectives, which helped to improve its rigour (Campbell et al., 2020).

This study focused on thematic analysis of gathered data where coding of the texts was considered the most appropriate approach (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis allows the researcher to focus on different data analysis methods. It is flexible and can be done across the entire dataset or deal with a particular phenomenon in depth (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The themes from each specific question were identified with the aid of software called NVivo. The patterns in the texts were also visually presented in the form of word clouds. Nodes for each question were created from the identified codes. The codes were then used to provide patterns and themes that bring meaning to a recurrent experience among the participants (DeSantis & Ugarriza, 2000).

Results of the Study

In this section, the results of the study are presented. It includes an explanation of the demographics, presentation of the data and interpretation of the results.

Demographics. This section gives an overview of the demographic characteristics of the 24 participants who participated in the study. The four basic initial questions were on the participant's position in the taxi industry, highest educational level, a language commonly spoken and experience in the sector. The results are presented graphically.

Position in the Taxi Industry. Figure 1 below displays that of the 24 participants, only 12.5% (n = 3) were both taxi owners and drivers, while 45.8% (n = 11) were taxi drivers only and 41.7% (n = 10) were taxi

owners. The mixture of the participants assisted the study in providing a balanced representation of the agents in the sector. These agents form the critical stakeholder base in the taxi industry.
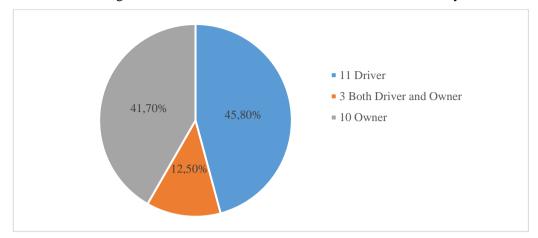

Figure 1. The Position in the Taxi Industry

Source: Compiled by the author

Highest Educational Level. Figure 2 shows that 75.0% (n = 18) had grade 12, also known as matric, a school leaving certificate or below as their highest level of education. It was followed by 16.7% (n = 4) with a certificate and 8.3% (n = 2) with a diploma.

Commonly Spoken Language. Figure 2 also indicates that the majority, 54.2% (n = 13), were IsiZulu speakers, 41.7% (n = 10) spoke English, and 4.2% (n = 1) spoke both IsiZulu and English.

Figure 2. Highest Educational Level and Language Spoken

Source: Compiled by the author

Experience in the Sector. Table 1 shows that a relatively new participant in the taxi industry had been operating for two years, while one who had been operating for much longer had spent 37 years in the taxi industry. On average (Mean ± SD), the 24 participants have been in the taxi industry for about 11.9±8.77 years. These figures give credibility to the participants as relevant for consultation in this study. The views and experiences they shared in the study are to be taken as valid and representative of their colleagues in the minibus taxi industry.

Table 1. Number of Years Operating in the Taxi Industry

	Overall (N=24)
Number of years operating in the taxi industry	
Mean ± SD(CV%)	11.9 ± 8.77 (73.8)
Median(Q1-Q3)	9.00 (6.00-14.3)
Min-Max	2.00-37.0

Source: Compiled by the author

Communication Mediation in the Taxi Industry in Ethekwini. The participants were asked to answer some questions on how communication is mediated among taxi drivers, taxi owners and passengers. To quickly have an overview of the responses, word clouds were used to provide a snapshot of the commonly used words in the interview. The interpretation is based on the relevant words (usually at the centre) to paint a picture of the issues under investigation without getting into too much detail in the responses. Below is a discussion that represents the questions the participants asked, and an analysis of the responses provided.

B1: What is your general view on the languages used for communication in the taxi industry?

Figure 3 suggests that the most used languages in the taxi industry in the six taxi associations were English and IsiZulu. The appearance of the word "problems" is indicative of the central theme that emerged. What emerged is that, within the taxi industry in the taxi associations that were the subject of the research, the use of both languages at the same time was posing a problem, thereby justifying the rationale for this study.

Figure 3. Word Cloud of the Responses on General View on the Languages Used for Communication in the Taxi Industry
Source: Created by Nvivo

Within this broader theme, five sub-themes emerged on the general view of the languages used in the taxi industry: people, problems, speaking, 'slang' and different languages. Regarding people, the idea was that the language was determined by the predominant races in the study area, primarily the IsiZulu language, spoken mainly by Zulu people and English, spoken mainly by people of Indian origin (so-called Indians). As for the problems, even though some could not see major problems in their taxi associations, most felt it was a good idea to get help with the translation and interpretation problems encountered. Also, the general view was that some associations were predominantly IsiZulu or English-speaking. In trying to mediate the problems that were being encountered with the use of both languages, Slang was one other language that was cited as being useful even though others considered it inappropriate. Slang was described as an informal language that is specific to the taxi industry. Although IsiZulu and English were commonly used and often mixed, it was mentioned that many different languages were used since some people came from bilingual or multilingual backgrounds.

B2: What are the challenges that you have faced regarding the written **language?**

The word cloud (Figure 4) shows that the minutes, memoranda, notices and other documents were written in IsiZulu or English. It can be accounted for by the fact that the study looked at areas that are dominated by either IsiZulu or English speakers. The documents are seldom in both languages, meaning that translation becomes an issue that poses a challenge for those who do not understand either of the languages. The word "try" shows that the languages used may not have been easy for everyone, hence the need for translation.

Figure 4. Word Cloud of the Responses on the Challenges Faced Regarding the Written Language

Source: Created by Nvivo

The challenges reported had to do with the dominant race at the higher level of an association, meaning at the executive level. If those who occupied the higher level were mostly IsiZulu speakers, the English speakers tended to be left out and vice versa. However, this was slightly different when there was communication between associations, where the communication medium was considered English. Some believed that English was the official language of communication in South Africa, but since they were in KwaZulu, it was ideal to use IsiZulu to accommodate others. Nevertheless, some of the Zulu-speaking operators were known to be fronting for the English-speaking operators such that they also ended up being able to communicate in English. However, in Chatsworth and Phoenix, dominated by Indians and with few so-called Coloureds, most notices were issued in English. It became apparent that these documents were not translated.

B3: How do the taxi operators accommodate each other in business if they are cornered with a language different to their own?

In terms of how the taxi operators accommodated each other in the business, especially if they were cornered with a different language to their own, the word cloud (Figure 5) showed that they had to either "ask" the "manager", "understand" or likely to "help".
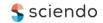

Figure 5. Word Cloud of the Responses on How Taxi Operators Accommodate Each Other in Business if They Are Cornered with a Different Language to Their Own

Source: Created by Nvivo

To deal with the communication problem, the central theme that emerged is that the different role players assist each other in various ways. It is evident in the six sub-themes: operators, experienced ones, employment, sign language, taxi language and rank manager. The operators were said to help each other, especially with the aid of experienced ones like the rank managers, who were known to be multilingual. Some association executives comprised mixed races such as African, Indian and Coloured, which helped break the communication barrier if it happened to exist. It has also been implemented as part of the recruitment process where a mixture of people that speak different languages was realised to be important. Sign language has been adopted as one of the ways to communicate in difficult situations.

At the association level, IsiZulu was used in locations like Umlazi, while English was used when interacting with other associations such as Isipingo and Bluff, the areas that are historically dominated by Indians and Coloured who use English as their first language.

B4: What language tactics have come to be used in the taxi industry to communicate with passengers who speak a different language?

The most relevant words (Figure 6) that seem to suggest the tactics used in the taxi industry to communicate with passengers who speak a different language were "sign", "help", "driver" and "fanakalo".

Figure 6. Word Cloud of the Responses on the Translation Tactics Used in the Taxi Industry to Communicate with Passengers who Speak Different Language
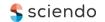
Source: Created by Nvivo

The taxi operators seem to be aware of how to deal with the challenges of communication, and some of the tactics that they have developed include sign language and Fanakalo. It is said that taxi drivers generally know how to talk to passengers who speak a different language. Other taxi associations have interpreters and translators who are bi-/multilingual. Rank marshals have also been strategically positioned at various stopping points, which are known to provide communication assistance as may be required. One approach has been to involve another passenger who understands the language. There are some extreme cases where communication breakdown has been reported, including a situation where the participant indicated that they use IsiZulu and English as they mistakenly think these are the only languages used in KwaZulu-Natal. If there is a different language, they accept that they will not be able to understand.

Discussion

The study has revealed that the languages used in the six taxi associations in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality are mainly IsiZulu and English. However, each language would either dominate or be used simultaneously, depending on the racial composition of the residents. In other instances, the other language would be used, when necessary, rather than having both equally utilised. Other preferred informal languages used are Slang, Sign language and Fanakalo. This practice, in line with the KZN Provincial Language Policy (2009) and the eThekwini Municipality Language Policy (2009), declares English and IsiZulu as business languages while stipulating that residents' preferences and diversity should be considered.

Additionally, the associations' top-level management tends to use their own language when communicating with the people within the association without accommodating the minority within that specific association. It is a form of language domination between IsiZulu and English speakers (Keet & Khumalo, 2017; Ngcobo & Mvuyana, 2022). This language dominance can also be associated with the demographic results, which presented low literacy levels among the participating adults. The low literacy levels indicate the general previous finding about it being highest among Black Africans, most of whom (980 000) are in the KwaZulu-Natal region (Khuluvhe, 2021). However, it does not suggest that English is equivalent to literacy and perhaps superior intelligence. Rather, monolingualism in the 21st century is limiting, making it a form of illiteracy in the global village that recognises multilingualism as enabling and strength when it comes to trade and diplomacy (Alisaari et al., 2019; Lo Bianco, 2021; Ngcobo & Makumane, 2019; Prosper & Nomlomo, 2016; Stojanovic, 2021).

Another critical finding from the study is that informal translation arrangements are in place in the taxi industry regarding the translation of minutes, memoranda, notices and other documents of the taxi associations. In some instances, the documents are translated by office bearers in the various taxi associations and by administrative staff who are employed in the taxi associations. However, the office bearers and administrative staff are not trained in translation. This and many other noted communication strategies directed at addressing language barriers at grassroots levels of informal businesses align with this study's transformative paradigm theoretical framework (Marais, 2014; Mertens, 1999; Tyulenev, 2014).

Conclusion

The general finding from the study is the agency of role-players in the minibus taxi industry, such as taxi owners, taxi drivers, rank managers, queue marshals and other administrative staff, in tackling communication challenges in the taxi industry. This finding resonates with the theoretical framework of the study. As argued earlier, the transformative paradigm, which explores the experiences of marginalised communities and how they can play a role in their economic development, is demonstrated by the role played by the role players in the study as described above. Through their agency and taking initiatives to deal with linguistic challenges in the eThekwini taxi industry, the economically marginalised rank managers and queue marshals can resolve impediments to their economic growth. The adopted communication strategies are broad as they entail translation, interpretation, slang and language dominance. Even though this study is limited to the informal economy in eThekwini Metropolitan Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, other informal economy participants in other metropolitan municipalities of South Africa and beyond could learn from these findings. Another important consideration is that provincial and municipality leaders could assist the taxi industry stakeholders draw relevant intervention strategies to enhance their participation in the informal economy.

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Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

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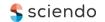
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