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Description and analysis of advertising used in Argentinean radio prime time

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Abstract:

Radio advertising in Argentina has been adapted to the changing needs of radio. This paper aims to describe and analyze the advertisement formats used in the four leading prime time programs in Argentina. The methodology is a content analysis that is applied to a sample of four programs each one with duration of four hours (ranging from 9 AM to 1 PM, Monday through Friday) for two weeks in October 2010. Therefore, the sample amounts to 160 hours of programming, 40 for each program. Sponsorships are least used, while the advertising segments are prevalent in all programs. The advertising segments are very different in length for the AM vs. FM. The "mention" has become increasingly common in prime time. The speaker's role is essential to the "selling" of products or services and his function becomes more important when programs incorporate dialogue sections to include brand mentions with time for humorous banter. The terms of prime time advertising on Argentinean radio have changed in recent years in order to adapt to the current needs of radio: programming criteria, use of ss, variety of content and voices and interaction with the listener.

Keywords: advertising radio, radio prime time, radio formats

This paper seeks to understand how to use advertising on radio prime time in Argentina: quantity and variety in the use of advertising segments, sponsorship and brand mentions (or live readings), as well as their duration and distribution at different times. We analyze the behavior of four leading programs: *Hola Chiche*, *El Oro y el Moro*, *Cuál es?* and *Terapia Despareja*.

This study is part of a wider investigation that also analyses the use of themes, sections, genres, voices and music of these programs. Prime time means a time slot that accumulates the largest audience. In Argentina prime time is between 9 AM and 1 PM. This sample includes 10 airings of each program, equivalent to 40 hours per program and 160 hours analyzed. Advertising segments are a series of ads that the station schedules at specific time and involve a pause for the program. Brand mentions are assumed by the speaker, who reads the ad text, mentions a brand and/or recommends a product or service. The sponsorship means a company is interested in a block, section or the whole program. The four programs are shows with leading speakers, which provide identity and style, shared with specialized journalists in sports, politics, economics, health and music. *Hola Chiche* y *El Oro y el Moro* are AM programs. *Hola Chiche* was introduced in 2009 at Radio Mitre, one of the oldest and most traditional radio stations in Argentina. Its speaker, Chiche Gelblung, has had a long career in radio and TV. *El Oro y el Moro* has run for 12 years in the morning on Radio 10, and has been the highest-rated program on the Argentinean radio. *Cuál es?* is on FM and has been the flagship program for Rock & Pop for over twenty years.

Specialized in rock, *Cuál es?* remains the leader among FM shows. *Terapia Despareja* was started three years ago at Pop Radio, a relatively new FM station.

Since the beginning of broadcasting, Argentina adopted a commercial model, supported by advertising. Always far away from the European public service model, Argentina opted instead for the “service of public interest”, achieved in most of Latin American countries. Although there were periods when Argentina nationalized radio, for more than ninety years private capital has prevailed, financed primarily through advertising. The advertising use on radio prime time evolves with the new interests and demands of the audience, rhythm proposed by shows and the strength of the speaker. Although radio advertising still uses traditional formats such as advertising segments and sponsorships, and the ads are still using redundant, catchy melodies or pitching voices, advertising changes and evolves as radio does.

Five trends in the use of advertising on Argentinean radio prime time are:

Advertising segments are the most used advertising format on prime time, followed by brand mentions and sponsorship

When tabulating the number of advertising segments, brand mentions and sponsorship accumulated by the four programs reviewed, it reveals that the advertising segments are the most commonly used advertising format in prime time, as shown in Figure 1.

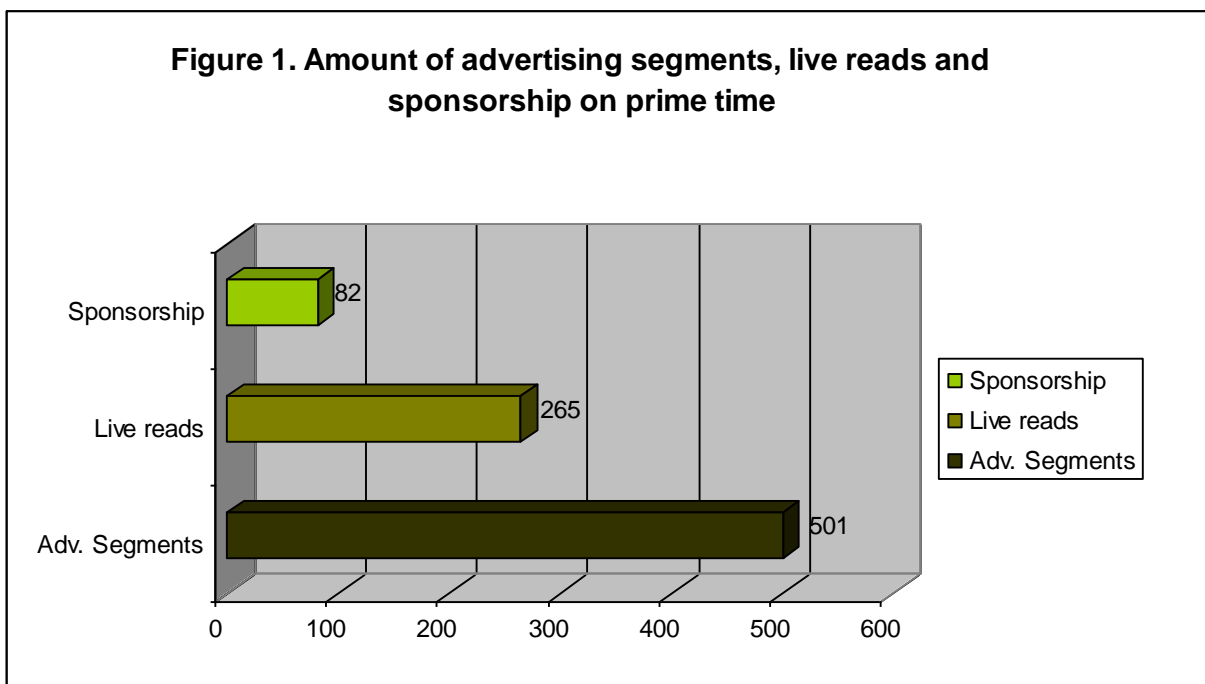


Figure 1: Amount of advertising segments, live reads and sponsorship on prime time

The four programs had a total of: 501 advertising segments, 265 brand mentions and 82 sponsorships. Brand mentions were three times more than sponsorships, a very important advertising format in the radio history. It is noteworthy that, the second format most used is the one that does not interfere with the continuity of the program, holding the speaker’s presence, adding a perceived endorsement to the live read. It comes without interrupting the flow of the program, a strategy that prevents the disconnection of the listener and which is reinforced by the presence of the speaker, recommending the products or services. When analyzing the use of

advertising format, we discover that all programs except for *Cuál es?* use the advertising segments first, followed by the brand mentions and then sponsorships. *Cuál es?* prefers sponsorship to brand mentions, as shown in Figure 2.

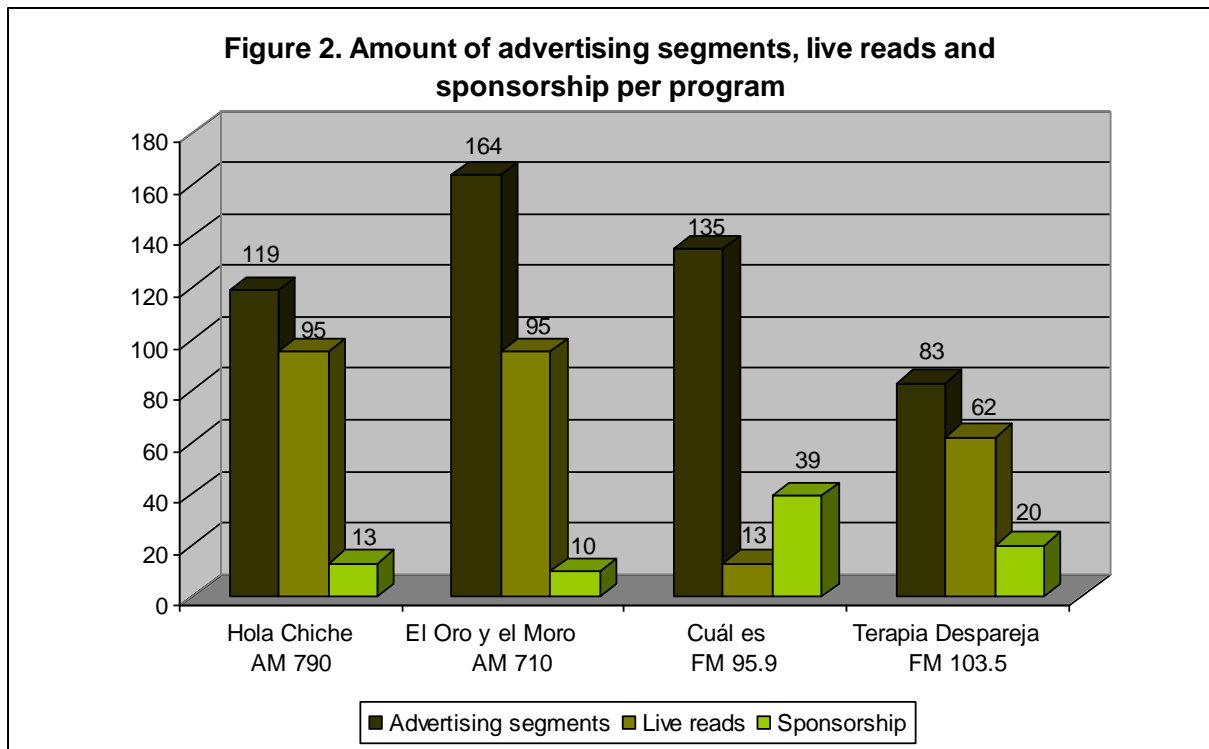


Figure 2: Amount of advertising segments live reads and sponsorship per program

Cuál es? uses 135 advertising segments, 13 brand mentions and 39 sponsorships. *El Oro y el Moro* uses the most advertising segments: 164, followed by *Cuál es?* with 135, *Hola Chiche* with 119 and *Terapia Despareja* with 83. As for brand mentions, the two AM programs use the same amount 95, followed by *Terapia Despareja* with 62 and *Cuál es?* with 13.

Band (AM or FM) establishes differences in the use of brand mentions and sponsorships

The band does not determine the number of advertising segments. Each program individually, on either AM or FM, orders its ads on advertising segments, determining the amount and duration. While different uses of advertising segments were not observed between AM and FM, differences do appear when analyzing the number of brand mentions and sponsorships. Figure 2 also shows that *Hola Chiche* and *El Oro y el Moro* use most brand mentions and more often than FM programs. These findings are consistent with type of programming proposed by AM and FM. AM has less aesthetic care, where brand mentions are used easily and frequently. By contrast, FM aims for advertising to be coherent, orderly and thorough air treatment. For example, *Terapia Despareja* programs their brand mentions at the end of blocks. *Cuál es?* uses them less often, and when it does, it is to promote products related to topics of interest to the program and its listeners: music shows, album releases, among others. As for sponsorship, FM uses them more frequently than AM. *Cuál es?* stands out specifically, with 39 sponsorships. This is because it is the program that has sections more clearly identified, with artists to open and close each one, and several of them with its title. Many of these sections are sponsored by a brand that has relation with the

content. FM uses more sections, clearly identified, so it's a common marketing strategy to sell these placeholders. AM works with a continuity approach only interrupted by advertising segments and news services; sponsorships are usually used to open or close the programs when the specialized journalists' interventions are sold.

Nearly 70% of prime time advertising is scheduled between 11 and 13

The distribution of advertising in different hours shows an upward trend between 9 and 13. The hour with less advertising segments is 9 am, as shown Figure 3.

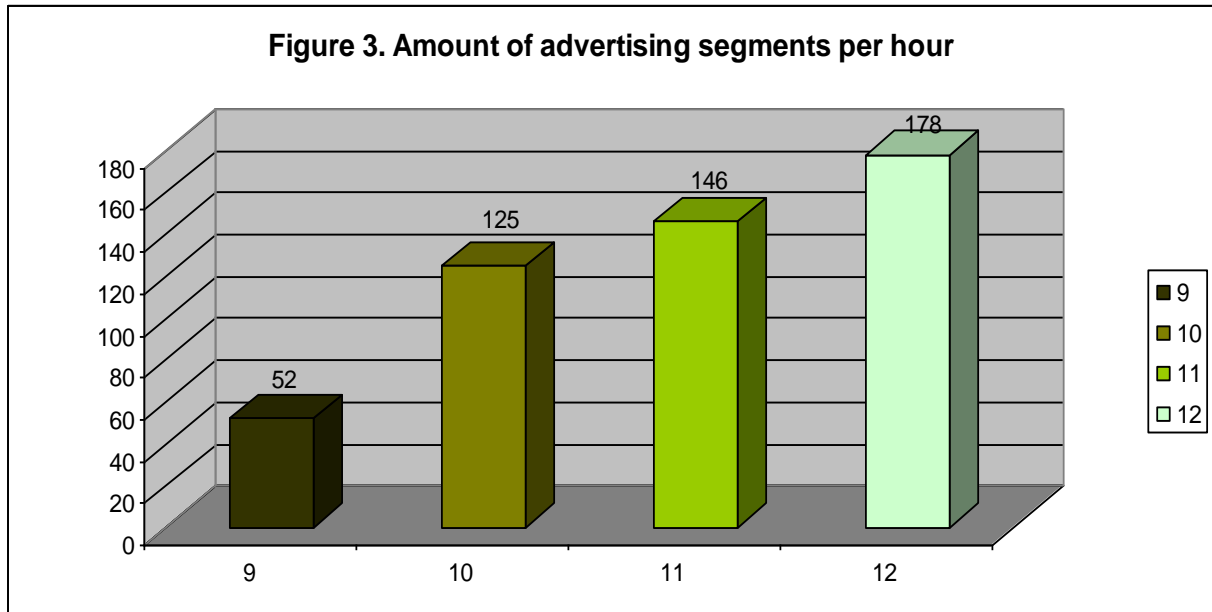


Figure 3: Amount of advertising segments per hour

The first hour accumulates 52 advertising segments, 125 in the hour between 10 and 11, and the third and fourth hour use 146 and 178 respectively. These results show that advertising segments increase strongly from 10 am and reach their peak in the last hour, from 12 to 13 am. Almost 65% of prime time advertising segments are scheduled between 11 and 13. Figure 4 confirms the upward trend in the scheduling of advertising in prime time.

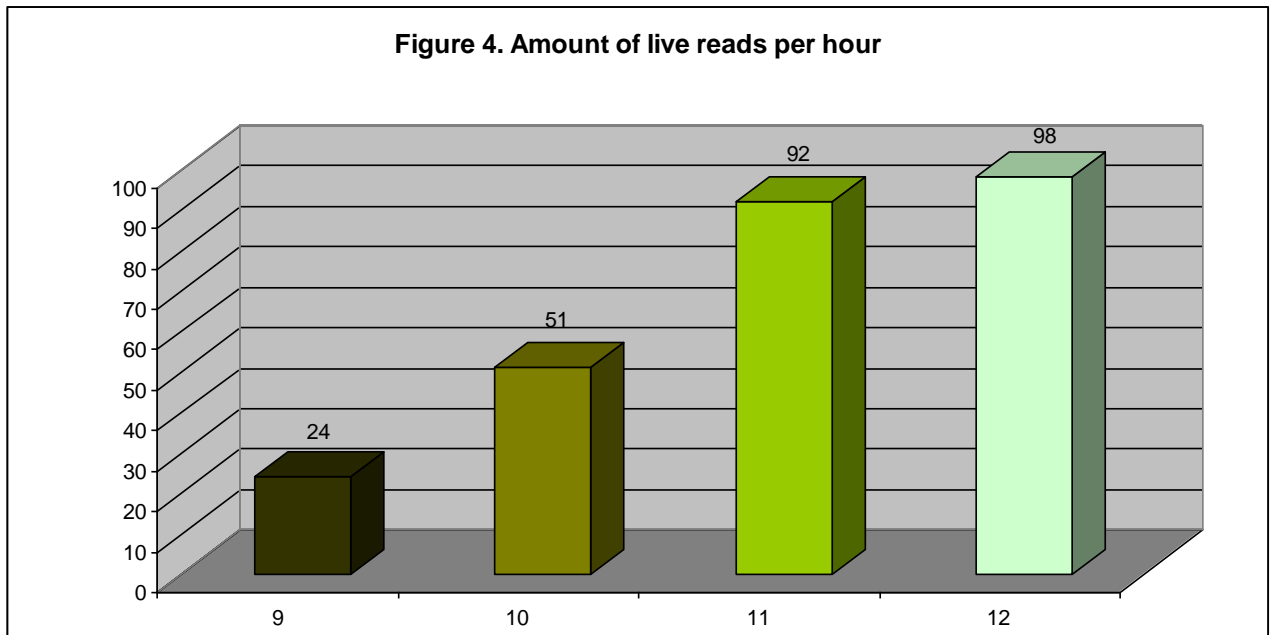


Figure 4: Amount of live reads per hour

There are only 24 brand mentions at 9 am and 51 between 10 and 11. From 11 am on, the number of mentions increased: 92 in the range of 11 to 12 and 98 in the last hour. If we consider the amount of advertising segments and brand mentions the four stations program between 11 and 13, they reach 514 promotional pieces; therefore 67% of total advertising each program accumulates is in the form of advertising segments and brand mentions. The sponsorship is the least used advertising format and as we can see in Figure 5.

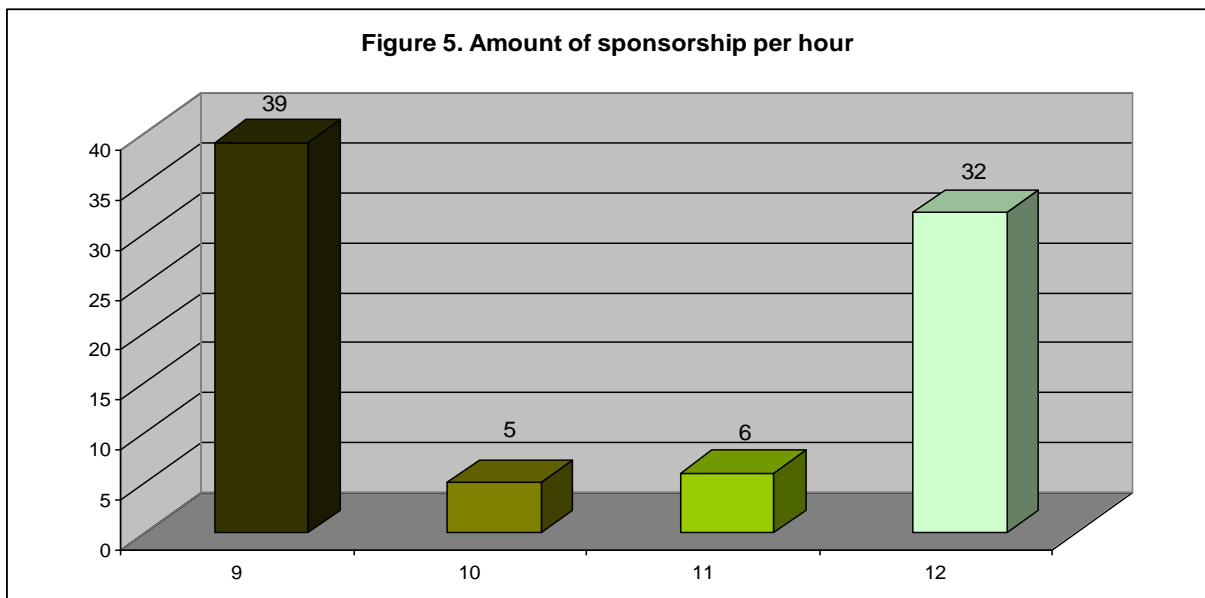


Figure 5: Amount of sponsorship per hour

The programs tend to use them in the opening or closing. Therefore, it is the only format with a different behavior, it doesn't grow between 9 and 13 but it has two "peaks", at the beginning and at the end of the

program. Advertising on prime time is mainly concentrated on the last two hours, and during the first two hours (9-10 and 10-11) the programs spend more time on other genres: news, opinion, fiction and entertainment.

FM is more regular than AM in the distribution of advertising pieces

As we already mentioned, about 70% of prime time advertising is scheduled between 11 and 13. AM concentrates advertising in the last two hours while FM, is more regular in distribution of advertising, as we can see in Figure 6.

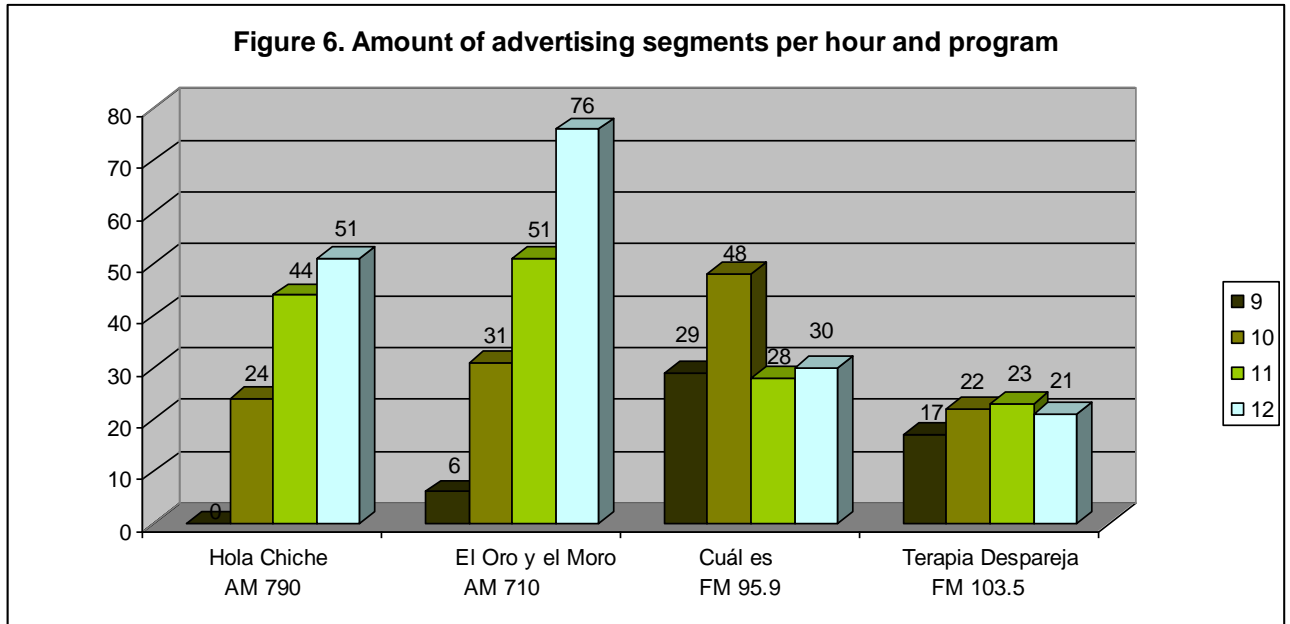


Figure 6: Amount of advertising segments per hour and program

AM goes from less to more, increases progressively since 9 to 13 am. FM maintains a balance between the hours, except for 10 am in *Cuál es?*, when the advertising segment increased. *Hola Chiche* does not usually schedule advertising segments in the first hour, when they take time on the “pase”, the chat room between *Hola Chiche* and the previous program. *El Oro y el Moro* shows a significant “jump” in the amount advertising segments in the last hour, taking great advantage over other programs at the same time. *Terapia Despareja* has a regular behavior; with almost the same amount frequency at all hours except for the first one, which usually programs less advertising segments. As seen in Figure 7, the programs that share band have similar criteria in distribution of brand mentions per hour. Although each program has its own style in programming brand mentions, AM has less regular distribution.

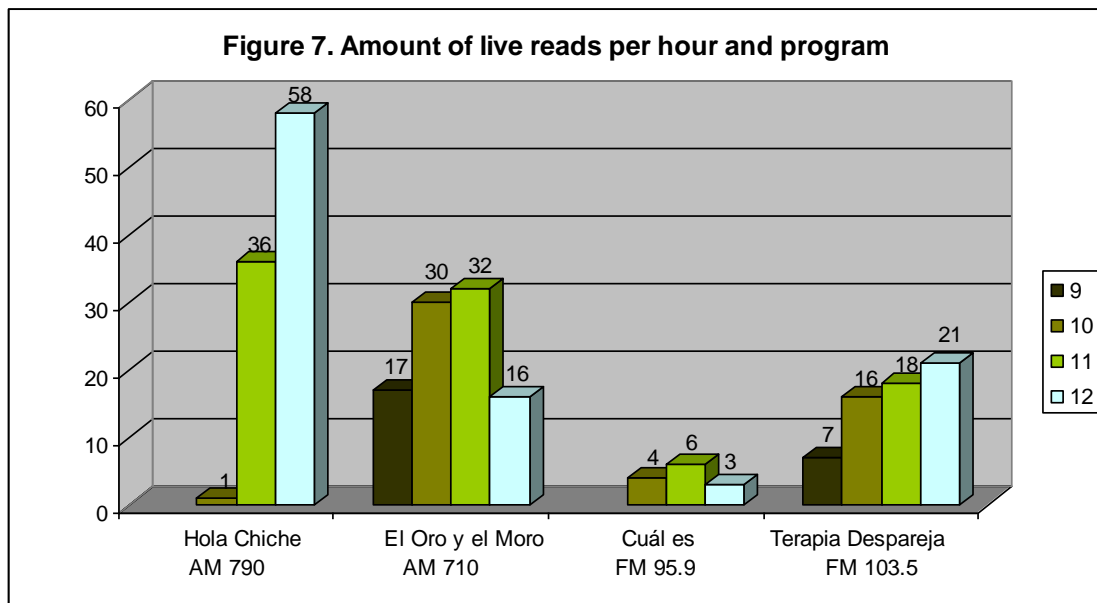


Figure 7: Amount of live reads per hour and program

Hola Chiche does not program adds on the first hour and *El Oro y el Moro* double them on the intermediate hours (10 to 11 and 11 to 12). In contrast, FM shows more balance in brand mentions distribution per hour. *Terapia Depareja* increases the amount of brand mentions in a progressive way, especially after 10 am, with a maximum difference of three brand mentions from one hour to another. Again, these results confirm FM as more organized. AM, however, tends to be more chaotic and improvised, especially because of the importance of current information on its style.

Accumulating more advertising pieces does not mean more advertising time

The amount of advertising segments of each program does not necessarily match with the amount of advertising time, as we can see in Figure 8.

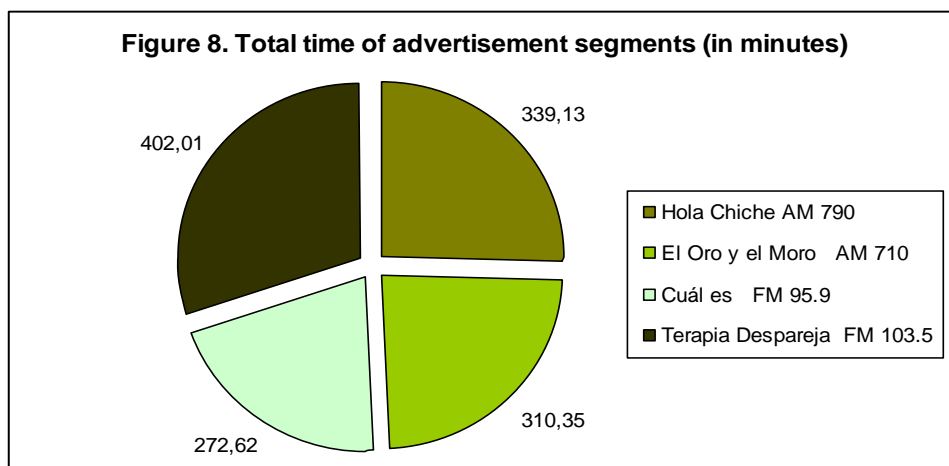


Figure 8: Total time of advertisements segments (in minutes)

Terapia Despareja is the program with least amount of advertising segments but also the one with the greatest advertising time invested in its format: 402 minutes or about seven hours. *Hola Chiche* is the second, with more than five hours of advertising segments, followed by *El Oro y el Moro* with just over five hours. Therefore the program with the highest number of advertising segments ranks third in amount of time used. Last show *Cuál es?* has four and a half hours. Results demonstrate that programs with fewer advertising segments use more advertising time, what means that their advertising segments are longer. There are similar findings for brand mentions, as shown in Figure 9.

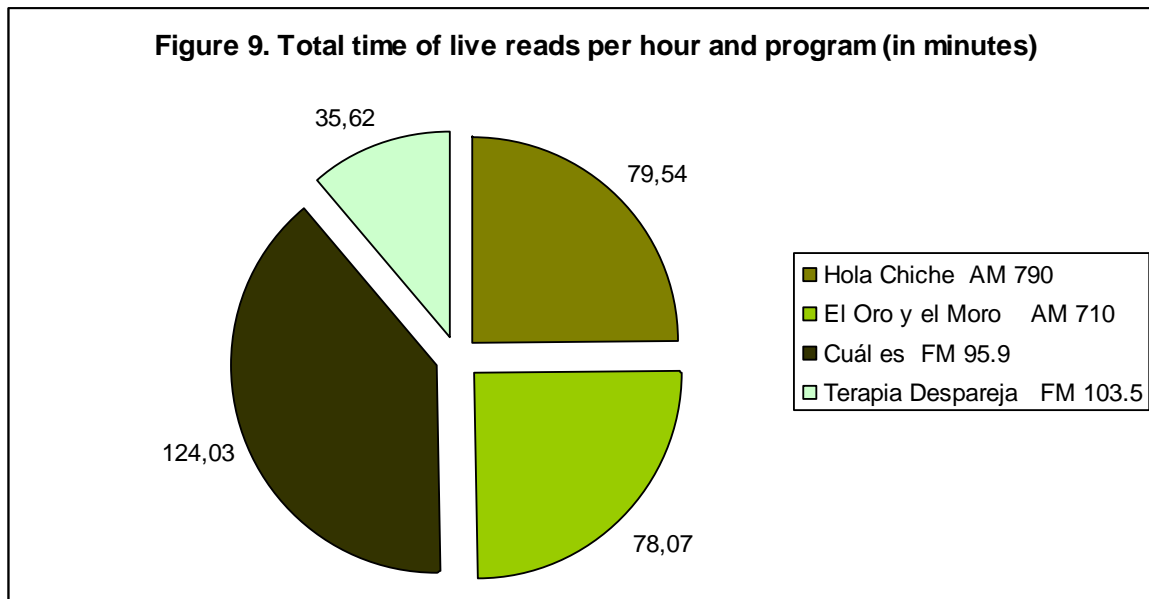


Figure 9: Total time of live reads per hour and program (in minutes)

Cuál es? accumulates the least number of brand mentions but is the one which spends the most time on them, with more than two hours invested on brand mentions. Behind it, *Hola Chiche* and *El Oro y el Moro* take 80 minutes and *Terapia Despareja* is the least with more than 35 minutes. This happens because *Cuál es?* executes very few brand mentions each with a long duration. Their brand mentions are always related to Rock & Pop business. There are less brand mentions because advertising is concentrated in fewer hands. Rock & Pop has major advertisers, provides a great deal of money and has a strong place in programming allowing them to concentrate advertising in fewer hands. By contrast, AM has less concern about what, how and when to advertise. *Terapia Despareja* is between the two styles described above, using more brand mentions than *Cuál es?*, but more brief and ordered than AM.

Advertising in prime time is abundant, especially in AM, where programming depends on what is currently happening. AM shows are built as they are made, with the latest news as dominant criterion. Though, advertising is not always emitted in times ruled by the commercial department, but inserted into the spaces the speakers find in heterogeneity of contents. The first two hours use more time for reports and interviews, so most of advertising is focused on the last two hours. FM uses a more homogeneous distribution of advertising and respects more pre set times.

All programs use brand mentions, a format that increased greatly in recent years. They facilitate the use of advertising without using a pause. They all include a recommendation from the speaker, who assumes first person promotion. Prime time uses few sponsorships, which is more common on FM. Driven by the amount of

advertising and the today's listener profile, active, dispersed, programs schedule ads to fit their times and rhythms.

The advertising segments are uneven in duration; some programs divide them into two and the speaker talks in between, sometimes used to separate pieces of an acting or report. Brand mentions also adapt to the program and integrate into it: involving the speaker, the humorist, introducing gags, using identifying music or inviting the listener to interact through a website, blog or social network. Programs also advertise brands through contests to seek interaction with the listener while using an advertising strategy.

Finally, the programs use all resources to prevent advertising from taking over the program and discouraging the audience. To achieve this, programs use all of the advertising tactics they know.

