



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 5.2
IJAR 2018; 4(10): 396-405
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 01-08-2018
Accepted: 03-09-2018

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The language of advertising: Analysis of lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisement

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the language of advertising and analyse lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements. The study looked at the lexical devices the MTN Ghana copywriter uses in writing the advertisements and how these devices are manipulated to lure potential customers to sign onto the network. Qualitative case study design was employed for the study. Data for the study was all the MTN Ghana print advertisements running in the system from June, 2015 up to June, 2016. Fifty (50) advertisements were purposively selected and analysed. The work brings knowledge about the use of lexical devices in print advertising. The study found out that the lexical devices in the MTN Ghana print advertisements were: lexical levels- nouns, adjectives, verbs, and pronouns. It was also found out that the most frequently used lexical devices are nouns and verbs which are used to influence the target audience to sign onto the MTN Ghana network.

Keywords: Language, advertisement, communication, lexical, MTN

Introduction

Communication is an important trait of human life and communication between individuals is done through the use of language. This is because language is one of the most important and characteristic forms of human behaviour. Language is said to be the medium on which communication drives hence, communication as a social process is rooted in human culture, and as society changes, and the transition of culture also changes (Akinbode, 2012) ^[1]. Communication is thus seen as transferring an idea or a message to another party, so that it can be understood and acted upon (Sekyi-Baidoo, 2003) ^[20]. One realizes that language is one of the most salient elements in human life; it is used to attain a variety of social and cultural goals in life.

Tremholm (1995) ^[21] sees language as "a rule-governed system of symbols that allows the users to generate meaning and in the process, to define reality". In other words, language is made up of sounds (phonetics), language rules (grammar), semantics and social situations. Thus, far in literature, language has been described as a human phenomenon used for the purpose of communication. That is, language – whether natural or non-natural – is the major vehicle by which human beings communicate.

Advertising on the other hand forms a very important part of a communication process. It has become part and parcel of present day life. From everywhere around us, advertisements of various types attack our privacy. In spite of it, there is an attractive power, which is able to influence the target consumer. An imperceptible voice of advertisement advocates, encourages, asks, announces and deeply implants into people's psyche (Lapsanska, 2006) ^[11]. Currently, advertising has become an important part of our social, political and economic system. Every day, we are exposed to a lot of advertisement. Advertising has become the spokesman for businesses and even politics. As a form of mass communication which is closely connected to the world of commerce and marketing, advertisement is a powerful instrument for the transmitting of information from the seller to the buyer. It does not only persuade any human society but also reflects certain aspects of that society's principles and structure. There are countless special and specific reasons for using advertising in its numerous forms. Advertisement is used in announcing a new product or service, expanding the market to new buyers, announcing an adjustment or a price change, enlightening

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Customers and challenging competition. In the process of creating advertisements for all these reasons, language, i.e., choice of expression is of major importance (Ojenike, 2012) ^[17].

Advertising is seen by Bovee and Arens (1994) ^[2] as “the non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods and services) or ideas by identified sponsor through various media”. Bovee and Arens further explain that advertising is directed to groups of people rather than individuals and is therefore non-personal. Most advertisements are meant to be persuasive and win audience to goods, services or ideas from a company. They continue to state that advertising is a stimulus which has the effect of breaking through the target’s psychological screen to create the kind of attention that leads to perception. This includes the conviction that the brand has the necessary attributes or properties which could satisfy the needs of the target consumer.

Therefore, advertisement is a communicative process that educates and influences the target audience to go for a product or service being advertised. People advertise to announce the arrival of a new product or service in the market, announce a product modification, announce a new pack, announce a price change, make a special offer, expand the market to buyers, invite enquiries, test the medium of communication, educate the consumers, sustain and maintain the market, recruit personnel among others. Thus, advertisements use communicative methods to enliven commercial activities specially the mass consumption of goods and services.

Leech (1972) ^[13] is of the view that the language of advertising belongs to the so called “loaded language”. Leech (1972) ^[13] continues to say that loaded language has the aim to alter the will, opinion, or attitude of its target audience. He claims that advertising is different from other types of loaded language- political, journalism and religious rhetoric. It has a defined material goal - changing the mental disposition to get to the desired kind of behaviour - buying a particular kind of product. He continues to say that to convince people to buy the product is the main purpose of advertising. Advertisers do all these using language. Advertising messages reach their audience mainly through the media of mass communication- television, radio, newspapers, handbills, billboards et cetera.

These days, people are exposed to several advertisements, either on radio, television or even when they walk around in town. These advertisements are crafted by the advertisers in a way to have many effects on the target audience. These advertisements have become so common these days to the extent that hardly does one watch a television programme or listen to radio for 30 minutes without a break for commercials. Today, politicians, schools, churches, telecommunication companies, manufacturing and marketing companies and other social bodies consider advertising as the best way of selling their products or ideas to the public. The question is, whether advertising is as effective as many people seem to believe. How does the advertiser use language to persuade his target audience to buy into his products and services?

Akinbode (2012) ^[1] studies advertising language in Nigeria and he is of the view that apart from the language which advertisers use to persuade consumers, they also employ extra-linguistic factors such as context of situation and

illustrations which play a significant role in determining the overall texture of an advertisement and its effectiveness.

In Ghana, there are quite a number of mobile networks which make it difficult for customers to settle on one. This is because these networks using language come with juicy advertisements with the purpose of persuading the target audience to buy into their products, services and ideas.

In view of that, this study looks at the language of advertising with particular reference to the analysis of language use in MTN Ghana print advertisements.

Statement of the Problem

Though many scholars have written extensively on advertisement, the researchers are yet to come across a substantial material on language use in telecommunication advertisement with particular reference to MTN Ghana print advertisement. This gap is what the researchers want to fill by analyzing the language use in MTN Ghana print advertisements to find out lexical devices in them, how these devices are used by the MTN copywriter to lure potential customers to sign unto the MTN Ghana network and draw relevant conclusions.

Vaicenoniene (2006) ^[22] in his study of language of advertising in English and Lithuanian advertising text says that copywriters use modifying adjectives and adverbs, rhetorical devices-metaphor, personification, ellipsis and simile, declarative sentences, colloquial vocabularies which contribute to the persuasive effect of the message. Njemanze, Nwulu, Ononiwu & Obiegbu (2015) ^[16] analysed the advertising language of the mobile telephony in Nigerian newspapers state that advertisers match images effectively with their texts, use simple structures, and make use of both loose and periodic sentence structures, and the advertisers also use simple diction that appeals to the emotion of the target audience.

In Ghana, there have been various reports of some telecom companies gaining significant numbers of subscribers while others suffer loss of subscribers. Considering the competitive environment in the telecommunication industry in Ghana and the high potential of telecommunication advertising to meet their marketing objectives, the study sets to examine the use of lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements that catch the target audience’ attention to enable them sign onto its network.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

1. Find out the lexical devices that are used in MTN Ghana print advertisement.
2. Find out the most used lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements.
3. Investigate how the advertiser manipulates these lexical devices to influence the target consumer.

Research Questions

This research basically answers the following questions:

1. What are the lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisement?
2. What are the most used language devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements?
3. How does the advertiser manipulate these lexical devices to influence the target consumer?

Limitations

This study could not be successfully carried out without its challenges. Prominent among these was the difficulty in accessing primary data directly from MTN Ghana regional office at Ho. Attempts by these researchers to source direct information on the topic in the form of MTN Ghana print advertisement proved unsuccessful as the officers advised the researcher to rather download the advertisements from their website and also take pictures of the advertisements on billboards, walls and kiosks. This became a problem due to frequent power outage during the period of the study coupled with the unreliable network services in the system. This consequently delayed the study.

Delimitations

This study was basically confined to the lexical devices of advertising with particular reference to the analysis of lexical devices use in MTN Ghana print advertisement.

Significance of the Study

This work will contribute to the wealth of knowledge and volume of work done in this area of study. The study also serves as a start off point for future studies. It will also assist the people in charge of advertisements to determine the best methods and mechanisms to employ to appeal to the human psyche.

Literature review

Advertising

Advertising is one of the most important elements in a company's marketing communication, and it is therefore considered a big business today. It is everywhere, thereby affecting everyone. We cannot read magazines, newspapers, watch television, or listen to the radio without encountering advertisement. We even see advertising on buses and billboards when we walk on the street.

Advertising can be looked at in many different ways. The word 'advertisement' is the Latin verb 'advert ere', meaning 'to turn towards'. That is advertisements are texts that do their best to get our attention and to make us turn towards them (Goddard, 2003) ^[6]. Kotler and Armstrong (2003) ^[9] see advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services through mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television or radio by an identified sponsor. That it is paid form means that the advertiser has control over the input, and a form of non-personal presentation means that there is no face-to-face contact between the sender and the receiver. Advertising is also impersonal mass communication meaning that it reaches a large number of people simultaneously and therefore lacks the two-way communication process as it is normally one-way-communication.

Bovee and Arens (1994) ^[2] say that advertising is the non-personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually influential in nature, about products (goods and services) or ideas by a well-known sponsor through various media. Bovee and Arens further explain that advertising is directed to groups of people rather than individuals and is therefore non-personal. Most advertisements are meant to be persuasive and win audience to goods, services or ideas from a company. They continue to state that advertising is a stimulus which has the effect of breaking through the target audience's psychological screen to create the kind of

attention that leads to perception. This includes the conviction that the brand has the necessary attributes or properties which could satisfy the needs of the target consumer.

Therefore, advertisement is a communicative method that informs and persuades the target audience about the product been advertised. People advertise to announce the arrival of a new product or service in the market, announce a product modification, announce a new pack, announce a price change, make a special offer, expand the market to buyers, invite enquiries, test the medium of communication, educate the consumers, sustain and maintain the market, recruit personnel among others. Thus, advertisements use communicative techniques to make livelier commercial activities particularly the mass consumption of goods and services.

Language of Advertising

In the field of advertising, language has a powerful influence over people and their behaviour. The choice of language to communicate specific messages with the purpose of influencing people is very essential. Visual content and design in advertising have a very great impact on the target consumer, but it is language that helps people to identify a product, service or ideas and remember it. Using language as a tool, marketing and advertising personnel have to consider the emotive power of the words they use. Advertiser makes frantic efforts through communication to achieve a link between the sender and the receiver which is seen as bridging the gap between the sender and the receiver. Advertiser's main function of advertising is to give information and to persuade the target consumer to buy into a product, service or ideas.

Kenechukwu (2012) ^[8] sees language as a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols. Words, texts and sentences are attributes of a language capable of changing the meaning as well as the mood of advertising messages. He says that in human communication, language is one of the major tools of thought. The words of a language or the units of meaning can be combined into a completely impressive number of sentences to represent the relationship between objects or events in the world around.

For the message of advertising to be efficient and successful, the language must be right and the diction must be suitable to the consumer it is hoped to influence, so the advertising language must be translated into the target consumer's language. Wright (1983) ^[23] says that "a primary problem in advertising is translating information about the product for the language of the advertiser into the language of the consumer"

Leech (1972) ^[13] posits that the language of advertising belongs to the so called "loaded language". Leech says that loaded language has the aim to change the will, opinion, or attitude of its audience. He claims that advertising differs from other types of loaded language (such as political, journalism and religious oratory). It has a precise material goal - changing the mental disposition to reach the desired kind of behaviour - buying a particular kind of product. To persuade people to buy the product is the main purpose of the advertising. Language of advertising is usually encouraging and gives reasons why one product stands out in comparison with another product.

Writing a commercial is not easy for the copywriter because his views and ideas about the product have to be transmitted to the print and the spoken media. Doing this, the advertiser has to carefully select words or codes which would explicitly convey his message to the consumer with the desired effects.

In print adverts, the headline plays a very powerful role, at times all powerful parts in getting attention and making the reader want to see and learn them. There are no headlines on television, only the opening shot and because a commercial starts with some seconds of silence, the advertiser/copywriter must depend on the picture alone. A guiding principle for constructing the opening scene could be to make the viewer say "what is that? Tell me more" (Akinbode, 2012) ^[1]. He continues to say that the copywriter must know the importance of the product which would enable him to associate with some perfectly natural desire in the mind of the target consumer.

A commercial should start from a brief synopsis, this consists of just a few sentences which state the main idea and development. Advertising language has to concentrate on the key point, the emphasis of some words over others, the creation of catchy ideas in order to catch the attention of the audience. It is for this reason that the language of advertising is short, simple and clear. It has to be tailored to perform a specific job with the fewest words as possible. This agrees with Gumberz (1982) ^[7] who, in his discourse strategies believes that communication helps to be aware of how people may share grammatical knowledge of a language but differently contextualizing what is said in such a way that very different messages are reduced and understood.

In language of advertising, each word, phrase or sentence in the advertisement should be carefully selected to perform a specific function. Thus, the language of advertising should be very positive and put emphasis on why one product stands out in comparison with another. According to Chomsky (1992) ^[3], each word the copywriter uses is associated with a class of pairs F.P. which F is Focus and P is Presupposition, each pair corresponding to one possible interpretation. The copywriter's duty is to translate his message to speech and writing.

Again, a sufficient consideration of the interpretation of the language of advertisements cannot be done based only on semantic interpretation without making recourse to semiotics. Semiotics as a course studies meaning which is gotten from linguistic and non-linguistic forms of communication. It examines symbols, signs and images, pictures, etc. as a form of communicative process. Advertisements generally adopt semiotic elements as a base to effect non-verbal communication. These are mostly in the form of graphics, cinematic devices and audio effects. In print adverts, there is usually an image element which is typically a scene that provides the background for the whole advertisement with the slogan of the advertiser's choice. In addition, this image may or may not be a representation of the product. Therefore, the need for a semiotic interpretation of such non-verbal signals need to be taken into consideration when studying language of advertisement.

Vaicenoniene (2006) ^[22] studies language of advertising in English and Lithuanian advertising text and says that copywriters use modifying adjectives and adverbs, rhetorical devices-metaphor, personification, ellipsis and simile, declarative sentences, colloquial vocabularies to

contribute to the persuasive effect of the advertising message. Okanlawon and Olugu (2007) ^[18] say that the language use in Nigerian advertisement that capture and arouse the interest of the target audience includes personification, alliteration, ambiguous language, indigenous language, Nigerian pidgin, faulty language, pun, simile, and simple or plain language.

Lexical Devices of Advertising Language

Variation and creativity play an essential role in advertising language. Visual strategies are normally used in advertising as attention-catching devices (Goddard, 2003) ^[6]. Also, verbal and written strategies are also used to carry out the message to the target consumer. Due to this, the advertisement texts must be more attractive and more unexpected. Thus, they must catch the attention of the target audience and then identify the product. Copywriters create uncommon, surprising and interesting texts with catchy slogans and phrases in order to manipulate and influence the target consumer to buy the product. Apart from the content of the text, it is important to know how the text is presented-handwriting, typing, spelling, type of font, etc. This aspect of the paper looks at the language of advertising from the point of view of lexical levels (Kubicova, 2013)

Lexical level

Lexical devices in advertisement talk about words and vocabulary of advertising. Simpson (2004) says the lexical level of language studies takes into consideration the words we use and the vocabulary of the language. The copywriters' choice of words may be different from that of advertisement, political speeches, television news, and charts with friends.

Leech (1966) posits that vocabulary in advertisements involve mainly productive and memorable groups of words. Leech places emphasis on contrast between verbs and adjectives, this is because "advertising language is marked by a wealth of adjective vocabulary, and a poverty of verb vocabulary". In Leech's study of television advertisement, he made mention that there is not much of grammatical complexity in English advertising. He says that in most cases, the clauses were independent, most of the clauses were just simple and in most of cases there were imperative clauses with no subject.

Adjectives

The use of adjectives is another prominent characteristic of advertising language. It convinces target consumers that this particular product is better than the other or is the best in order to make consumers go for it. Copywriters use adjectives to make the product outstanding from other products in the market. Leech (1992) is of the view that most advertising language is marked by a wealth of adjectives which enable copywriters talk about exceptional qualities of the product advertised and help the target audience develop positive attitude towards the advertised product. Adjectives may have attributive or predicative function. Attributives pre-modify nouns e.g. *the best network*. Predicative post-modify nouns e.g. *our network is the best*. Majority of adjectives may be modified by adverbs *very, quite, rather* (Leech and Svartvik, 2002) ^[12].

Gradable adjectives are typical for advertisements than non-gradable adjectives. Gradable adjectives may have a form of comparative (adding -er) or superlative (adding -est) e.g.

better than, biggest. There is also possibility to express higher degree by the use of *more* e.g. *the most delicious, more important.* Again, adjectives may be created from nouns by adding suffixes e.g. *beauty – beautiful* (Leech and Svartvik 2002) ^[12]. Leech (1992) says that *good, better, best* and *new* are the best of adjectives, and *new* is the most common word in advertising. Advertisers try as much as possible to avoid adjectives with negative connotations and disapproval such as *bad, worse* or the worst, *dreadful* etc.

Nouns

Noun phrases in advertisement are more complex than the verb phrases. In advertising language, the noun phrase has the pre-modifying part which is normally complex. This complexity is based on an effort to catch, describe and specify the features of the product in attractive way. One interesting thing is that at times a whole advertising text would not contain any verb-it would be made up of only noun phrases. At times, inside these noun phrases, clusters of two, three or more adjectives are inserted.

Pronouns

Pronouns are regularly used elements of advertisements. Pronoun is a word that is used to replace a noun to avoid needless repetition of the same noun. English language distinguishes personal, reflexive, possessive, reciprocal, relative, interrogative, demonstrative and indefinite pronouns. The most common pronouns copywriters use in advertisements are personal pronouns categorized into subjective (I, we, you, he, she etc.) and objective (me, him, her, us etc.) cases. Personal pronouns create a relationship between advertiser and customer and involve the customer into the issue. Preference for first, second or third person vary in styles. However, advertisers use all three persons. 'We' is often the manufacturer. 'I' is the expert or adviser, *you* and *I* are observing *he/she* who did not use the product yet. The most frequent is the use of *you* (Cook, 2001) ^[4].

Mobile Telephony

People are exposed to several advertisements either on radio, television or even when they walk around in town. These advertisements are crafted by the advertisers in a way to have many effects on the target audience.

In Ghana, there have been various reports of some telecom companies gaining significant number of subscribers while others suffer loss of subscribers. For instance, as at August, 2015 there was a 1.39% increase in the total number of Mobile data subscribers. Total subscribers increased from 16,855,666 as at the end of July 2015 to 17,089,304 as at the end of August, 2015. The total penetration rate was 62.80%, indicating an increase of 3.9% since January, 2015.

The market trends indicate the following market shares for various telecommunication companies in Ghana: MTN - 48.02%; Vodafone - 18.10%; TIGO - 15.18%; Airtel - 15.38%; GLO - 3.05% and Espresso - 0.27% (NCA, 2015).

Njemanze et al (2015) analyzing the advertising language of the mobile telephony in Nigerian newspapers state that advertisers match images effectively with their texts, use simple structures, and make use of both loose and periodic sentence structures, and the advertisers also use simple diction that appeals to the emotion of the target audience.

Ojenike (2012) ^[17] examines the role played by advertising in influencing consumers' preference for telecom services provided by telecommunication firms in Nigeria reveals that

both male and female and different age groups were equally influenced by advertising in their preference for the brand. He continues to say that majority of his respondents showed preference for MTN because of its captivating advertising. Nartey (2010) ^[15] posits that consumers respond effectively to advertisement when it is informative, appealing, innovative, pleasing to the eye and shows creativity in its concept.

From the above, one is of the view that advertising plays a role in convincing target consumers to sign onto a particular network.

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used for this research work. This includes design of the study, population, sampling technique, sample size, research site, data collection strategies, and data analysis plan and data presentation.

Design of the Study

The design for the study was qualitative case study. A case study is in-depth or intensive description and analysis of a single unit or bounded system such as a programme, event, process, group, intention or individuals (Merriam, 2000) ^[14]. Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time. Case studies are used to explain, describe or explore events or phenomenon within their natural context.

In terms of overall purpose of case studies, Merriam (2000) ^[14] has identified these as descriptive case study, interpretive case study, and evaluative case study.

1. Descriptive case study. It provides detailed account of the phenomenon under study. Descriptive case study is useful in presenting basic information about areas of education where little research has been conducted. This type of case study is also used to describe an intervention or phenomenon and the real-life context in which it occurred.
2. Interpretive case study. It is used to develop concept categories or to illustrate, support, or challenge theoretical assumption held prior to the data gathering.
3. Evaluative case study. It involves description, explanation and judgment.

Descriptive case study was chosen for this study because one of the goals of case study is to develop an understanding of the bounded system. The purpose of this study was to look at the language use in MTN Ghana print advertisements by analyzing the language devices the copywriter uses to influence the target consumer to buy the products.

Population

Population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to whom the researcher would like to generalize the research results of the study (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). Population is the aggregate of all the elements showing some common set of characteristics that comprises the universe for the purpose of the research problem.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) there is target population and accessible population. The target population is the actual population to which a researcher would really

like to generalize. The accessible population is the population to which a researcher is able to generalize. The former is the researcher's ideal choice; the latter, is the researcher's realistic choice.

The target population for this study is all the MTN Ghana print advertisements running in the system from June, 2015 up to June, 2016. The accessible population is the selected MTN Ghana print advertisements which were chosen over all other telecommunication advertisements because MTN Ghana is the market giant in the country and the researcher wanted to find out the lexical devices the copywriter uses in these advertisements to catch the attention of the target audience that made them use its products.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used was purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a method in which researchers do not simply study whoever is available, but use their judgment to select a sample that they believe, based on their prior information, will provide the data they need. In purposive sampling, the researcher samples with a purpose in mind. It may involve studying the entire population or a section of the population (Merriam, 2000) [14]. This technique was used by the researcher to ensure that advertisements that provided data for the research were selected.

Sample Size

A sample is a subset of the elements of population selected for participation in the study. Seidu (2012) [19] also sees it as the "selected subset of the whole which is being used to represent the population." Samples should be as large as a researcher can obtain with a reasonable expenditure of time and energy. A total of 50 advertisements were carefully selected for the study. The researchers had chosen this size because of time constraints and advertisements available for the period under study.

Research Site

The research site is Ghana. Ghana was chosen over other West African countries because the researchers live in Ghana and easily had access to MTN print advertisements without any difficulties. Also, MTN Ghana is doing well as a market giant (with 48.02% over other networks) in Ghana (NCA 2015).

Data Collection Strategies

The term data refers to the kind of information researchers obtain on the subjects of their research. The data needed for this research was collected through the use of primary and secondary sources.

Primary source

The data for this research was collected from the printed advertisements of MTN Ghana. The advertisements were downloaded from the company's website for the study. Again, the researchers went to town to take photographs of MTN advertisements pasted on walls, signboards and kiosks for the study.

Secondary source

The secondary source of data was obtained from a wide variety of source and the archives of the company under study. However, the main source of information was from

the internet. As Fraenkel and Wallen, (2003) stated, the internet provides market researches with a new environment for research. Since the internet provides good opportunities for the research, the internet has been used as an efficient tool to find quite a lot of useful information concerning the research topic. Also, other information were obtained from books, journals, newsletters, and published articles.

Data Analysis Plan

The researchers employed descriptive case study to analyse the data. Data gathered were coded for easy analysis. Items captured on the data were coded as follow: nouns (Nns), pronoun (Prn), adjectives (Adj), adverbs (Adv) and verbs (Vbs). Since the focus of the paper was to look at the lexical devices, elements of these devices were critically looked at and grouped. The reasons for the copywriter using these devices were sought for.

Lastly, frequency distribution and percentages were used to summarise the data. The summarized percentages were subsequently analysed using descriptive case study.

Data Presentation

The data were presented using tables, percentages and bar charts to interpret information gathered for clearer understanding to readers. This gave a vivid and clearer understanding of the findings of this paper.

Lexical Level

This part talks about the words and vocabulary of the advertising language. Items looked at were adjectives, nouns, pronouns, verbs and adverbs.

Nouns

Data identified under this device is shown below:

• Common Nouns

- Nns1: Share your cool picture on MTN Facebook fans page.
- Nns3: Is there a "real" doctor in the house?
- Nns4: High speed internet & reliable landline service
- Nns6: When heroes shine, the world smiles
- Nns7: MTN Conference Call
- Nns13: Great things are coming my way
- Nns14: Season of surprises
- Nns15: Happy father's day
- Nns16: Call your people at 11k/sec and the world at half the price
- Nns17: Let's celebrate your Hero
- Nns18: Heroes of Change 2016
- Nns20: Get the hottest music
- Nns21: Supported for a lead role
- Nns22: Introducing mobile money.
- Nns24: Call the world from as little as 49c per minute
- Nns25: Dads need love too
- Nns28: Mobile money is better money
- Nns29: The most affordable way to send and receive money
- Nns27: Get a high-speed internet at incredibly low charges!

• Abstract Nouns

- Nns2: Get the most likes, comments & shares to win...Billboards
- Nns5: The future is yours. Go
- Nns8: You're Network...
Is your Net worth...?
- Nns9: Life is richer with MTN

Nns10: MTN; the Better Connection
Nns11: Chale it's time, Switch to 4G on MTN
Nns19: Find love on MTN dating
Nns23: Tailor-made communication solutions for SMEs
Nns26: Have Fun Talking with MTN Magic voice
Nns31: Go make that call
Nns30: Send airtime and SMS or internet bundles to your loved ones using MTN
Nns32: Need the number of a business or person?
Me2U

- **Proper Nouns**

Nns9: Life is richer with MTN
Nns11: ChaleIt's time, Switch to 4G on MTN
Nns12: Thank you for everything Daddy

Adjectives

Data identified under this device is shown below

- **Base Form**

Adj 1: Share your cool picture on MTN Facebook fans page.
Adj 2: Send airtime and SMS or internet bundles to your loved ones using MTN Me2U
Adj 3: Be daring
Adj 5: Is there a "real" doctor in the house?
Adj 6: The best things in life are priceless
Adj 9: To lead the delivery of a bold, new digital world to our customers
Adj 10: Get FREE calls...from MTN
Adj 12: High speed internet & reliable landline service
Adj 13: MTN Magic voice
Adj 16: Great things are coming my way
Adj 18: MTN Conference Call
Adj 19: Happy father's day
Adj 20: The fast, safe and convenient way of sending and receiving money
Adj 21: Get a high-speed internet at incredibly low charges!
Adj 22: Tailor-made communication solutions for SMEs
Adj 23: Free after 1 minute
Adj 24: Introducing mobile money.
Adj 26: Mobile money is better money
Adj 27: Accessible to any network in the world
Adj 28: Supported for a lead role
Adj 29: Have fun Talking with MTN Magic voice
Adj 30: Call the world from as little as 49c per minute
Adj 31: Be exciting Comparative form
Adj 7: MTN Beta Talk
Adj 8: To make our customers' lives a whole lot brighter
Adj 14: Life is richer with MTN
Adj 15: MTN; the Better Connection
Adj 17: An easier way to smsyrgranma, Superlative
Adj 4: Get the hottest music
Adj 6: The best things in life are priceless
Adj 11: Widest coverage

Verbs

Data identified under this device is shown below

- **Bare Form of Verbs**

Vbs 1: Get the most likes, comments & shares to win a chance to shine...Billboards
Vbs 2: Send airtime and SMS or internet bundles to your loved ones using MTN Me2U

Vbs 5: Move to MTN
Vbs 6: Get a high-speed internet at incredible low charges!
Vbs 7: Call the world from as little as 49c per minute
Vbs 8: Get FREE calls...from MTN
Vbs 10: Call your people at 11k/sec and the world at half the price
Vbs 11: Get the hottest music
Vbs 13: Enjoy the widest.....all of Ghana
Vbs 15: Brighten someone's day
Vbs 18: Live it. Love it
Vbs 20: Have fun Talking with MTN Magic voice
Vbs 22: Go make that call
Vbs 24: Text, talk and browse all day on Sundays.
Vbs 26: Chale it's time, Switch to 4G on MTN
Vbs 28: Find love on MTN dating
Vbs 29: Let's celebrate your Hero
Vbs 32: Need the number of a business or person?

Infinitive Form

Vbs 1: Get the most likes, comments & shares to win a chance to shine...Billboards
Vbs 3: To make our customers' lives a whole lot brighter
Vbs 4: To lead the delivery of a bold, new digital world to our customers
Vbs 9: The most affordable way to send and receive money
Vbs 27: An easier way to sms yr granma,

Gerund

Vbs 20: Have fun Talking with MTN Magic Voice
Vbs 23: Introducing mobile money.
Vbs 25: The fast, safe and convenient way of sending and receiving money
Vbs31: Great things are coming my way

Finite Verbs

Vbs 12: Dads need love too
Vbs 14: When heroes shine, the world smiles no matter what you say
Vbs 16: M: SMS till you drop
Vbs 17: N: Life is richer with MTN
Vbs 19: MTN, everywhere you go
Vbs 21: Thank you for everything Daddy
Vbs 30: You can talk for free with MTN Zone
Vbs 33: Supported for a lead role

Auxillaries

Vbs 30: You can talk for free with MTN Zone
Vbs31: Great things are coming my way

Adverbs

Data identified under this device is shown below

- **Adverbs of Time**

Adv 1: When heroes shine, the world smiles
Adv 2: Conference call anytime, anywhere
Adv 3: Text, talk and browse all day on Sundays.
Adv 4: ALWAYS, for MTN subscribers!

- **Adverbs of Place**

Adv 2: Conference call anytime, anywhere
Adv 5: MTN, everywhere you go

- **Adverb of Degree**

Adv 6: Get a high-speed internet at **incredibly** low charges!

Pronouns

Data identified under this device is shown below:

• **Personal Pronouns**

- Prn 1: Yes you can
- Prn 3: **You** can talk for free with MTN Zone
- Prn 4: Brighten someone’s day,
No matter what **you** say
- Prn 5: SMS till **you** drop
- Prn 7: MTN, everywhere **you** go
- Prn 8: Thank **you** for everything Daddy

• **Possessive Pronouns**

- Prn 2: The future is yours. Go
 - Prn 11: Yours to win
- Indefinite Pronoun
- Prn 4: Brighten someone’s day,
No matter what you say
 - Prn 8: Thank you for everything Daddy
 - Prn 10: Send airtime and SMS or internet bundles to your loved ones using MTN Me2U

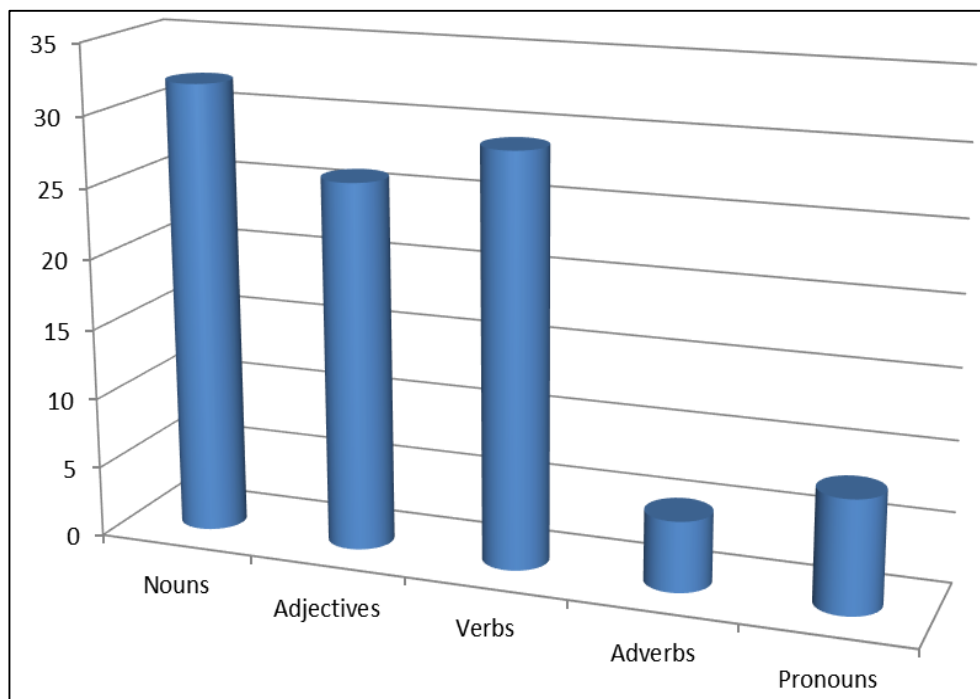
• **Impersonal Pronoun**

- Prn 6: Live it. Love it
- Prn 9: Chale it’s time, Switch to 4G on MTN

Table 1: Lexical level

Devices	Number	Percentage (%)
Nouns	55	32
Adjectives	44	26
Verbs	50	29
Adverbs	8	5
Pronouns	15	8
Total	172	100

Lexical level, noun is the most frequently used occurring fifty five (55) times representing 32%. This is followed by verbs occurring fifty times representing 29%, adjectives occur forty four times representing 26%, pronouns occur fifteen times representing 8% and adverbs five times representing 8%. This is shown in the bar graph below.



Source: Field Data 2016

Fig 1: A bar graph showing analysis of lexical level

Analysis of Lexical devices in MTN Ghana Print Advertisement

In advertising, with particular reference to this data, nouns are used to name the products, services, ideas and benefits one will derive when one is hooked onto the MTN Ghana network. Looking at the data collected, a total of fifty-five (55) nouns were identified in thirty-two (32) utterances. This includes thirty-four (34) common nouns, twenty-one (21) abstract nouns and four (4) proper nouns. A critical look at the nouns used in the data collected revealed that most of them are related to the products, services and benefits of the network company under study. These were used by the advertiser to catch the attention of the target consumer with the mind that when he or she uses the network, he/she will enjoy all these goodies that come with the network.

One common feature of advertisement is the use of adjectives. Adjectives have a great influence on the tone of the message that is sent across. In competitive market, advertisers mostly employ the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives to override their competitors. However, these are not predominant features in this study. A total of forty-four (44) adjectives were recorded in thirty-one (31) utterances. Out of a total of forty-four (44) adjectives identified in the data, only five (5) have been used predicatively (refer to adj3, adj6, adj8, adj14 and adj31) while the rest are attributive. This suggests that attributive adjectives were most frequent in MTN Ghana print advertisement. Again, the data also recorded thirty-six (36) base forms of adjectives, five (5) comparative forms and three (3) superlative forms of adjectives. The reason for the frequent use of the base form of adjectives is to divert the

attention of customers from looking for other available networks providing same services. MTN Ghana print advertiser uses adjectives to create positive connotations of the company.

Verbs are necessary items in MTN Ghana print advertisements. Out of total of fifty (50) statements sampled for this study, thirty-three (33) of them have verb elements in them. In MTN Ghana print advertising, verbal groups are mostly of maximum simplicity, consisting of only one word. It is obvious by a quick look through the data above indicated that the majority of the finite verbs are either simple present form (to satisfy the customer's desire for the present state of the product and its implication of universality and timelessness) or else simple imperatives. It is not surprising therefore, that in the data above, the active form of the verbs is mostly used imperatively (see the bare forms of verbs above). These imperatives in MTN Ghana print advertisements encourage people to act that will inure to the benefit of both the advertiser and the consumer.

Another category of verb types used in the data is the auxiliaries (vbs30 – vbs31). The use of the modal auxiliary 'can' which comes in data vbs30 needs to be looked at. If an animate subject precedes the verb 'can' (in most cases 'you' = customer →...you can), the customer is told that the product gives him or her 'ability' to do this or that. If an inanimate subject however (in most cases the brand name → e.g. MTN, the customer is told what 'possibilities' the product offers.

Again in data vbs31, the use of the auxiliary 'are' with the continuous form of the lexical verb 'coming' indicates the brighter future of the signee to the product. This is an expression of hope that the product offers to the customer. It is also noted in vbs33 that the use of the passive verb 'supported' leaves the customer a multiple of agents (who offer the services) to think of. Absence of agent (agentless passive e.g.... supported for a lead role) in the data attests to this.

Advertisers regularly use adverbs to encourage the public to use their products. In doing so, most advertisers fall on adverbs of time and place to market the products. The most frequent of these adverbs in MTN Ghana print advertisements is the adverb of time. These include 'when', 'anytime', 'all days', 'on Sundays, always', etc (see adv1-adv4). This implies that the product on offer can stand the test of time as to encourage customers to go for the service. Similarly, data collected also revealed adverb of place (see adv2 and adv5), indicating that the service is available to the customer at all places worldwide. Since people would want to access services wherever they are, they are convinced to go for a product that offers it.

Pronouns were also identified in the data under study. Pronouns generally are used to replace nouns, particularly to avoid repetition of the noun in question. In advertisement, pronouns are used to refer to the brand, services and products. The data under study identified fifteen (15) pronouns in eleven (11) appendices (see prn1 – prn11). These are classified under the following: personal, possessive, indefinite and impersonal. In the data above, out of twenty-one pronouns, the personal pronoun 'you' was used six (6) times. These personal pronouns in these advertisements create personal tone of the message. In prn2, prn4, prn5, prn6, prn10 and prn11, the pronoun is used to address the customer directly. Equally, they were used to create the impression of personal contact, especially in prn2

and prn4 and also increase the urgency of the message. In all these, the copywriter named the potential customers directly and emphasized that it is up to them to decide. The pronoun 'you' therefore makes the customer feels that the message is addressed to him or her alone and not any other person. Again, the data revealed the use of the personal pronoun 'you' as the most frequent pronoun used in MTN Ghana print advertisement.

Another pronoun worth mentioning in the data is the use of possessive pronoun 'yours'. This is used in the advertisement to create personal contact and a feeling of care to the customer as though the network, product and services belong to the customer. This makes the customer feel that when he or she uses the network, he or she will belong to the big family of MTN Ghana.

There is also the use of the indefinite pronouns such as 'someone', 'everything', 'ones' (see data prn4, prn8 and prn10). These pronouns are undefined and represent the generality of product users.

Last but not least pronoun identified in the data is the use of the impersonal pronoun 'it' (see data prn6 and prn 9). In data prn6, the pronoun "it" is implied and used to refer to the network. This is employed to keep the customers thinking of the MTN network with the widest coverage.

Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations

Introduction

This session presents the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study on "The language of advertising: Analysis of language use in MTN Ghana print advertisement." The research questions for the study are:

1. What are the language devices in MTN Ghana print advertisement?
2. What are the most used language devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements?
3. How does the advertiser manipulate these language devices to persuade the target consumer?

Summary of Findings

Findings from the analysis of language devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements are as follow:

At the lexical level, the use of nouns reveals that most of the nouns are related to the products, services, and the benefits of the network under study to the consumer. This advertiser used to entice and to catch the attention of the consumer with the mind that he (the consumer) would enjoy all the goodies that come with the network. Adjectives have a great influence on the tone of the advertising message in order to override other competitors giving similar service. Attributive adjectives featured more than the predicative adjectives. Also, the base forms of the adjectives were used frequently than the comparative and the superlative forms. This is to divert customers' attention from looking for other available networks providing similar service in Ghana. Verbs in the data were simple verbs (i.e. consisting of only one word) and are in imperative forms that encourage people to act by going for the products. Auxiliary verbs and the passive forms of the verbs were also used to lure the target consumer. Adverbs are of minimal use in the data collected. Adverbs of time and place took the centre stage of all the adverts in the data. This indicates that the products and services been advertised can stand the test of time. Pronouns are used to replace nouns in the advertisements which refer to the brand, services and products. The

personal pronoun “you” was used frequently in order to create personal tone of the message which makes the target consumer feel that the message is directly addressed to him. From the data analysed above, it therefore became evidently clear that the use of lexical devices in advertising language used in MTN Ghana print advertisements is catchy and influential that lure potential customers to sign unto its (MTN) network.

Conclusion

The study set to explore “The language of advertising: Analysis of lexical devices use in MTN Ghana print advertisement.” The language use in MTN Ghana print advertisement to persuade customers was critically looked at. This research basically answers the following questions:

1. What are the lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisement?
2. What are the most used language devices in MTN Ghana print advertisements?
3. How does the advertiser manipulate these lexical devices to influence the target consumer?

Fifty (50) advertisements were purposively selected and analysed. The data analysed revealed that the lexical devices used in the advertisements appeal to the customer and which make the advertisements more informal and personal. This involves the frequent use of the following lexical devices: nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs and pronouns. In all, the most frequently used lexical devices in MTN Ghana print advertisement are the nouns and verbs which are used to influence the target audience to sign onto the MTN Ghana network.

Recommendations

The findings from the study have called for the following recommendations:

- The company’s advertising text should both be strong and persuasive and reminder oriented. The text must be strong and appealing enough to persuade and build brand preferences, encourage switching to the company’s service by changing the perception of the customers of rival telecommunication networks in Ghana.
- It is also recommended that future researchers conduct research on both electronic and the semiotic aspects of the company’s advertisements.

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