

**AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE OF BILLBOARD ADVERTISEMENT: A CASE  
STUDY OF SOKOTO METROPOLIS**

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**BY**

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## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my husband Abubakar Muhammad Layya (the cynosure of my eyes) who stood by me throughout this work.

## **CERTIFICATION**

This Dissertation by Rashida Umar with Admission number 08/211110015 has met the requirements for the award of the Master of Arts (English Language) of the Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Billboard is a kind of outdoor advertising found along major highways. Billboard advertisement are designed to catch people's attention and create memorable impression very quickly, leaving the reader thinking about the advertisement after they have driven past it. However, its message is often not clear to people due to the persuasive techniques used in them. This study therefore analyses the language of billboard advertisement within the general framework of linguistic analysis with a view to identify the language employed on billboards. This is done on a collection of 99 pictures of Billboard's advertisement across Sokoto metropolis. The study identifies various linguistic elements and devices used through language in the aspects of phonology, morphology/ lexis, syntax and semantics, to create special effects on the target audience. Several aspects of English diction have been manipulated to this end coupled with the fact that, specific linguistic processes such as code-mixing, ellipsis, blending, parataxis and contraction, featured prominently. The findings made include among others that at the phonological level, we realized that the use of rhyme, rhythm, alliteration and assonance have made the language of billboard memorable; at the lexical level; the vocabularies tend to be concrete and vivid while the use of negative words show the uniqueness and unparalleled quality of a product. By and large, the persuasive nature of the adverts displayed on the Billboards is more or less predicated on the selected linguistic resources exploited for such purposes.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This study is primarily aimed at identifying and analyzing the language used on billboard advertisements. Language is one of the most important characteristic forms of human behavior. It is regarded as the major means of communication. It is not only the most effective means of communication, but also the most ingenious, flexible and productive (Olateju et al, 2005). The society relies on it for its vibrancy. Besides, language lends itself to creative manipulations to capture the changing dynamics of the society and diverse linguistic needs of the speakers in different contexts and situations. Language can be spoken or written. The spoken means of communication is as old as language itself and it is the primary medium every normal individual can utilize irrespective of being literate or otherwise. The written medium develops in the course of time in different phases of human history. Writing is an emblem of the arbitrary nature of language. It is this characteristic that keeps it changing and improving at different stages of human development. It developed from the use of stones to the time when skin was used and up to the time paper was discovered. The discovery of paper which forms the background for the era of printing ushered in the use of typewriter to the time when telegrams, computers and other related developments like billboards are used to share written information.

Human language is unique in the sense that it has its own system of organizing its component units into meaningful patterns. Therefore, just as we use language for specific purposes so also manufacturers aimed at promoting and selling their goods and services through advertisements via language.

Due to the increase in the production of goods and services, advertisers are constrained by the desire to create awareness, inform, persuade and convince the public to buy certain products, service, ideas etc.,. He or she chooses and manipulates the resources of language at his or her disposal to realize these desires. This means that language has to be used persuasively.

Advertisement is a form of mass communication closely limited to the world of commerce and marketing. It is a powerful tool for the flow of information from the seller to the buyer. It influences and persuades people to act or believe. Advertisements of diverse types, sometimes, attract our privacy. In spite of it, there is an attractive power which is able to manipulate the consumer; an invisible voice of advertisement advocates, encourages, asks, announces and deeply embeds into people's minds.

There are many special and specific reasons for using advertising in its several forms. Announcing a new product or service, expanding the market to new buyers, announcing a modification or a price change, educating customers, challenging competition, recruitment of staff and attracting investors are few such reasons. In the process of creating advertisements for all these reasons, the choice of expressions is of crucial importance. What kinds of choices make an advertisement highly effective is something worthy to be studied from a linguistic perspective.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

We live in a complex world and this complexity is engendered partly by communication. Ironically, one of the major bonds that weld the human society together is communication. This complex phenomenon is so vital an instrument in human society that it is often believed that without it no social organization can function properly. This is

attested to by Ibilade (1987:1) who posits that, ‘...without communication there would be no coordination, no cooperation and indeed no social organization.’

What then is communication? Cooley (1980:41) defines it as “the mechanisms through which relationships exist and develop.” The mechanism, according to him involves words, writing, printing and whatever may be the latest means of sending or receiving information.

In human societies, where communication is seen an important means of attaining unity, language is regarded as the major means of communication. It is not only the most effective means of communication, but also the most ingenious, flexible and productive. The society relies on it (language) for its (society’s) vibrancy. Beyond this, language lends itself to creative manipulations to capture the changing dynamics of the society and diverse linguistics needs of the speaker in different contexts. The human uses of language are of varying complexities.

The language of advertisement (which include the expressions on the billboard) is obviously more than just a means of communication. It influences our culture and even our thought process. A criticism that is commonly made is that most commercial advertisement are untrue or misleading. A strong moral objection to advertising is that it frequently appeals to unworthy motives and exploits human weakness. For example adverts for cosmetics appeals to people’s quest for variety, some people may feel that if they use the advertised product to o will look like the person in the advert. (Amodu, 2002).

Many critics of advertisement may not agree with an American advertising agent Erickson’s (2005) definition of advertisement as truth well told. Certainly all critics and defenders of this form of communication will agree that it is a powerful socio-economic force in the society. According to Osundare (1991:63), in Olateju et al (2005), advertising

grew out of the incessant human economic cycle of demand, production and supply. Its function according to him is to bring to public attention to what is privately produced.

The language of advertising is quite often associated with the language of everyday conversation; the tone is often informal and chatty, also colloquial expressions are common. Verbal contractions like 'we've' and 'you'll' are easily recognizable features of informal spoken language which would be inappropriate in a more formal variety. Advertising language, however, is distinct from conversation and other linguistic features which make it a variety in its own right, simple sentence or a complex sentence. Advertisers can use puns, they can disrupt collocations, or they can work on our emotions, but whatever approach a particular campaign uses, the slogan is always made eye-catching.

According to Thorne (1992: 257) in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, most advertising was straight forward and informative. Its language and style were formal and respectful; its tone was often ceremonious. In the late twentieth century, however, the power of the mass market has changed this. Since advertisers aim to persuade people to 'buy', 'give', or 'vote' for their own particular product or service, their approach is biased. In a competitive market, advertisers have to be better or more persuasive than their rivals if they are to succeed. Their marketing campaigns seek to encourage 'customer loyalty' by establishing a clear and distinctive image and identity which will make their products or services stand out from equivalent brands from other companies.

Billboard is the common term used to describe a type of outdoor advertising found along major highways. Billboard advertisement are designed to catch a person's attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the reader thinking about the advertisement after they have driven past it. They have to be readable in a very short time because they are usually read while motorists pass along at high speed. Thus, there are

usually only a few words, in large print, numerous and captivating images in brilliant colours.

Furthermore, billboard is frequently given to a large steel framed sign which are mounted on poles 20 – 100ft above the ground. Most often, the sign is printed on large poster sheets which are affixed to the face of the sign. These signs may also be equipped with a variety of special lighting and display effects. This type of sign is one component of a unique advertising medium that communicate with the audience on the go. Such promotions are also referred to as “out of home” advertising because the intended audience are usually in transit, and are always away from their homes [www.answers.com/topic/billboard](http://www.answers.com/topic/billboard) (2010).

As recent as 25 years ago 90% of outdoor advertising consisted of billboard. Today, the industry has expanded to include smaller sign on bus, shelter, kiosks and malls. There are over 500 companies nationwide that specialized in this type of advertising. The Federal Highway administration estimates that in 1996 there were over 450,000 billboards on federally controlled roads which generated revenue in excess of \$1.96 billion.

Billboards are also used to advertise national and global brands particularly in more densely populated urban areas. Billboards are charming and attractive advertising vehicles. The meaning universality of the messages, photos and graphics, which are used in Billboards are important and effective for the perception of the consumer,(Elden,2003;232). Billboards are short-lived advertising machinery because they change easily.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The message of billboard is sometimes not clear to people. This is as a result of persuasive techniques employed in the adverts. The structure and style of different types of advertising have attracted the attention of linguists, those interested in language of communication, psychologists and professionals in marketing. Despite the fact that there are several studies that deal with various aspects of the language of the Billboards, (Emre, 1999; Teker, 2003; Elden, 2003 to mention but a few) yet most of these works are situated within mass media framework of analysis. And those that could be considered to be purely from language perspective either focused on advertizing as a variety or genre in general or adverts in Print media. To the best of my knowledge, there are few studies on the language of advertising with particular reference to Billboards. Hence, the present study is a modest attempt in this direction. It is a systematic study of the language encoded on the Billboards. This is done by collecting a large body of Billboard adverts across Sokoto Metropolis, the capital city of Sokoto state of Nigeria and closely examining them and subjecting them to linguistic analysis. Several linguistic elements, processes and devises as well as the special effects of typography evident in the data collected are identified and discussed.

## **1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

There are two closely related aims of the present study viz: first and foremost, to systematically identify the form and structure of the language of advertising employed in the Billboards, and second, to analyze them within the general framework of linguistic analysis.

Specifically, the study attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify the different choice of expressions used in Billboard advertising

2. To classify the identified expressions in to linguistic and stylistic categories
3. To identify and characterize other devices employed in achieving special effects.
4. To analyze the various linguistic devices evident in the data within the purview of general linguistic analysis.

#### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

The study attempts a systematic study of advertising expressed on the Billboards with particular reference to Sokoto metropolis. This is motivated by the fact that despite the fact that there are several works carried out on advertising there are very few ones that considered the language of advertising encoded on the Billboards per se. Most of the previous works evaluated the impact of advertising on the public. Moreover, there are very few case studies showcasing specific characteristic linguistic features of Billboard advertising with respect to Billboards located in specific societies or communities. Hence, the *raison d'être* of the present work.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The present study is guided by the following research questions:

1. Does the language on billboard advertisement constitutes a special variety of English?
2. What is the form and structure of the expressions used in billboard advertisements?
3. What are the linguistic processes and devises exploited in the Billboard advertising?
4. What is the role played by stylistic devices in the language of Billboard advertisements?

## **1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study**

The study explores the language employed in selected billboards located within the confines of Sokoto metropolis. By metropolitan area of Sokoto it is meant sixteen kilometers from Shehu Shagari square of the central area of Sokoto (Sokoto Urban Development Authority; SUDA, 2012). It examines and analyzes the various linguistic elements, devises and processes evident in the persuasive language of advertising encoded on the Billboards. The linguistic processes examined include, among others, blending, contraction, repetition, code-mixing, ellipsis, to mention just a few. These are analyzed with the view to determine their persuasive effects. Thus, the study analyzed the data at different levels of linguistic analysis: morphological, phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic.

## **1.7 Summary**

The chapter begins with the general introduction with a brief explanation of language, advertisement as well as billboard. Other issues discussed include the background of the study the statement of the problem is specified, the objectives of the study are also stated. The chapter further provides the justification of the study. Issues related to the research questions, scope and delimitation of the study were also highlighted.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This section is concerned with review of the literature related to this study. The literature is divided into two sections: the first section contains the scholarly views pertaining to advertisement and the language of advertisement and billboard as well. The second section deals with reviews of previous works which have been done in relation to this study.

#### **2.1 Definitions of Advertising**

In this section of the work, attempt is made to provide an exposition of the ramifications of advertising; how it was developed and which types of advertising exist. This part brings basic definitions necessary for the reader to understand the whole issue.

There is a considerable body of literature on advertising, because different scholars define it according to their perception. When we look at their definitions critically, they are all pointing at one theory.

Therefore, different views of scholars are presented below: Advertising is an inevitable part of our modern capitalist consumer society whose outstanding features is its competitive fight. (- Advertising is not some external curiosity which we examine, from which we are separate and superior, but something of which we are part, and which is part of us “ - - - (Cook (1996: 182). It is everywhere around us in newspaper, in magazine, on billboards along the streets, on television, in radio, in means to public transport and any

place the sponsor pays to distribute their message. The effects of the advertising influence us whether we like it or not.

Jefkin's (1973), asserts that advertising present the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospect for the product or service at lowest possible cost. Similarly, Beinstain (1974) argued that advertising is the organization and communication of consumers towards purchase.

Another definition is given by Nicholl (1978). He views advertising as a crucial form of communication that is indispensable in any sphere of life.

Also, Fabey (1979) in his book "the business of advertising" defines it as a tool of cooperate communication, a way of delivering messages from one party to another in both personal and public cycles.

Kotler (1980:487) in Amodu (2002) further stresses that adverts can be informative and persuasive by nature when he says: Advertising "is the use of paid media by a seller to communicate persuasive information about its (sic) products, services, or organizations". This is to some extent similar to the definition advanced by Starton (1983) where he opines that "advertising is the process of presenting to a group a non-personal, oral or visual openly sponsored message regarding a product, service or idea".

All these definitions have in common the fact, that advertising is a means of promoting products, idea or organization on the market with the aim to give information and to persuade people on the advantage of the product and induce them to take an action by buying or subscribing to it.

## **2.2 History of Advertising**

The history of advertising can be traced back to ancient times. Wikipedia says that the first forms of advertising messages were transferred by word of mouth, however, in the ruins of Pompeii commercial message and election campaign displays have been found. Egyptians used papyrus to create sales message and wall posters while in Greece and Rome lost-but-found advertising on papyrus was common. Wall or rock painting for commercial advertising is another manifestation of an ancient media advertising form, which is present to this day in many parts of Asia, Africa and South America.

With the form of advertising, we could meet in the market places, where the sellers used to shout and extol their products. In the course of time, people more and more tried to differentiate their products and began to find out new ways of presenting. They started to accentuate the visual aspect of the advertisement. With the expansion of colour printing and colorful posters the streets began to travel in colours. These posters were ancestors to our modern billboards.

As the economy and the trade were expanding during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the need for advertisement grew. Gradually, advertising transformed into a modern, more scientific and sophisticated conception. New visual techniques have been launched. Not only the content of the message is important, but also the form. The creativity of copywriters, who are finding new ways, leads to the richness of various forms of advertising.

## **2.3 The Nature of Language of Advertising**

Advertising is a process of promoting goods or services publicly with the aim of increasing sales. It is also a process of making ‘something’ generally known to the public. The advertisers do this through effective manipulation of language.

In investigating the language of advertising, Crystal and Davy (1969;222) outline certain pertinent questions thus: is it true to say that the intention of advertising is not so much to please the eye as to catch it? What linguistic devices do advertising men use to get you to remember their product? How do they praise their products? Advertising needs both to inform and persuade: is there a clear distinction in the language between these functions?

To understand fully the nature of the language of advertising, Bulton (1960;83) highlighted two basic functions of advertising. One is basically socially useful, completely ethical and free from semantic problems. To her, this function is *to costs, what it is like and so on*.

The other function which is unethical is to create want which in this case implies using language deceptively. According to her, advertising uses language in such a way that it plays on people's emotions, prejudices and ignorance to simulate an artificial want. Consequently, advertising not only sells and promotes goods, but enhances the satisfaction that could be derived from them.

This means that the language of advertising must be able to appeal strongly to the consumer's emotion, sensitivity and sensibility.

## **2.4 Types of Advertising**

According Geoffrey Leech (1972), most frequently and important type of the advertising is commercial consumer advertising: advertising directed towards a mass audience with the aim of promoting sales of a commercial product or service.

It is the kind which uses most money, professional skills and advertising space in this country" (this country, here: Great Britain). Example: "Plump it up. New volume boast

liquid lip color, paints lips with a high shine lacquer finish. Feel the tingling sensation as formula begins to work.”

Another type of commercial advertising is prestige advertising. Here the name and the positive image of the company are advertised rather than a product or services. A typical example runs thus:

The Americans cup: the oldest and most coveted trophy in the world of sailing. Its organizers have entrusted once against the vital timing of the races to Omega, a company whose experience in watch making and sports timekeeping dates back over 150 years – to the very origins of the America’s cup itself.

Industrial or trade Advertising is yet another type of advertising, where a company advertises its products or services to other firms so the communication is between equals. They both (copywriter and the reader) have as an interest a particular knowledge about the product advertised. Therefore, “industrial advertising typically lays greater emphasis on factual information than prestige and consumer advertising, and less emphasis on the persuasive elements”. (Vestergaard and Schroder, 1985:2) Example:

You can trust trenkwalder. We can search for and find the right professional challenges for your carrier, we offer you:

1. Advice about the employment market.
2. An analysis of your personal carrier opportunities taking into account your knowledge, your experiences and your preferences

As an example of non-commercial advertising, we may mention appeals from associations and societies whether their purposes are charity or political propaganda: “Thanks to the world food programme, this little girl in Mozambique knows she won’t go hungry today”.

We can classify the types of advertising also according to the type of medium: TV, radio, brochures, leaflets, magazines, newspapers and other printed materials. Advertising on the internet and direct mail advertising, outdoor advertising which consists of billboard, et.c.

## 2.5 Advertising as a Kind of Communication

According to Widdowson (2000;3), human language “serve as a means of cognition and communication: it enables us to think for ourselves and to cooperate with other people in our community”. It follows that advertising is a kind of communication between the creator of advertisement (in fact, the copywriter who substitutes the producer/seller and transfer his ideas into advertisements), and the consumer.

## 2.6 The Process of Communication

Now we will describe the communication process in general. Communication is the process between at least two sides- the addresser (transmitter – speaker or writer) and the addressee (receiver - listener or reader). Between these two participants, the coded meaning (information) is transmitted through the communication channel. Each communication is proceeding in given context or situation. The communication process is represented in the following picture:

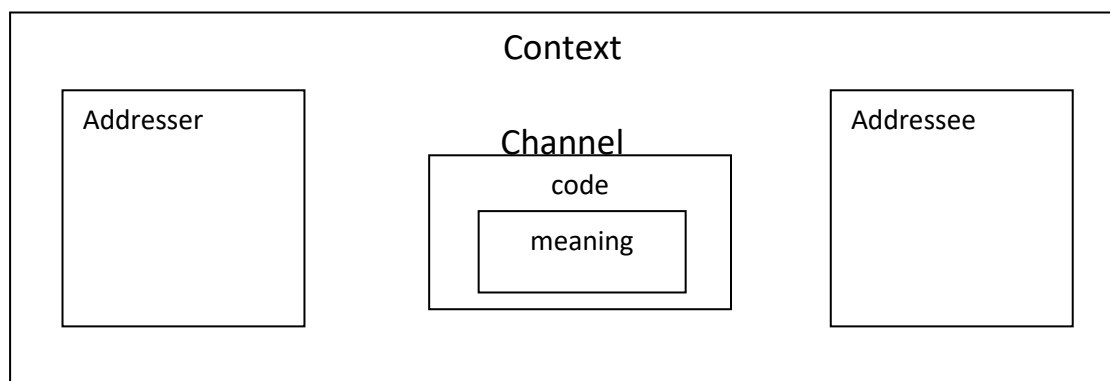


Diagram 1: The representation of communication process (Adopted from Vertergard and Schroder (1985: 16)

From this graphic representation we can clearly see that, in case of advertising, “the addresser is the copywriter, and the addressee is the reader, the meaning transmitted is about the product (more specifically, an attempt to make the reader buy the product), the code (in the case of press advertising) is language and some sort of visual code, the channel consists of printed publications, and the context will include such features as the reader’s total situation (does he have the product already? Can he afford it? e.t.c), the publication in which the advertisement appears, and last but not least the knowledge that the text is an advert”, (leech 1974:49), in Vestergaard and Schroder (Ibid: 15). From this we conclude that advertising is a kind of communication with its own principle. The addresser is a producer – a company that tries to persuade the addressee – a consumer- to buy a product. The code of the language has to be known by all participants of the communication.

The information communicated by the advertisement is not discussing everything about the product. It is incomplete because there is no space enough to describe the product into details. The information only contains what the producer thinks the consumer needs to know. It always contains the name of the producer and usually the information how it can benefit the consumer.

Goddard (1998), emphasizes the idea of narrator and narratees. She says that the writer is the person who constructs the texts in reality (in advertising texts, the real writers are the copywriters and artist who work in an advertising agency’s creative department), while the narrator is the story teller within the text. Copy writers can construct all sorts of different narrators to convey to us the message, for example, a female writer can construct a male narrator, or an adult writer can construct a child narrator: *She’s got more than me, mum.*

Narratees are, on the other hand, people who appear to being addressed, in fact, in advertising communication a narratee is not a certain person, but at least a target group or a whole public.

The widest address forms to be given to a narratee in an advertisement, are:

a no address or at all (o) or (b) 'you' (or the possessive form, 'Your'.) In

both these cases, any person reading the advert can feel addressed by it

and not excluded from the communication (Goddard,1998:31) .

The widely used pronoun 'your' symbolizes the closeness of the product to the consumer.

However, a narrator might be any of the following:

i. The first person singular narrator *I*: a character in the story itself, this kind of text sounds

more personally; the narrator talks to us; "I am a big loser", "I am unique, moissanite is me"

ii. The first person plural narrator '*We*'. This may evoke the effect the whole company or association talks to the narratee: it makes corporate impression; "We bring Olympic energy your home"

iii. The third person Omniscient narrator 'He' 'She', 'It', 'They' or 'O'- it is 'an observe' of events telling us about actions or product:

"In their eyes, they can tug forever"

"Stop seeing broken hair everywhere"

"One just right for you".

## **2.7 Varieties of Language**

A variety of language as Brook (1979) observe, seems to depend not on the people using it but on the occasion when it is used. Part of the problem of language is that once learned, it has to be used for different purposes that are unrelated and each purpose calls for a different variety of the language.

Factors such as need and purpose usually determine the language we use and the meaning we intend to communicate. Also, one's profession, field of discourse and context can determine the variety of language we use. For instance, a lawyer's choice and use of words will be different from that of a preacher or a man advertising new product. Language reflects these varieties. This refers to any piece of language variation according to use. It is presumed that the same speaker has a repertoire of varieties and makes habitual switches to suit appropriate occasions. For instance, the variety of language a lawyer will use in court of law will certainly be different from the one he will use at home with his wife and children.

Thus, we can talk of language of religion, legal language, language of newspaper reporting, language of broadcasting, language of politics and language of advertising to mention just a few. However, this research work treats the language of advertising which taken from Billboards, as a special variety of language.

## **2.8 Linguistic Means Used in Advertising Language**

Leech in his book (1972:25) writes, that the language of advertising belongs to so called 'loaded language'. He further states that "loaded language has the aim to change the will, opinions, or attitudes of its audience". He claims that advertising differs from other types of loaded language (Such as political, Journalistic and religious oratory) in having a

very precise goals - changing the mental disposition to reach the desired kind of behavior-geared towards buying a particular kind of product.

To persuade people to buy the product is the main purpose of the advertising. Among such great competition, the producer wants to demonstrate the uniqueness of his product. He wants to differentiate it from the rest. He is trying to find new techniques of advertisement.

Also, the advisement texts must be more attractive and more unexpected. They must catch the attention of the audience and then identify the product. Copywriters create uncommon surprising, interesting texts with catchy slogans or phrases. The reader or listener must give it some thought and the result is manipulation with him in order to buy the product. Leech (Ibid) sets the following principal of advertising texts: attention value, readability and colloquial style, memorability (most important in the process of advertising is to remember the name of the product) and selling power. Leech (Ibid: 27). The last principle is crucial. David Ogilvy (1985:7) in his book says:

I do not regard dvertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information. When I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative' I want you find it so interesting that you buy the product.

We may identify the advertising as a type of discourse, because it can tell us a good deal about our own society and our own psychology. Discourse is text and context together (Cook 1996:2-5). We could analyze the whole discourse of advertising. It means "the interaction of all elements that participate in advertig discourse: participants, functions, substance, pictures, music, a society paralanguage, language, a situation, other advertising and other discourse" although such analysis would be complete, it would be very difficult to elaborate in such limited space. For that reason, in this we analyse the language of Advertising in billboard advertisement from the linguistic perspective, especially

phonological aspect, lexical and morphological, syntactic and semantic points of view. We provide examples and describe the most commonly used linguistic devices and figures of speech in billboard advertising text. The linguistic aspect is listed below:

- i. Phonological aspect: Rhyme, Rhythm, Alliteration and Assonance.
- ii. Grammatical structure and morphonological aspects: Verb phrase, Noun Phrase, Adjectives, Numerals, Intertextually, compound noun, negative words, inclusive words,  
use of coinage, Idiomatic constructions, use of proverb and Collocations.
- iii. Syntactic aspect: Sentence type: Simple, Interrogative, Imperative and Declarative, sentences. The use of Exclamatives, Co-ordination – Apposition, Parataxis, Schematic  
patterning: Parallelism, Anaphora, Epiphora, and Ellipsis.
- iv. Semantic aspects: denotation, connotation, personification, simile, hyperbole, metaphor, visual metaphor and antithesis.

## **2.9 Billboard as an Advertising Medium**

There are scanty literatures on billboard as an advertising medium. However what follows is a review of some of the available literature.

Elden (2003:223) says that, “the priority objective of billboard advertisement is: to gather and attract consumers’ interest and attention.

Due to this reason all the figures, texts and design methods, types which are used in Billboard advertisement are very effective by sending the message. Sex, excitement, fear, honour, colour, texture, movement, rhythm, harmony, Balance, contrary to effective use of

white spaces are the characteristics of billboards, which enable effective reach and large target audiences for this medium.

## **2.10 Previous Studies on Language of Advertising**

The study of language of advertising from a linguistic perspective has been attempted by several scholars: Leech (1966) Geis (1982), Vestegaard and Schroder (1985); Mancher (1990) Gondo(1987); Keleson (1991) Grace (1995); Abdulazeez (2005) and Nayak (2002) . Leech (1966) in his pioneering and comprehensive study on English in advertising, has analyzed in detail different aspects pertaining to grammar, vocabulary, discourse and rhyme, rhetoric of advertising with special reference to television. He has effectively related these aspects with the functional factors such as attention value, listenability/readability, memorability and selling power. Illustration, display typography, vocal emphasis, prompt spelling, grammatical solecism, metaphor and paradox are some of the aspect linked with attention value. Simple and colloquaial style and familiar vocabulary are connected with readability. Phonological regularities such as alliteration, rhyme and single are related to memorability. Frequent use of imperatives and superlatives are connected with selling power. The distinctive property of advertising language has been closely identified with the use of clauses, phrases and words as minor sentences, which constitute a different kind of grammar disjunctive called as attempt to descriptive grammar. Geis (1982) has made an attempt to describe how language is used in American advertising, especially television advertising. He focuses on certain linguistic devices that figures most prominently in advertising. According to him, the advertising claims employing the word ‘help’ as in phrases like ‘help to achieve’ and comparative phrases like ‘ more or less’ are impressive because they are distinguishable from the law like generic claims of scientists. He has concluded that advertisers in general tend to prefer vague language rather than

language with explicit empirical consequences and to prefer subjective claims to objective claims.

Vestergaard and Schroder (1985) have studied the language use in commercial press advertising in relationship with communicative functions of language such as expressive, directive, informational, contextual and poetic etc they have also identified the importance of imperatives and directive speech acts in encouraging the audience to buy the products.

Mancher (1990) has looked into the aspect of vocabulary in advertising and identified ten words as the most personal and persuasive. They are: New, Save, Safety, Proven, Love, Discover, Guarantee, Results, You, and Health. The psychological impact of those words on the consumers has also been discussed from the perspectives of the following:

- i. Schematic patterning:
- ii. Parallelism
- iii. Anaphora
- iv. Epiphora
- v. Ellipsis
- vi. Semantics aspects that include: denotation ,connotation, personification, simile ,hyperbole, metaphor and antithesis.

Gondo (1987) conducts a study of lexico-semantic use of language in advertisement and its impact on the general public. He examines lexemes used in advertising with respect to their meanings. In particular he determines emotive and cognitive meanings associated with these items. To explore more into the semantic aspect of these lexemes, he makes an imaginary dictionary for the advertisers, the essence of which is to ascertain if the words

that form the regular choice of the advertiser have different interpretation with the English dictionary. He finds out that there is no difference in meaning.

In addition, the researcher investigates the sentence pattern used in advertisements where he finds that simple, compound and even complex sentences are all present in language of advertisement. Another issue of interest to him again is the technical employment of the anaphora for emphasis on languages. However, the researcher was unable to tell us the kind of advertisement he used whether it is television advertisement, Radio, newspaper, billboard to mention just a few. Therefore he was not specific. The work is related to the present study since it has to do with the semantic use of language which is one of the level of linguistics being analyzed in the present study.

Another related project also relevant to this study was produced by Keleson, (1991). She focused her work on the use of emotional language in advertisements, its usage and the effect it has on the consumers. She presented her data in a tabulated form. This was done through a list of tabulated words and expressions obtained from the various adverts which has to do with language of emotions. She presented four tables which were divided into five different columns thus:

- (i) Column one contain words and expressions that have lexical representations and object, event, situation and ideas which are capable of arousing emotions.
- (ii) Column two contains the emotional language in magazine adverts.
- (iii) Column three involves the emotional language that is written in billboard adverts.
- (iv) Column Four is concerned with the emotional language that exists in Radio Adverts.
- (v) Column five consists of the language of emotions in television adverts.

Therefore, in the discussion of the data, the notion of sense relations – denotation and connotation are used as her analytical tools because the study is specifically semantics. In addition, she emphasized that people like advert generally, especially those that have emotional feelings of love and elation. Therefore, such emotional appeals constitute the main attraction of adverts.

In her conclusion, she asserts that advertisers consciously exploit the vast resources of language through their choice of words and variety of linguistics play to achieve their purpose i.e purchasing the advertised product. Despite the fact that Keleson's work was limited to the emotional use of language in advertisement, it is relevant in the conduct of this study.

Apart from the above, Grace A.K (1995), also writes on language of advertisement. Her topic of research work is "An assessment of the language of advertising and its impact on the public". The work highlights the important role played by the language of advertising in Nigeria. The work notes the use of persuasive language as an important tool in advertising. It seeks for a regulatory body that will regulate the activities of advertising practitioners as well as protect the interests of the consuming public.

Therefore, the significance of her study aims to increase public awareness of the impact of advertising, also sensitive government policy towards protecting the interests of the consuming public. In addition, her data was analyzed according to the persuasive use of language. Grace's work is also limited to persuasive use of language in advertisement, but it is equally relevant to this study since the present study encompasses the general framework of linguistic analysis.

However, Abdul'azeez (2004) carried out a research on stylistics analysis of language used in billboards advertisement. In her attempt to obtain a reliable data for her

work, she administered a hundred copies of questionnaires, so, thirty questionnaires were distributed to wholesalers, the same number to retailers and then forty were administered to the consumers across Sokoto metropolis. This was done to ascertain the reaction of the wholesalers, retailers and consumers as regards the effect of billboards as a means of advertisement.

Also, the tool of Stylistic Analysis was also used to interpret the linguistic elements of the billboard. Abdulazeez (Ibid)\_ suggested the following:

- (a) Advertisers should avoid the use of ambiguous language in the course of advertising their products.
- (b) Advertisers should always consider the culture of an area that is, image on the billboards should reflect the cultural setting of the society.

In her conclusion therefore, she upholds the view that, consumers are positively influenced by billboard because of their visual content. Finally, she argued that billboard is a good medium of advertisement because even if one cannot read what is written on it, he can see the image which signifies what is being advertised. Despite the fact that this work makes an interesting reading, yet it has very little to contribute to the present work because of its emphasis on the psychological effects of advertising on the general public.

Nayak (2002) explored the language of advertisements in Tamil Mass Media. The study analyzes the language of advertisements in magazines, radio and television with a view to find out the differences in choice of expressions among the three media. Although, this work differs in significant ways from the present study, particularly with respect to the choice of the media, yet it provides useful insights with regards to the mechanics of analysis relevant in the analysis of this kind.

## **2.11 Summary**

This chapter starts with the introduction, it talks about definitions pertaining advertisement, history of advertising, the nature of language of advertising, types of advertising, advertising as a kind of communication, it also highlights the process of communication, varieties of language, linguistic means used in advertising language, Billboard as an advertising medium and reviews previous works related to this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter looks at the field work techniques used for data collections, the analytical tools and how these tools are used to analyze the data. It also elucidates how data are collected. The headings to be discussed in this chapter are as follows:

1. Research design
2. Population/sampling
3. Sampling techniques
4. Data and data collection procedure
5. Instruments for data collections
6. Methods of data analysis

What follows is a discussion of each of these items in turn.

#### **3.1.0 Research Design**

This research is designed to investigate the linguistic processes, devices and elements and their realizations evident in billboard advertisement. Therefore, the design is descriptive.

#### **3.1.1 Population of the Study**

The total population of this study consists of ninety- seven billboards advert materials collected across Sokoto metropolis where various manufacturers advertise their products using different approaches in the use of language.

### **3.1.2 Sampling**

A total number of 120 billboards snapshots are collected from a cross-section of streets within Sokoto metropolis. 99 pictures are sampled for analysis based on their unique linguistic characteristic features.

### **3.1.3 Sampling Technique**

As stated earlier, 120 billboards are photographed. However, we randomly selected 99 out of the total number and content-analyse them. The analysis is strictly linguistic in nature that borders on phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic planes. The Billboards are located across Sokoto metropolis that include different places such as: Runjin Sambo Area, Arkilla Round About, C.O. E. Road, Abdullahi Fodio Road, Maiduguri Road, Kano Road, Old Airport, Maituta Road, Aliyu Jodi Road, Market Area and UDUS Bus Stop (Permanent Site).

### **3.1.3 Instrument of Research**

Both primary and secondary data are used. The primary data contains the photos of billboards while the secondary data contains the written records of some billboards to clarify some photos that are not obvious.

### **3.1.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The method of analysis utilized in this study is Content Analysis. This is used since the focus of the study is linguistic characteristic features encoded on the Billboards vis-à-vis their persuasive impacts on the target audience. The items are analyzed by identifying their unique linguistic properties evident in the sample pictures. Some of these properties are basically, phonological, morphological, syntactic or semantic. Sometimes a combination of one or more levels of analysis is exploited.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the data are analysed under the following levels of linguistic description of language - Phonological, lexical and morphological, syntactic, and semantic points of view. We provide examples and describe the most commonly used linguistic devices and figures of speech in billboard advertising.

Since, the main purpose of advertising is to persuade people to buy the product in the midst of such great competition; the producer wants to demonstrate the uniqueness of his product. He wants to differentiate it from the rest. He is trying to find new techniques of advertisement. Also, the advertising texts must be more attractive and more unexpected. They must catch the attention of the audience and then identify the product. Copywriters create uncommon, surprising, interesting texts with catchy slogans or phrases. The reader or listener must give it some thought and the result is manipulation with him in order to buy the product. Leech sets the following principles of advertising texts: Attention value, Readability (by means of simple, personal, and colloquial style), memorability, (most important in the process of advertising is to remember the name of the product) and selling power (leech. 1972:27). The last principle is crucial as emphasized by Ogilvy (1985:7) thus:

I do not regard advertising as entertainment or an art form, but as a medium of information, when I write an advertisement, I don't want you to tell me that you find it 'creative' I want you to find it so interesting that you buy the product.

We now present in the following sections the data and its relevant analysis.

#### **4.1 The Data Presentation**

An attempt is made in this section to present and analyse the data on which this work hinges. Several linguistic aspects stated in the preceding sections are identified and the possible analysis of such linguistic properties evident in the data is discussed in the next section.

## **4.2 The Data Analysis**

In this section we present an analysis of the sample data collected. The data is made up of 99 photographs of billboards representing a cross-section of variety of pictures depicting various linguistic properties with different persuasive effects used for special purposes. Generally, the language is laudatory, positive, unreserved emphasizing the uniqueness of the product. The vocabulary tends to be concrete and vivid. Figurative expressions are found to be common, rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, assonance and other phonetic effects are noticeable. There are deviant spellings, especially in the brand names and considerable use is made of inexplicit grammatical constructions. Linguistic processes such as ellipsis and code-mixing are common place in the data investigated. The analysis below demonstrates specific instances of this general view. The data is examined and analyzed according to linguistic processes, devices and elements that characterized the corpora.

## **4.3 Phonological Aspect**

Advertising language often use the techniques similar to poetic texts. The advantage of so called mnemonic devices (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance) has the mnemotechnical effect. It guarantees that the receiver of the advertisement remembers the text better and recalls it at the right moment.

### **4.3.1 Rhyme**

This is “a pattern of identity of sound between words or verse-lines extending from the end to the last fully accented vowel and not further”. (Concise Oxford English Dictionary 2004). Rhyme refers to sounds, not spelling. Rhyme is related to the use of an identical sound, letter or syllable at the end of adjacent words or lines. It is commonly found in jingles, slogans and headlines as can be seen in the following:

(1) Golden penny sermovita: “The HOME OF GOOD FOOD”

(2) Taste king magi: “make the most tasty cooking”.

(3) Glo: “recharge and go to old Trafford”.

(4) Luna Milk: Adding a smile to life!”

(5) Glo: ACTIVATE YOUR SIM, REGISTER, RECHARGE

(6) Amstel malta: “Be the best you can be”.

(7) Mama detergent: “Good mama knows best”.

(8) Road safety corps: Together, we say “No to over speeding”.

(9) a-z petroleum product: We blend for Engines to perform.

(10) Scanfrost freezer: Make a happy home happen

(11) Enchanteur cosmetics: The fragrance of romance”

(12) Blue Band: “New spread for bread”.

(See Appendices A, C, D, E, F, G, H and J)

A further occurrence of rhyme in different patterns is exemplified below.

- a. Between second, fourth and fifth words.
  - i. Golden penny semovita: “The HOME OF GOOD FOOD”(app.A)
- b. Between second and fifth words
  - i. Luna Milk: Adding a smile to life!” (app.C)
  - ii. Scanfrost freezer: Make a happy home happen (app. D)
  - iii. Enchanteur cosmetics: The fragrance of romance” (app.H)
  - iv. Blue Band: “New spread for bread” (app-J).
- c. Between first, second and sixth words.
  - i. Amstel malta: “Be the best you can be” (app.E).
- d. Among first, second and third words
  - i. Glo: ACTIVATE YOUR SIM, REGISTER, RECHARGE (app.D)
- e. Among first, second as well as third and fourth words
  - i. Taste king magi: “make the most tasty cooking”.
  - ii. Mama detergent: “Good mama knows best”.
- f. Among first, third, fifth and sixth words as well.
  - i. Glo: “recharge and go to old Trafford”.

#### 4.3.2 Rhythm

The aim, of advertising is to be catchy and easy to remember. One of the devices copywriters can reach out is to use prosodic features intonation, rhythm and lexical stress. This is because they have a great emotional and mnemonic effect. Even the scientists cannot explain why rhythm and repetition have so powerful attraction on human mind. Some suggest that it recalls the regular sound of the mother's heartbeat in the womb. Langer (1967:324); Stetson, 1951 in: Cook (1996: 120) or other compare it to the dances of ritual magic (Olson, 1950, in: cook 1996:120). That they have an enhancing effect on neuronal circuits in the brain (Newman, 1986 in :Cook 1996:120).

Copywriters often use language with rhythmical arrangement. The listener or reader need not notice it and he perceives it only subconsciously. The result is that the text is memorable and linguistically neat.

Consider the following sample examples:

(1) Taste king magi: the king of tasty cooking (App. A)

(2) Etisalat: Now you're talking. (App.A)

(3)Chivita orange drink: LOVE MY FRIENDS,

LOVE MY CHIVITA

(4) INEC: FIND. ASK. PROBE

(5) Dangote weat: Whole meal for healthy living

(6) Glo: No hidden charges, no, conditions, No rentals.

(7) MTN: Let's go Africa, let's go 2010.

(8) Maltina Drinks: Nourishment for life! .

- (9) Vitavite Drink: Vital for healthy living.

(See also appendices A,B, C and D for more cases of this nature).

#### 4.3.3 Alliteration:

Alliteration can be defined as literary technique, in which successive words (more strictly, stressed syllables) begin with the same consonant sound or letter. It is widely used in advertising slogans. There are 20 consonant sounds in English, but those that are made by stopping the air-stream completely are: p, b, m, n, t, d, k and g. These are, according to Myers (1997), most used because they stand out more than others. The examples below are in agreement with this observation:

(1) It is made up of **b**ody **b**uilding nutrients (Indomie Noodles).

(2) **m**akes the **m**ost tasty cooking, **b**ring out the **b**est flavour in food. (Taste King Maggi)

(3) **d**elicious food, **d**angote weath

(4) Good **B**etter – **B**ank PHB

(5) **W**orld's no 1 3-**W**heeler. (Bajaj Re-3-wler).

(6) Nations No. 1, **n**ourishment for life! (Maltina drink)

(7) Get **m**ore out of **m**ilk (Peak milk)

(8) **g**old circle **g**o for **g**old! **S**trong for **m**aximum **p**rotection, **S**ensitive for **m**aximum **p**leasure

(9) Activate your sim, **R**egister, **R**echarge (Glo)

(10) **S**ilent the quality **s**peaks volume (generator company – Jubaili)

- (11) golden **penny** **pasta**, choice **for** **family**
- (12) amstel malta, **Be** the **best** you can **be**.
- (13) **together** we **say**: “No **to** over **speeding**”. (road safety corps)
- (14) **keeps** on **keeping** on the **king** of freeze (scanfrost freezer)
- (15) the **home** of **H**igh quality furniture. (Sokoto furniture factory)
- (16) win exciting prizes in the food **D**elicious deals court **D**ecember 2009-march 2010
- (17) make a **happy** **home** **happen** **help** for the **home** maker
- (18) **consumer** **protection** **council** be **proactive** **consumer**!
- (19) **Best** today, still **better** **tomorrow**
- (20) **farewell** **from** Sokoto
- (21) **finest** quality, **fortified** with vitamins
- (22) **get** comfort, **get** vitality
- (23) **dangote** **danvita**
- (24) **good** talk. **Good** business
- (25) **Bringing** out **B**ig idea in you.
- (26) **Blue** **band**, **daily** **blue** **band**, **daily** growth

For a clearer representation of this see( Appendices A,B,C,D,E,F,G,H, and J).

From the above examples it can be deduced that alliteration is the use of words that begin with the same sound in order to make special communicative effect. Usually they are pleasing to ears because of the clever choice of the word by the advertiser. In addition, the repetition of the beginning sound emphasizes the meaning the advertisement wants to express.

#### 4.3.4 Assonance

This is a linguistic device in which the same vowel in successive stressed syllables creates a vowel harmony. It is not as obvious as alliteration. Examples of assonance are given below:

(a) Between first and second words

- i. Drink milk every day /i/
- ii. Rich in essential micronutrients /i/
- iii. Don't joke and invite malaria for your family. / u/
- iv. Let's get behind African football /e/
- v. Government of sokoto / / (shukura Hotel).
- vi. chi exotic nectar /i/

(b) Between first and third words

- i. Makes the most tasty cooking /ei/
- ii. continuity, Sokoto North local government / /
- iii. vitamin and minerals /i/ and / /. (peak milk)

- iv.     **Go** for **gold** / / Condom)
- v.       - **Be** the best you can be /e/ (Amstel malta)
- vi       -**Better** wash. **Better** scent (Good mama Detergent) / / & / /
- vii       -**promise** of marriage **or Job** / / (NAPTIP)
- viii      - The excellent Roofers / / (Roof Company)
- ix        - **Medicated** and antiseptic soap /e/ & /i/ (Dettol soap).

( c) Among first, second and third words

- i.        **cooking**, **Baking** spreading /i/ (blue band)

(d) Among second and third word

- i.        Golden **penny** semovita /e/
- ii        The home of **good food** /u:/
- iii       Dangote wheat **meal** /i:/
- iv        noodles **simply** nood**ilicious** /i/ (golden penny noodles)
- v         -**feel** the excitement Nescafe / /.
- vi        Recharge and **go to old** Trafford / / (glo)
- vii       adding a smile to **life!** /ai/ (luna ilk)
- viii      Aji –**No-Moto** / u/ (Maggi)
- ix        - Good **taste** can **make** series smile /ei/ (madish maggai)

- x      feel the goodness / / Vitamins, iron, energy /i/
- xi     your partner in power / /(jabaili bros gen company
- xii    Saviour the Golden moment / /(Maltina drink)

(a) Between first and second line.

- i.      indomi Alata, katame aturugu, edige to pata /ae/and /a/ in ALata and pata.
- ii.     The king of tasty, cooking /i/
- iii.    Can you identify one from the other: / /(National Identity Management Commission)
- iv.     A-Z petroleum product total  
  
Total performance Delivery /r/ (a-z petroleum product).
- v.      A Win exciting prizes in the food court  
  
delicious deals December2009 march 2010./ e/ (UAC Snacks).
- vi.     make a happy home happen (scanfrost freezer).
- vii.    best today still better tomorrow /e/
- viii.   Good nutrition, smart kids /i/ (bobo drink).
- ix.     safe for you, tough on mosquitoes / / (mortien)

(b) Between first, second, third and fourth line.

- i.    Glo infinito, No hidden charges No conditions, No rentals / /
- ii. Golden penny semovita /e/

The home of **good food** /u:/

iii. idomic Alata, katame aturugu, edige to pata /ae/and /a/ in ALata and pata.

iv. Drink **milk** every day /i/ Rich in essential micronutrients /i/

v. **Don't joke** and invite malaria for your family. / u/

vi. The king of tasty, cooking /i/ **Makes** the most tasty cooking /ei/

vii. continuity, **Sokoto** North local government / /

viii. Dangote **wheat** meal /i:/

ix. **Glo** infinito, **No** hidden charges **No** conditions, **No** rentals / /

x. Let's **get** behind African football /e/

xi. 28 **vitamin** and **minerals** /i/ and / /. (peak milk)

xii. **Go** for **gold** / / (Condom)

xiii. noodles **simply** noodilicious A promise of quality /i/ (golden penny noodles)

xiii. feel the excitement Nescafe / /.

xiv. Recharge and **go to** old Trafford / / (glo)

xv. adding a smile to **life!** /ai/ (luma milk)

xvi. Aji –**No-Moto** / u/ (Maggi)

xvii. Good taste can **make** series mile /ei/ (madish maggai)

xviii. feel the goodness / /Vitamins, iron, energy /i/ (Maltina)

xix. your **partner** in power / / (jabaili bros gen company)

xx. Be the best you can be /e/ (Amstel malta)

xxi. Better wash. Better scent (Good mama Detergent) / /

xxii. **promise** of marriage **or Job** / / (NAPTIP)

xxiii. Can you identify one from the **other**: / / (National identifying management  
commission)

xxiv a.-z petroleum product total Total performance Delivery /r/ (a-z petroleum  
product).

xxv. Win exciting prizes in the food court delicious deals December2009 march  
2010./ e/ (UAC Snacks).

xxvi. make a happy home happen (scanfrost freezer).

xxvii. best today still better tomorrow /e/

xxviii. Good nutrition, smart kids /i/ (bobo drink).

xxix. The excellent Roofers / / (Roof company)

xxx. Medicated and antiseptic soap /e/ and /i/ (Dettol soap). /ai/ (Golden penny  
semovita)

xxxi. Saviour the Golden moment / / (Maltina drink)

xxxii. cooking, Baking spreading /i/ (blue band).

xxxiii. Government of sokoto / / (shukura Hotel).

xxxiv. safe for you, tough on mosquitoes / / (mortien)

xxxv. chi exotic nectar /i/

#### **4.4 Syntactic structure and Morphological formations**

This part of the work will be concerned with typical characteristic features of the vocabulary of advertising investigated from the perspectives of syntactic structure and morphological formations.

##### **4.4.1 Verb phrase**

There exist two types of structure of verb phrase in English: finite verb phrase and non finite verb phrase. The first one is a verb phrase in which the first word in the verbal group or the only verb word is a finite verb (it has the tense contrast, person and number concord with the subject), the rest of the phrase (if any) consisting of non-finite verbs the infinitive, the -ing participle and the -ed participle are the non-finite forms of the verb. (Quirk et al. 1990: 41). In advertising, verbal groups are mostly of maximum simplicity, consisting of only one word (Leech 1972:121). It is obvious by a quick look through our advertising materials in research phrases are either simple present forms (to satisfy the customer's desire for the present state of the product and its implication of universality and timelessness) or else simple imperatives. Phrasal verbs are also used.

According to Leech, passive voice occurs very sporadically and so does the application of auxiliary verbs. Two auxiliary verbs often used in advertising are the future auxiliary 'will' because it evokes the impression of 'Promise' and the modal auxiliary 'can' examples of finite and non finite phrases as well as the modal auxiliary verbs used by copywriters in the adverts examined in this study can be seen below:

(1) Peak milk: 'Drink' milk every day

(2) Indomie noodles: it 'is made' up of body building nutrients

(3) National Association of mothers to protect malaria:

'Don't joke' and 'invite' malaria for your family.

(4) Maggi taste king: 'Makes' and 'Bring'.

(5) Inec: 'Before' Cast', 'ask' 'probe'

(6) Peak milk: 'Making'

(See Appendices, C, D, F, G, H, I and J for more examples).

#### **4.4.2 Noun Phrase**

In general, noun phrases in advertisements are far more complex than verb phrases. In advertising language, the interesting part of the noun phrase is the premodifying part, which is usually very complex and is characterized by certain unusual structural features. The complexity of pre-modification is based on the effort to catch, describe and specify the properties of the product in alternative way: This is instantiated in the example below:

(1) "A promise of quality pasta. You are famous. It is made up of durum wheat, spaghetti, couscous, macaroni. Golden penny pasta. Choice for the family"

Here the only lexical verb is the verb 'to make' in passive voice.

There are instances where the whole advert contain Noun phrases such as the following:

(2) Jubaili bros Engineering ltd, the name behind the quality. Your partner in power

So, only, ‘your’ is a possessive pronoun. (See appendix F more instances of this).

In many cases, whole advertising text does not contain any verb; it consist only of noun phrase inside the noun phrases, stacking of two, three or more adjectives are possible.

Witness the examples below:

(3) Partner with great leaders

Support to realize

The 7 point Agenda

For good governance

(4) ViTA ViTE

Multivitamin fruit drinks

...Vital for healthy living (app.21)

See Appendices C, D, and E for more evidences of this realization.

#### **4.4.3 Adjectives**

While reading the advertisement, the reader may notice the hyperbolic character of the language. This exaggeration causes increased number of comparative and superlative adjectives. The product is better, nicer, newer, and tighter and the customer is happier and more satisfied. The product offers more information, more entertainment, more comfort, more than any other product

let’s take a look at some of the examples:

(1) the all NEW RE 205.

Powerful, economical, reliable, comfortable, eca-friendly.

We may observe in our list of advertisements that gradable adjectives that describes qualities that can be measured in degrees; they can be used in comparative or superlative forms.

Below are some examples:

(2) Golden Penny semovita

The Home of good food

‘The secret of comfortable life’.

*Good* and *comfortable* are the gradable adjectives here. Another use of adjective can be seen in the advert below:

(3) DRINK MILK EVERY DAY

RICH IN ESSENTIAL MICRONUTRIENTS

MORE MILK MORE BRAIN POWER

There is the use of *RICH*, *MORE*. *MORE*, which are gradable adjectives. But *ESSENTIAL* is a non- gradable adjective. Note also the use of upper case throughout. Several examples of gradable adjectives can be seen in Appendices B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, and J.

Non-gradable adjectives that describe qualities that are completely present or completely absent which do not occur in comparative and superlative forms, and cannot be used with adverbs such as *very* or *extremely*, because we do not usually imagine, degrees of

more or less of the quality being described, are also found in the data investigated.

Examples of non gradable adjectives are:

(4) WATCH MAKING OF

THE NEXT SUPERSTAR

PEAK TALENT SHOW 3

It's in you.

Here, 'NEXT' is the non-gradable adjective, which is written in upper case.

See another example below:

(5) New Golden penny

Noodles simply nooodlicious

A promise of quality.

Note the occurrence of *Golden* a non- gradable adjective. The advertiser also makes intentional use of extra *o* in *nooodilicious* as an instance of additional modification, similar to what we have seen in the preceding examples where we witness the use of *Golden* and *secret*.

Therefore, the use of non-gradable adjective is not much in our data compared to the gradable adjective identified above.

The use of emotive or evaluative adjective exemplified by words that stimulate envy, dreams and desires by evoking looks, touch, taste, smell and sounds without actually misrepresenting a product abound. Among the adjectives "new" is probably the favourite

one. According to Leech (1966), the most frequent ones used include 20 words identified below:

1. New 2. Good/best 3. Free 5. Delicious 6. Full 7. Sure 8. Clean 9. Wonderful 10. Special 11. Crisp 12. Fine 13. Big 14. Great 15. Real 16. Easy 17. Bright 18. Extra, 19. Safe 20. Rich.

Among these words, *New* is the most common one, which shows people's desire for original idea and fresh concept. An American advertising expert once said, *the most powerful words you can use in a headline are free and new*.

In the 20 words above only two words are not evident in our data and these are: *fresh* and *crisps*. There are some adverts in our data that contains *new* as can be seen thus:

(1) New chivita 750ML

FRIENDSHIP PACK

LOVE MY FRIENDS

LOVE MY CHIVITA

The first phrase in the advert which contains 'new' and Chivita are written in lower case while the rest of the phrases is written in upper case. Consider also the following:

(2) THE ALL NEW RE 205

**NEW** Golden penny noodles simply nooodilicious A

promise of quality

(3) **New** chi Jelly strawberry flavour the **new**

strawberry sensation.

(4) **New** mortein powerguard. Join mortein the fight

against malaria.

(5) Peak Tin milk **New**. NOW ALSO IN A SACHET.

(6) **New** Dettol Herbal Soap: Naturally Beautiful germ free.

(7) Blue Band **New** spread for bread

#### 4.4.4 The use of numerals

In many of the advertisements examined here, we can see the use of numerals. Sometimes this is necessary for the copywriters especially when they want to define the exact characteristics of the product. Numerals are used to define quality of various aspects, for example percentage of some substance in a product, number of years in connection to the length of the tradition of the product, the number of satisfied customers, e.t.c. Here are some vivid examples:

(1) New chivita **750ml** .

(2) DANGOTE NOODLES **3** Exciting variants!

(3) Peak TALENT SHOW **3**

(4) WORDLD'S No **1 3**- WHEELER, INTRODUCING CO

BAJAJ RE **205** NOW WITH **4**-STROKE ENGINE

(5) MTN: lets go Africa. Lets go **2010**

(6) Glo – lets go Africa. Lets go **2012**

(7) Nations no **1** .

Support to realize the **7** point Agenda for good governance.

(8) GET MORE OUT OF MILK, **28** VITAMINS & MINERALS

(9) Enjoy **25%** price of

(10) **1** call received = **1** million naira

(11) **200** millionaires this season .

(12) **N1** Million each **10** people x **25** days

(13) **N500** AIRTIME Each **60,000** people x **25** days

(14) **24**hrs maximum protection Dettol .

(15) Airtel  $\frac{\text{club } 10.}{TEN}$  Enjoy **1** naira sms to **10** friends.

#### 4.4.5 The use of intertextuality

Intertextuality can operate at many levels of language, from phonological and lexical references in titles and slogans to visual aspects such as layouts and images. Intertextuality can be an important component of an advert meaning, in that the original text being referred to establish a message, which the second text can then use and elaborate on. For intertextuality to work completely, readers have to be able to remember the original advert and place the reference being established. But if they don't, it doesn't matter too much, for the contemporary advert will simply be enigmatic...." (Goddard 1998:124).

In advertising, the intertextuality is used in such conditions, where there is justifiable supposition that the original text is well-known among people. (Cmejrkova 2000:

169-191). It further presents various ways of how intertextuality can be used in advertising.

It is characterized by any of the following:

1. Fixed phrases, idioms and collocations
2. Biblical sentences
3. Quotation of famous people or employees of the company.
4. Statement of historical persons.
5. Proverbs and sayings
6. Names of literary works, films, or television programmes.
7. Quotations from songs and fairy tales,
8. Mixing of various styles – e-mail, letter, interview, telephonic conversation, recipe  
e.t.c.

Here are some examples of intertextuality that are evident in our data:

- (1) Glo: Shine your eye. It's the real deal
- (2) Condom: strong for maximum protection, sensitive for maximum pleasure
- (3) GLO: ALL EXPENSES PAID
- (4) Maltina: FEEL THE GOODNESS .
- (5) Glo: Rule your world
- (6) Good mama detergent: Better wash, Better scent
- (7) Mortein insecticide: safe for you, Tough on mosquitoes

(8) Chi exotic: make life come alive

(9) Federal Road safety corps: safer roads fuller lives

(10) Apple cosmetics look beautiful, feel beautiful

(11) Best today, still better tomorrow.

#### 4.4.6 The use of compound Noun

Compound words can also be seen in advertisements. A compound word can be composed of all parts of speech and the word configuration is very flexible, therefore adverts can fully take the advantage of it and make the advert copy more creative. A compound word in advert can be adv.+n.; V+ ing + a; n + v+ ed; adv + v. + ing . The following are examples of these different realizations:

(1) **Aji-No-moto**

(2) **World no-1 3- WHEELER**

(3) **germ-free skin ANTI BACTERIAL**

The structure of the adverts in (1) and(2) is thus :N+ adj +adj

#### 4.4.7 Use of negative words.

Adverts use negative words such as no, none, nothing, never, e.t.c to show the uniqueness and unparalleled quality of the product. Instances of these can be observed in the examples given below:

(1) Glo: **No** hidden charges

**No** Conditions

**No** rentals

(2) Delta soap: **Nothing** compares to family

#### 4.4.8 Use of inclusive words

Apart from negative words, the adverts are also found to exploit the inclusive words such as, all, every, always etc., to indicate the reference is universal. Examples of this are not difficult to find:

(1) Dangote Noodles: Dangote ready to eat noodles

Noodles in **all** time!

(2) **ALL** NEW RE 2005.

“At the rate of five hundred naira and above **every** week for ---

(3) **ACTIVATE YOUR SIM, REGISTER RECHARGE**

& get N500 worth of FREE Airtime sms Daily draws open to **all** new and existing subscribers

Note that the most important words are written in upper case, there is also the use of acronym – sms- which means small messages.

#### 4.4.9 The use of coinage

Coined words are new and memorable. Coinages are kind of smart words that have special meaning in the specified context. They can raise the interests of the advert headline receivers, make them ponder upon the meaning and marvel at the smart idea of the advert. By so doing, they recognize the brand. Consider the following example:

(1) Glo **infinito**

(2) **Ogaline**

Here, the advertisers blend British and Pidgin English. Another example is that of peak milk advert given below:

(3) RICH IN ESSENCIAL **MICRONUTRIENTS**

In (3) above, the two words are real English words coined.

#### **4.4.10 Idiomatic Constructions**

An idiom is an expression (1.e term or phrase) whose meaning cannot be deduced from the literal definitions and the arrangement of its parts, but refers instead to a conventional use. In linguistics, idioms are figures of speech that contradict the principle of compositionality (the principle, which tells that the meaning of a complex expression is determined by the meaning of its constituents expression and the rules used to combine them) Idiom have multiword character, they are fixed and they have common figurative meaning. for example.

(1) DRINK MILK EVERY DAY

RICH IN ESSENTIAL MICRONUTRIENTS

MORE MILK, MORE BARAINPOWER

(2) fight against malaria and protect, your life

ELBE PHARMA LIMITED

“fight against’ is the idiom here, the sentence is written in Hausa language for the understanding of people in Sokoto geographic area. The use of ELBE is a foreign word. In this case it is an idiom that means continuing to become larger in number or amount.

In App. A, there is also use of an idiom:

(3) The king of tasty cooking

Make the most tasty cooking

Bring out the best flavour in food.

Therefore, the use of ‘makes’ the ‘most’ is the idiom used in this advert. The advert means to gain as much advantage, enjoyment etc as you can from tasty cooking.

#### **4.4.11 The use of proverb**

A proverb is a type of idiomatic construction. It is “a well-known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true”. (Oxford advanced learner’s Dictionary 2001), e.g too many cooks spoil the broth: means that if too many people are involved in something, it will not be well done. Examples from our data include the following:

(1) Rule your world glo

(2)Trusted friend for cooking

#### **4.4.12 Collocation**

A collocation *is a combination of words in a language, that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance*, (oxford Advanced learner’s Dictionary 2001). Collocations are used in advertisements, however often without any deviation or play on words and for the readers it is often imperceptible. We offer here an example of an advertisement with the use of deviated collocation.

(1)Taste the coffee side of life

(2) Loved at first bath

The original collocation of the first one sounds more like ‘Taste the good/bad side of life’ the second example sounds ‘love at first sight’.

## **4.5 Syntactic Aspect**

This deals with the grammatical arrangement of written text of billboard advert.

### **4.5.1 Frequent Use of Simple Sentences**

Advertisers often use simple sentences to make a message more striking. We know that most of the advertising readers would not give too much time on ad reading and they are often impatient to read long and complex sentences. In addition, short and simple sentences can bring succinct and confident feeling to the reader. Many excellent advertisers are famous for their simplicity. Take the advertisement of midwives services scheme for example:

(1) Show great happiness to new born babies to over shadow your sadness.

Many women and many children die during anti-natal and during bath, make sure you have contact with specialized midwives during ante-natal and while giving bath. For more information visit hospital that is close to you.

All the sentences in this advertisement are very simple and oral. Moreover, the sentences are easy to understand and read natural and friendly.

### **4.5.2 Use of Interrogative Sentences**

The interrogative sentence is very favourable in advertising copywriting according to statistics, there is an interrogative sentence among every 30 sentences. In the explanation of the high frequency of the use of interrogative sentences, Leech (1972) discusses two main

functions of interrogative sentences, viewed from the angle of psychology. Interrogative sentences fall into two phases by first raising a question and then answering it. Thus, it turns the passive receiving into active understanding. From the linguistic angle, interrogative sentences decrease the grammatical difficulty, because they are usually short in advertisements. For example:

(1) what does he/she do for a living? (Inec advert for voting).

(2) laundry trouble? (good mama detergent)

(3) can you identify one from the other?

(national identifying management commission).

Another typical type of question used in advertisement is rhetorical question. It assumes only one possible answer. This is exemplified thus:

(4)Are you in Naija?

The implied answer to this is of course, yes!

#### **4.5.3 Use of Imperative Sentences**

Imperative sentences give a command or make a request. And they are usually short and powerful sentences. Although it's just a few words, the admen don't let it go at that. They use every opportunity to exhort the potential consumers to act, to buy and to consume. It is the most direct way to achieve the ideal effect. Several of this are evident in the data:

1. Indomie noodles: get it while it's hot (app. A).
2. Peak milk: Drink milk everyday (app.A)

3. National Association of mothers to protect malaria: Don't joke and invite malaria for your family.

Be serious it is not something to play with (app. A).

4. Chivita Orange drink: Love my friends, love my chivita. (app.A)
5. INEC: find. Ask. Probe. Don't vote for the corrupt!!! (app.B)
6. Bank PHB: Write your own script. (app. B)
7. Peak milk talented show: Watch the making of the next superstar (app.C).
8. MTN: lets go Africa, lets go 2010. (app.C)
9. Glo: Let's get behind African football. Let's go Africa, lets go 2010. (app.C)
10. Yar'adua seven point agenda: support to realize the 7 point agenda for good governance (App. C)
11. Peak milk: Get more out of milk (app.C).
12. Condom: go for gold! (app.C)
13. Midwives service scheme: Show great happiness to new born babies to overshadow your sadness. For more information visit hospital that is close to you. (app.C)
14. Amatem malaria drug: Fight against malaria and protect your life (app. C).
15. Nescafe: Enjoy 25% price off feel the excitement Nescafe refill packs. Taste the coffee side of life (app. C).
16. Glo: Recharge and go to old trafor. Rule your world glo (app.C).

17. Maltina: Feel the goodness. (app.F)
18. Glo: Receive or make calls on your glo line and become a millionaire. Rule your world glo(app.D)
19. Glo: activate your sim, register, recharge & get N500 worth of free airtime/sms.
20. Glo: recharge and win (app. D)
21. Amstel malta: Be the best you can be (app.E)
22. Maltina: put a smile in every moment (app.F)
23. Mortein insecticide: Join mortein in the fight against malaria. (app.F)
24. Chi exotic: make your life come alive (app.F)
25. NAPTIP: use your brain (app. F)
26. Passion energy drink: feel the new passion(app. G)
27. NIMC: Enrol once and be identified for life(app.G).
28. Malta Drink: Celebrate golden moment(app. G)
29. Scanfrost freezer: keeps on keeping on(app. G)
30. Uac Snacks: win exciting prizes in the food Court Delicious deals. Dream it, Taste it, win it. (app.G)
31. Scanforst frezer: make a happy home happen(app.G)
32. CPC: Assert your consumer rights. Consume wisely (app. G)
33. Qlink motorcycle: Buy one and get one lantern free (app. G).

34. NAPTIP: Beware ! Human traffickers come in different forms. Join Naptip to stop it. (app. G).
35. Governor bids farewell: support a great achiever for development and good governance (app. G)
36. Golden penny semovita: Share our secret(app. H)
37. Vitafoam: live the vitafoam experience, get comfort get vitality (app.H)
38. Shun cultism it is detrimental to your academic progress ---- (app.I)
39. Egitel Phone: Let's enjoy! Egitel multi media phone (app.I).
40. Airtel: Enjoy 1 naira Sms to 10 friends, Dial 101# to join (app. J).

#### **4.5.4 The Use of Declarative Sentences, Phrases and Clauses**

Declarative means to make a proposition or statement– to say factual information. According to Quirk et al (1990:23) declaratives are sentences in which it is normal for the subject to be present and to precede the verb. Let's see examples from our data

- (1) Etisalat: we have roots across 9ja
- (2) MTN; MTN. official supporter of Africa united
- (3) Glo: Daily draws open to all new and existing registered subscribers.
- (4) Ranbaxy company: Health is your Happiness
- (5) Mortein insecticide: safe for you, tough on mosquitoes.

Virtually, all of the above examples have a simple structure of declarative sentences.

#### 4.5.5 The Use of Exclamation

The use of exclamation marks is very liberal and widespread. (we may notice that exclamation marks are more frequently used in exclamations than in imperatives in English. Exclamations may have simple sentence structure. They draw our attention by virtue of their exclamatory force. The examples of this include the following:

- (1) Be serious it is not something to play with!(App. A).
- (2) Don't vote for the corrupt!!! (App. B)
- (3) 3 exciting variants! (App. B)
- (4) Nourishment for life! (App. C)
- (5) Adding a smile to life! (App. C)
- (6) THE SCENT OF A MAN! (App. C)
- (7)Top of the world goodness (App. D)
- (8) ANOTHER ₦1billion up for grabs! (App. D).
- (9) good mama known best! (App. E)
- (10) be PROACTIVE consumer! (App. G)
- (11) Wow! (App. G)
- (12) BEWARE! (App. G)
- (13)Liberty toughest!!! (App. H)
- (14)Let's enjoy! (App. I).
- (15) Now offers you a choice! (App. J),

#### 4.5.6 Use of Coordination

Coordination is an important cohesion factor in advertising language. There are three

types of coordination – linking “use of coordination and often sharing the same subject”; “it is applying to the omission of both coordinate and subordinate conjunctions, and to clauses and phrases both” (<https://usm.maine.edu>) and apposition (two elements are placed side by side, with the second element serving to, define or modify the first).Leech says, that in some cases, copywriters show tendencies to use coordination in the following instances:

1. Coordination in places, where subordination would have made the relationship between clauses more explicit and
2. Non-linking coordination (parataxis and apposition) in preference to linking the demonstrates coordination (Leech 1972: 143)

The first case has the following example: ‘ just water it on, and weeds shoot up, then curl and wither always’

This is an imperative linked to an affirmative clause. It might be paraphrased by a sentence with a conditional clause:

If you just water it, on, weeds shoot up, then curl and wither away”

There is also a type of sentence in advertising which consists of a pair of imperative clauses in apposition:

- (1) Worlds No1, 3-wheeler. Powerful, economical, reliable, comfortable, eca-friendly shine your eye. It’s the real deal (App. C)

(2) Strong for maximum protection, sensitive for

Maximum pleasure. (App. C).

(3) Vitamins, iron, energy. (app D).

(4) Activate your sim, register, recharge.

(5) It is made up of durum wheat, spaghetti, coscous macaroni.

(6) Beta wash Beta scent (App. E)

(7) safe for you, tough on mosquitoes (App. F)

(8) Sources of iron source of iodine. (App. F)

(9) Safer Roads, fuller lives (App. F).

(10) finest quality, fortified with vitamins” (app.H).

(11) Daily blue band. Daily growth

Most of the apposition are supposed to be expressed by a subordinate conjunction or clauses but the admen do the style of apposition deliberately to add beauty to the advert.

In billboard advertising, copywriters also use parataxis. Parataxis of adjective group is also common and serves the same kind of purpose as the listing of premodifying adjectives in noun group. (see leech 1972.147) Here noun/adjective group (noun/adjective phrase). Following examples is a parataxis of separate adjectives:

(12) GOOD, BETTER ----BANK PHB (App. B),

(13) safe for you, tough on mosquitoes

There is also the use of verb phrase parataxis. The following are some of the examples:

(14) ACTIVATE YOUR SIM, REGISTER, RECHARGE (App. D)

Parataxis involving basic sentences are also evident in our data as can be seen in the following:

(15) Dream it, taste it, win it (App. G).

#### 4.5.7 Syntactic Processes: Schematic Patterning

In this part of the work, we shall focus our attention on the structure of sentences in advertising language. We will mention the most important structural tendencies used by copywriters.

The formal schemes can be represented in various ways. **Parallelism**, this is one form of schematic patterning. It can be defined as repetition of formal patterns". (Leech 1972: 186). Parallelism means the parallel presentation of two or more than two similar or relevant ideas in similar structural forms. It is a rhetorical device heightening the emotional tone of the message and its importance. For instance,

(1) MORE MILK, MORE BRAIN POWER

'More' is an indefinite pronoun. The advertiser add beauty to the advert with the use of alliteration of the two words "more" and 'milk'. There is also the use of anaphora in the two consecutive phrases of 'more milk more brain power'. This is done for the purpose of emphasis, the two phrases are also declarative in nature since the advertiser is informing the public that the more they drink milk, the more brain power they get. This brings us to

the issues of ellipsis- the omission of part of a structure. Advertisers do that for many reasons. Some of the reasons are:

(i) To save space and money because words cost money.

(ii) To create a sense of information

Another use of parallelism can be seen in “love my friends, love my chivita”, the two verb phrases are used deliberately to achieve parallelism, which add balance and rhythm. The two phrases are also imperative since they tend to be commanding people to love chivita drinks. Moreover, there is evident use of parallelism in glo advert where they say: ‘No hidden charges, No conditions, No rentals’ which are three phrases that all start with a negative determiner. The advertiser achieves the use of parallelism by repeating the sentence structure, it is only the first phrase that has a verb in it followed by a noun, but the remaining two phrases have the negative determiners and nouns in them. The use of negative determiner itself is done to achieve rhyme and anaphora. The advert is telling the consumers that glo infinito is a kind of tariff that does not require much money-recharging glo line. The three phrases are declarative in nature. Since they are informing the consumers how the net-plan of glo is.

Another striking example of parallelism is an advert of MTN for sponsoring African football. The parallelism here is “let’s go Africa, let’s go 2012” which has one finite verb and two nouns. There is a repetition of the same finite verb which is an imperative.

A similar advert is also done by glo where ‘Africa united’ is repeated three times which is also a parallelism that shows the union of Africans in football. The advertisers use it to achieve parallelism, cataphora, anaphora and above all rhyme. There is another parallelism in Appendix C. This is an advertisement for condom where two phrases are

parallel, the phrases are “strong for maximum protection, sensitive for maximum pleasure”. This is an exaggeration of the two adjectival phrases. The advertisers use the style so that they will have high patronage of the product brand and also to achieve intertextuality (App. C).

There is evident use of parallelism in the three noun phrases- vitamin - A, vitamin - D3, vitamin - E. Each clause has the same idea and structure beginning with a verb in declarative form. Also in App. D there is an advert of glo for the people who recharge more will win prizes such as car, motorcycle, Tv set, and recharge cards. The advertiser uses parallelism in mentioning the things to be won by the consumers who do the highest recharge. He does this by showing the pictures of what is to be won and writing the number of what is to be won everyday. So, this is visual metaphor because the things to be won can only be understood by seeing the picture in the billboard. The repetition of everyday is also a style of epiphora.

Furthermore, we can see the use of parallelism in App. E. Where the advertiser says “Beta wash. Beta scent”, the use of ‘Beta’ instead of ‘Better’ is a pidgin English, a kind of code-mixing pidgin with British English. There is also ellipsis of *and* which is supposed to be *Beta wash and Beta scent* in the two adjectival phrases.

Another vivid example of parallelism is seen in Appendix D where the advertisers say *add beauty very tasty one you know*. The two phrases show parallelism and at the same time ellipsis because the advert is suppose to read *add beauty the very tasty one you know*. So, the omitted item is ‘the’. The same thing applies to the assertion – source of iron source of iodine, which contains two noun phrases.

‘Safer roads, fuller-lives’ is another use of parallelism in App. F which is a federal road safety corps’ advert. The two adjectival phrases, are saying the safer the roads are, the

more lives we save. There is also an ellipsis in the two phrases- the missing of coordinating conjunction ‘and’.

In Appendix G- iii ozone cosmetics advert there is also another use of parallelism, the advert is ... *cold one, a very cold one*. A close look at the advert will reveal the use of epiphora. Another similar example to this is that of apple cosmetics which has code-switching and parallelism, (see Appendix G).

Another evident example of anaphora is in App. G, and advert of UAC snack grand prize trip for four winners to south Africa. The advert reads: ‘Dream it’, ‘Taste it’, ‘win it’. The advertiser deliberately uses two noun phrases followed by a verb phrase which gives a sort of rhyming and epiphora.

The advertiser also makes use of linguistic manipulation by means of schematic patterning –parallelism (see Appendix G); where the advertiser says – *best today, still better tomorrow* in the advert of *firestone* the two adjectival phrases explains that today is best but the future will be better. Other cases of parallelism in the data, therefore, are listed below.

(1) Vitafoam advert – get comfort, get vitality

(2) Airtel –good talk, good business

(3) Blue Band – Cooking, Baking, Spreading. Daily Blue band daily Growth.

Another form of schematic patterning is *epiphora* – “the repetition of the same words or words at the end of successive phrases, clauses or sentences”. Examples of epiphora in our data are presented below:

(1) Ten **everyday**, three **everyday**, three **everyday**, one hundred **everyday**.

(2) we watched man united live at old **Trafford** Recharge and go to old **Trafford**

(3) cold **one**, a very cold **one**

(4) you look **beautiful** ... look **beautiful** feel **beautiful**.

(5) keeps **on** keeping **on**

(6) Dream **it**, Taste **it**, win **it**.

(7) buy **one** get **one** latern free

#### 4.5.8 Ellipsis

This is one of the cohesive devices, defined as *the omission of part of a structure* (Goddard 1998:123) Ellipsis in advertising is used for many purposes:

- i. for economical reason; to save space and money because words cost money
- ii. “to avoid drawing attention to features of the message which do not serve the advertiser’s interest” (Cook 1996:169).

However, the use of ellipsis is common in advertisement. This owes to the fact that the advertiser usually tries to express much with few words. Let us look at examples of this process from the data available to us:

(1) BEFORE YOU CAST THAT VOTE

FIND. ASK. PROBE

In this advert one may ask find what? Ask who? Probe who? Since the two verbs are not self explanatory they are all imperative. The next question gives a clue to those expressions:

(2) WHAT DOES HE/SHE DO FOR A LIVING?

Meaning the candidate a person wants to be voted for. So, that last assertion says it all:

(3) Don't vote for the corrupt!!!

Another vivid example can be seen in (4) below:

(4) "Those who win are those who think they can"

The question to ask at this point is: Think they can do what? The omitted word there is 'win'. The advertisers did not include *win* deliberately, may be, to avoid repetition of the word 'win'.

Another case of the use of ellipsis can be seen in this specimen of the data:

(5) GOLD CIRCLE

Go for gold!

This is the advertisement that promotes the use of condom. The imperative phrase is elliptical – go for gold! What gold? Gold condom? The word gold is metaphorical and condom is also ellipse.

#### **4.6 Semantic Properties and Literary Devices Exploited in the Data**

Each linguistic expression has its literal meaning. Literal meaning denotes what it means according to common or dictionary usage (or more exactly, what the reader is most likely to assign to a word or phrase if he or she knows nothing about the context in which it is used. In the simplest terms, it is the simplest primary meaning of a word, text, or statement distinct from any figurative sense which it may carry, Baldick 2004;140-141). The same linguistic expression, however, may have also its figurative meaning as pointed out. It connotes additional layers of meaning and evokes association; for example, the word

*professional* has connotation of skill and excellence, it is not possible to give an exhaustive account of the connotation of the expression, because connotative meanings, which have been evoked in an individual, depend on people's entire previous experiences and on conventions of particular community.

Therefore, the connotations of the same expression will differ slightly from person to person. Furthermore, the same denotations can have different connotations in different context. Vestergrand and Schroder (1985) believe that in advertising language, the most frequent word for 'acquisition of product' is 'get', and not 'buy', because 'buy' has some unpleasant connotations, like *money* and *the parting with it*.

Associations are very powerful tools advertisers pay attention to and often this aspect of language is deliberately used. They play with colours, because colours may have various positive or negative connotations: innocence /snow/ ice/ race, and other for white. Passion/ blood/ stop signal/ fire for red; e.t.c. They must be careful about the target group because each culture may have different connotations to the same expressions. In Chinese and Indian tradition, white is the colour of mourning, death, and ghosts.

In india, white also stands for peace and purity. Black colour in southern Nigerian connotes mourning. Red colour in Eastern European countries may have slightly negative connotation in relation to the identification of communism with "socialist red".

#### **4.6.1 Trope**

According to the Oxford advanced learners Dictionary (2001), a *trope* is a word or phrase that is used in a way that is different from its usual meaning in order to create a particular mental image or effect. It is a figurative expression, especially one that uses words in senses beyond their literal meaning. In this part, we give a list of most important

trope used in advertising language that includes personification, simile, hyperbole and metaphor. In relation to semantic aspect of language used in adverts considered here, we also define antithesis.

#### **4.6.1.1 Personification**

Personification is a term used mainly in literature to name the figure of speech, which “involves directly speaking of an inanimate object, or an abstract concept, as if it were a living entity, often one with specifically human attributes. These attributes may include sensations, emotions, desires, physical gesture and expressions, and powers of speech among others” (Baldick, 2004). The readers of adverts usually do not register or realize that there is used personification in the text. It is used very widely in several expressions employed, especially, with respect to the products. Witness the following cases;

- (1) Feel the excitement. NESCAFE”. “Adding a smile to life!”
- (2) AJI –No-Moto “... trusted friend for cooking”
- (3) Ma dish .”Good taste can make series of smile”.
- (4) “SILENT BUT THE QUALITY SPEAKS VOLUMES”
- (5) “Food court” (UAC snacks)
- (6) “savour the golden moment”

#### **4.6.1,2 Simile**

Simile is defined as a direct, expressed comparison between two things essentially unlike each other but resembling each other in at least one way (Baldick, 2004). Usually, similes are marked by use of the words *like*, *than*, *as* or *as if*. We may also find

comparative constructions used when comparing two things or two situations in frames such as “*as ...as*”, “*so ... as*”. The following are cases in point taken from Myers (1997:125). Corresponding example from our corpus is given in (3):

(1) “Ibuleve gel as fast & effective as pills? Now there’s clinical evidence”

(2) “Breakfast without orange juice is like a day without sunshine’

(3) CHI BRAND AS A FRIEND

#### 4.6.1.3 Hyperbole

In the case of a hyperbole there is a deliberate use of overstatement or exaggeration to achieve emphasis. Businessmen and manufacturers use this particular figure of speech to advertise their goods in as attractive a way as possible. Consider the examples from our data below.

(1) Golden penny semovita: The HOME OF GOOD FOOD

(2) Dangote Noodles: Dangote ready to eat noodles, noodles in no time

(3) Peak milk: Get MORE OUT OF MILK, 28 vitamins & minerals.

(4) Condom: Strong for maximum pleasure, sensitive for maximum pleasure.

(5) a.z petroleum product: fuel economy guaranteed lubricating the nation

(6) Consous: for longer night, food for any time.

(7) glo: Rule your world

(8) Generator company: SILENT BUT THE QUALITY SPEAKS VOLUMES

(9) Malta Gold: CELEBRATE GOLDEN MOMENTS

(10) Dettol soap: 24hrs maximum protection.

(11) Golden penny semovita: Finest quality fortified with vitamins

#### **4.6.1.4 Metaphor**

Advertisers like to use maximum information condensed into fewest words possible. In order to do this, they try to employ various strategies. One of the means through which they do this is the use of metaphor for example, in Golden penny semovita advert the quality-a home is equated with the product. The advertisement says:

(1)The HOME OF GOOD FOOD.

Here, 'HOME' means a comfortable place where one lives; a place where one value more than any place. Therefore, the advertiser wants the readers to believe that 'Golden penny semovita' has the qualities of 'HOME' and so the consumers should rely on it.

Metaphor is also employed in the example below, the advert is simple, but says a lot, witness the aptness expressed:

(2) Nation's No1 Nourishment for life!

In the same vein, the Maltina advert above, tries to convince the consumers that it is a Nations No'1 drink. So, it equates the best Nigerian drink with maltina. The advertiser also went extra mile in the second exclamatory phrase- Nourishment for life! This means nourishment for ever if one drinks maltina which is hyperbolic.

Another striking example is the advert where the qualities of a BOXER, is equated with the qualities of motorcycle telling the readers that the motorcycle is as strong as Boxer and that is why the advertiser went on explaining that the consumers "can use fuel of two hundred naira to make profit of two thousand naira with it". The whole assertion is

hyperbolic. He (the advertiser) also emphasizes that “because boxer is the only one” which is not only by hyperbolic but quite understood adverbial of phrase reason and at the same time elliptical. What does the only one implies? The omitted part is ‘motorcycle’.

There is also code-mixing in the first sentence because it is written in Hausa language, only *Boxer* there is an English word. The Boxer is written in bold for emphasis. Another example is that of malta Gold where the advert says:

### (3) CELEBRATE GOLDEN MOMENTS

The assertion is not only metaphorical in nature but also hyperbolic, imperative. We also witness similar realization in the advert below:

### (4) The king of freeze

The noun phrase is not only metaphorical it is also hyperbolic in nature and personification because ‘freeze’ is an inanimate but given a quality of animate –only a human being can be a king.

It is however important to note that, there are two types of metaphor: verbal and visual. Visual metaphors do not relate only to words, but they depict relationships between a product or service and some object or visual element with qualities that the advertiser wishes to attribute to the product or service. In print advertising, visual metaphor is widely used, because it takes advantage of the possibility to accompany the text by the image (or vice versa). Let us consider the following advertisement:

### (1) CONTINUITY. SOKOTO NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The word 'continuity' can only be understood at the glimpse of the billboard because the pictures of 'continuity' is shown on the billboard. Another vivid example can be seen below, where the advertiser say:

(2) 24<sup>hrs</sup> maximum protection

On the picture of the advert two children are shown on an arrow which indicates twenty four. This makes it visual metaphor. The twenty four is written in number to add beauty to the advert. The two noun phrases are hyperbolic. The Hrs used is an abbreviation for hours. Visual metaphor is also evident in the following. There is a picture of big ice block and then the expression of the advert:

(3) The king of freeze

The noun phrase is also hyperbolic.

#### **4.6.1.5 Antithesis**

Antithesis is yet another figure of speech, which uses the same or similar structure to express two opposite ideas so as to achieve the effects of emphasizing the meaning and the contrast. The figure has the characteristic of harmonious combination of sound and rhyme, balanced syllables, sharp rhythm and compendiousness. The combination of pleasant senses of vision and hearing often stimulates the good feeling of readers and arouses consumers' buying desire. Antithesis relates to words, clauses or sentences. It is based on antonyms (words of opposite meaning) or opposite ideas.. Examples of this are found in some of the adverts collected. The example in (1) suggests antithesis

(1) SILENT BUT THE QUALITY SPEAKS VOLUMES

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the Summary of findings of the study and possible conclusions drawn from the work.

#### 5.1 Summary

This study is motivated by the artistic manner in which the advertisers manipulate the latent power of language to sell their products, particularly the use of language in outdoor (billboard) advertisement. In this study the content message of ninety nine (99) billboards is being analysed. The analysis is divided into four levels of linguistics analysis. They are phonological, lexical and morphological, syntactic and semantic points of view.

At the phonological aspect the we analysed cases where *rhyme* a property of to sounds o is commonly found in billboard slogans and headlines in billboards adverts. There are also clear cases where *Rhythm*, which makes a text to be memorable, featured prominently. Alliteration which has to do with the repetition of the initial consonant sound in order to make a special communicative effect and assonance which has to do with vowel harmony are both effectively utilized.

However, the lexical and morphological aspects deal with the typical characteristics of the vocabulary of advertising. It explains and analyses types of verb phrase such as verb phrase which consisted of finite verb which is in agreement with the subject in terms of person and number which has tense contrast. While the *-ing* participle and the *-ed* participle are the non-finite forms of the verb. That is why we found that phrases in billboard advert

are either simple present forms to satisfy the customers desire for the present state of the product and its implication of universality and timelessness, and also simple imperative. Other issues discussed are the use of Noun phrase in advertising language, the interesting part of the noun phrase is the pre-modifying part which is usually very complex. Therefore, the complexity of pre-modification is due to the effort to catch, describe and specify the properties of the product in an alternative way. Adjectives which introduce the hyperbolic character of the language create the exaggeration with the increased number of comparative and superlative adjective. For instance the product is better, nicer, newer and tighter, etc.

There are also gradable adjectives identified which describe qualities that can be measured in degrees while the non gradable adjectives describe the qualities that are completely present or completely absent; so they do not occur in comparative and superlative forms. The use of evaluative adjective in billboards adverts are found to stimulate envy, dreams and desires by invoking looks, laughter, taste, smell and sounds without actually misrepresenting a product. The use of numerals is used to define the precise characteristics of the product. For instance percentage of some substance in a product, number of year in connection to the length of the tradition of the product, number of satisfied customers, etc, constitute the characteristic defining features of the adverts studied. The use of intertextuality, compound noun, negative words, inclusive words, coinages, idiomatic constructions, use of proverbs, and collocations are all evident in our data.

The syntactic structure exploited in the data are also presented and discussed. This has to do with the grammatical arrangement of the expressions expressed on the billboards adverts. Several constructions and syntactic operations and processes are identified and analysed in the light of the general mechanism of advertisement. The data demonstrate the

use of simple sentences, interrogative sentences, imperative sentences, declarative sentences, phrases and clauses, use of exclamations, coordination, schematic patterning which has to do with parallelism, anaphora, epiphora, and ellipsis.

At the semantics level, a number of semantic properties and devices are brought to the limelight. This entails different shades of meaning depicted on the billboard advertisement. These include figurative devices such as personification, simile, hyperbole, and metaphor which are evident in the data of this study. Other semantic effects are realized by means of antithesis which is strictly semantics. By and large, the study is carried out within the general framework of linguistic analysis. The data is interpreted by exploiting the relevant linguistic tools of analysis. This made it possible for us to identify various properties of advertisement that are by-products of different linguistic resources exploited in the billboard adverts -our subject of inquiry.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

This study shows that billboard advert constitute a special variety of English with its own distinctive characteristic features. It presents an interesting platform where the various segments of both verbal and non-verbal language are utilized to achieve different moods and levels of persuasion crucial for positive and gainful marketing. This perhaps point to the fact that billboard is a good medium of advertisement because even if one cannot read to know or understand what the advertisement is all about: the graphic aspect allows one to see the image of the product, which signifies what is being advertised. From the evidences gathered in this work one can argue that virtually all the relevant properties of language conspire to yield the desired persuasive material which often leads to successful advertisement. This study has also established the fact that the persuasive language of the billboard is linguistically, highly concentrated which weld several layers of

linguistic processes, devices and elements in varying proportions to create the desired communicative impact.

### **5.3 Suggestion**

It is undoubtedly clear to say that billboard is used in advertising products across Sokoto metropolis. It conveys persuasive messages of advertisers to consumers. In view of this, the following suggestions are advanced:

- i. Decent images should be in billboards advert so that the members of the community should not give different interpretations to the products being advertised.
- ii. Advertisers should cultivate a new attitude towards their advert by code-switching and code-mixing English with the local language of the area where the billboard is located. Where possible, advertisement could also be done in the languages of the localities where goods are advertised.
- iii. Government should ensure that monitoring agencies should be proactive in ensuring that billboards advertisements do not violate the cultural norms of the particular locality where they are situated.
- iv. There is need to undertake further studies in the area of billboard advertisement in other parts of Nigeria so as to have complete picture of the forms and functions of advertisements.
- v. Each major predominant linguistic property encoded on the adverts can be studied in isolation or in relationship with its psychological impact it may have on the consumers.
- vi. The role of punctuation marks can also be explored.

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