

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF BANK ADVERTISING SLOGANS

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Abstract

This study attempted an investigation of language use in bank advertising slogans. The analysis was done by gathering twenty-four bank advertising slogans from various platforms on-line. The stylistic analysis was done using four levels of stylistic description: graphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic. Among the findings of this work are that language is an important tool of advertisements and also that the variety of English used by advertising slogan makers maybe standard or non-standard. Another fact evident in the analysis is that the Bank advertising slogan maker modulates his English to perform one basic function, which is to gain customers. In all, the work is a contribution to researches in the functional use of language.

Keywords: stylistics, stylistic analysis, language, bank advertisement, slogans

Introduction

It is undeniable that language is central to all communities of human beings. Language is vital for the regulation of every community, the instruction of its young and the identification of its members. Consequently, language as well as being a fascinating phenomenon in itself is a necessary part of any investigation in human and social organization (Brown and Miller 2013). Language is not animal communication, it is human specific. Human language exhibits creativity, flexibility and adaptability to changes at the different levels. These qualities distinguish language from other forms of communication. Just like language, communication is central and paramount to the smooth running of day-to-day human activities. It runs through all human activities and endeavours. Without proper and effective communication, there is bound to be misinformation or total communication breakdown in the society.

Advertisements are meant to persuade people to buy particular products. They are very important in modern businesses because they are the best ways of introducing customers to goods and services (Akbar Ali 2019). Advertisements

give information about the usefulness of a particular product. Advertising slogans are promotional tools that enable companies or organisations to introduce themselves, their products or services. In order for an advertising slogan to be effective in introducing a company or organization, it should be easily understood by consumers, and be associated with a specific brand (Abdi and Irandoust 2013:62 citing Stewart and Clark 2007). Language is the primary tool at the disposal of the advertiser, and it is through the systemic employment of language that he can succeed in his enormous task. The bank advertiser needs to paint a vivid picture of the benefits of the bank in a convincing manner, which will leave the reader in no doubt as to the ability of the bank. The bank advertising slogan maker needs to be cautious in his choice of language because he would be dealing with a mixed audience majority of whom may be commoners.

In a multilingual nation like Nigeria, the major language of advertisement is English. The truth is that except a language of wider communication like English is used, it is practically impossible to reach the totality of mass audience through their different native languages.

However, the advertiser needs to modulate his English language to suit the Nigerian context for effective communication to take place. This may result into various modifications of the English language so that it can reach all levels of the society and satisfy their communicative needs. This research therefore, has chosen to investigate the language of bank advertising slogans in order to find out the style the advertisers use on their consumers.

Theoretical Framework

The sole reason for theoretical framework in research writing is to backup the research work with theories that are appropriate or relevant in order to promote scholarship. The theory adopted for this research is the MAK Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) which is a theory of language that focuses on the view of language function. Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a theory of language centred around the notion of language function. While SFL accounts for the syntactic structure of language, it places the function of language as central (what language does and how it does it) in preference to more structural approaches, which place the elements of language and their combinations as central. SFL starts at social context and looks at how language both acts upon, and is constrained by this social context. SFL looks at language as a choice. A central notion in SFL is stratification such that language is analyzed in terms of four strata: context, semantic, lexico-grammar and phonology-graphology.

Statement of the Problem

Advertising is an interesting area of research and just as advertisements attract consumers' attention so it does academic attention. The domain of advertising is a domain where different scholarly researches have been conducted. For instance Nawandi (2019) examined "A stylistic analysis of language use in advertising: a study of advertisement of selected small to medium entrepreneurs in Ohana region". The study discussed the most common stylistic devices used in advertisements by Small and Medium Entrepreneurs (SME) in Ohana region. The study revealed that advertisers attract the attention of customers through the use of stylistic devices.

Famukong (2016) examined "A stylistic analysis in advertising discourse: A case of the Dangote Cement advertisement in Bameda Cameroon". The study discusses advertisements of Dangote cement on billboards in Cameroon, analyzing what is communicated, how it is communicated and interpreted. The study reveals that the advertisers use different stylistic devices that carry positivity and a common ground that makes the readers identify with the advertisements, persuading them to buy Dangote cement. From the previous studies reviewed, the researcher has observed that none of the studies paid particular attention to bank advertising slogans. This research therefore seeks to carry out a stylistic analysis of bank advertising slogans. This research work would focus on twenty-four bank advertising slogans.

Aim and Objectives

Generally, the study aims at carrying out a stylistic analysis of bank advertising slogans. The aim therefore is to look at the general importance or the role of language in bank advertising slogans as well as investigate the choice of language of the bank slogan maker. This would add to the interest of stylistics.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What is the choice of language used in bank advertising slogans?
2. What are the effects of the choice on the target audience?
3. What are the stylistic features of bank advertising slogans?

Method and Procedure

This study is structured within the methodological framework of stylistics. The data for this study comprises twenty four (24) bank advertising slogans. The advertising slogans are drawn from selected commercial and microfinance banks in Nigeria. The slogans are studied qualitatively. A thematic analysis of the data is done at the graphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic levels of stylistics.

However, occasional recourse may be made to quantitative mode of data representation, especially at the syntactic level of the analysis.

Data

Data gathered from bank advertising slogans are examined using qualitative analysis. In all, twenty four bank slogans selected from various commercial and microfinance banks are gathered and analyzed at the graphological, lexical, semantic and syntactic levels of stylistic analysis. The selected slogans are those used by the banks as at the year 2022.

Data	Bank	Advertising Slogan
Datum 1:	Access	More than banking
Datum 2:	Fidelity	We are fidelity, we keep our word
Datum 3:	FCMB	My bank and I
Datum 4:	First	You First
Datum 5:	GTB	Wouldn't you rather bank with us
Datum 6:	Union	Your Simpler, Smatter Bank
Datum 7:	UBA	Africa's global bank
Datum 8:	Zenith	In your best interest
Datum 9:	Citibank	Let's get it done
Datum 10:	Eco Bank	The Pan African Bank
Datum 11:	Heritage	Your Timeless Wealth Partner
Datum 12:	Polaris	The sky is big enough
Datum 13:	Stanbic IBTC	IT CAN BE
Datum 14:	Standard Chartered	Good Enough, Ain't Enough
Datum 15:	Sterling	Your one-customer bank
Datum 16:	Unity	...succeeding together
Datum 17:	Wema	People banking on people
Datum 18:	Parallex	...upgrading lives, upgrading
Datum 19:	Kuda	Bank of the free
Datum 20:	LAPO	...improving lives
Datum 21:	VFD	...above and beyond banking
Datum 22:	Sparkle	Walking by your side Today and Tomorrow
Datum 23:	Providus	FUTURE FORWARD BANKING
Datum 24:	Suntrust	Tomorrow's Bank Today

Graphological Analysis

Gomez-Jimenez, (2015) defines graphology as “a linguistic level of analysis that comprises the study of graphic aspects of language”. Crystal and Davy (1969:18) say “graphology is the analogous study of a language's writing system or orthography: as seen in the various kinds of handwriting and typography”. They add that a graphological level of analysis examines a particular text, bringing out striking use of punctuation, capitalization spacing and so on.

Data Presentation

The twenty four bank advertising slogans were gathered from the official websites, and facebook pages of the selected banks. The advertising slogans are listed below:

Capitalization

The capital letter starts a new sentence or follows a question or exclamation mark. Capital letters are used in a number of situations. An issue of graphological interest in the gathered data is the use of capitalization. In some of the data, capitalization is used for emphasis. Anything written in the upper case attracts the readers' attention instances are under listed in the data below.

Datum 6:	Your <u>S</u> impler <u>S</u> marter <u>B</u> ank
Datum 11:	Your <u>T</u> imeless <u>W</u> ealth <u>P</u> artner
Datum 13:	IT CAN BE
Datum 14:	<u>G</u> ood <u>E</u> nough <u>A</u> in't <u>E</u> nough
Datum 22:	Walking by your side, <u>T</u> oday and <u>T</u> omorrow
Datum 23:	FUTURE FORWARD BANKING
Datum 24:	<u>T</u> omorrow's <u>B</u> ank <u>T</u> oday

Ellipsis

Also of graphological attraction is the use of ellipsis in a few of the gathered data. Ellipsis is a

Ellipses are found in the following data.

Datum 18:	...upgrading people, upgrading lives
Datum 16:	...succeeding together
Datum 20:	...improving lives
Datum 21:	...above and beyond banking

In the above data, ellipses dots are used just before the slogans. The reader therefore is expected to put the names of the banks before the ellipses. These show that the banks come before the services or the benefits the customers stand to enjoy.

Datum 12:	The sky is big enough
Datum 9:	Let's get it done
Datum 14:	Good Enough, Ain't Enough

Lexical Analysis

The lexical items used in the selected slogans are mainly words relating to advertisements. These are words like: First, Simpler, Smarter, Big, Wealth, succeeding, upgrading, improving, forward, above etc.

A. Collocates

A few collocates are found in the data. For instance, simpler, smarter, good, best, upgrading, improving, above, all collocate with benefit.

Datum 1:	More than banking
Datum 2:	We are fidelity, we keep our word
Datum 3:	You first
Datum 6:	Your Simpler Smarter Bank
Datum 9:	Let's get it done

Another issue of lexical interest here is the use of adjectives. Some of the bank slogans made use of adjectives to describe the benefits of the banks. Instances can be found across the data. Here such adjectives as simpler, smarter, best, timeless, big, good, upgrading, improving, and

cohesive device involving the omission of an item which the reader or listener has to supply.

Full Stop

Also of graphological interest is the use of the full stop. Even where there are full sentences, some of the advertisers have failed to use the full stop. The effect of this is to show that the advertisers are in haste to deliver their messages. Instances are found in the data below.

These collocates identify the purpose of the slogans which is advertisement.

B. Vocabulary

The language of the bank slogan is formal. However, simple lexical items are used to ensure that the message intended is passed across. The assertion of simple lexical items can be illustrated with the majority of the data. A few examples are given below:

global are used.

To sum up the lexical analysis, it is necessary to get the mind of the advertiser through an examination of the kind of words used. As has been discussed earlier, commercial lexical items are featured in many of the slogans. All the slogans

have to do with getting one benefit or the other from the bank.

Syntactic Analysis

Dutta (2021) asserts that “The structures of sentences, clauses and groups are germane in stylistic analysis”. It is in line with this assertion that syntactic analysis is necessitated for this

study.

Systemic grammar is chosen for the analysis because “it is highly suitable model in stylistic studies”. (Dutta, 2021). Here, the pattern used in this research will be considered. The sentence pattern adopted for this research is the systemic approach which is SPCA.

Table 1: Showing the Syntactic Analysis of the Data

Data	Subject	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
Datum 1			More than banking	
Datum 2	We We	Are Keep	Fidelity Our word	
Datum 3	My Bank and I			
Datum 4	You		First	
Datum 5	You	wouldn't bank		rather with us
Datum 6	Your Simpler Smarter Bank			
Datum 7	Africa's Global Bank			
Datum 8			In your best interest	
Datum 9	Let's	Get Done	It	
Datum 10	The Pan African Bank			
Datum 11	Your Timeless Wealth Partner			
Datum 12	The Sky	Is	Big	Enough
Datum 13	IT	CAN BE		
Datum 14	Good Enough	Ain't	Enough	
Datum 15	Your one customer bank			
Datum 16		...succeeding		Together
Datum 17	People	Banking on	People	
Datum 18	...upgrading lives ...upgrading people			
Datum 19	Bank		Of the free	
Datum 20	...improving lives			
Datum 21				Above and beyond banking
Datum 22		Walking		By your side Today and Tomorrow
Datum 23	FUTURE FORWARD BANKING			
Datum 24	Tomorrow's Banking			Today

The table above shows that eighteen structures have subjects, nine structures have predicators, ten structures have complements while five structures contain adjuncts.

Although there are structures without subject, eighteen structures out of the twenty-four examined structures have subjects. This suggests

Datum 3:	My Bank I
Datum 6:	Your Simpler Smarter Bank
Datum 7:	Africa's global bank
Datum 10:	The Pan African Bank
Datum 11:	Your Timeless Wealth Partner
Datum 15:	Your One-Customer Bank

Ten structures have complements. These complements are either saying more about the subjects or the predicators. In other words the complements are used to buttress the benefits that

Datum 2:	We are <u>Fidelity</u> , we keep <u>our word</u>
Datum 4:	You <u>First</u>
Datum 12:	The sky is <u>big</u> enough
Datum 19:	Bank <u>of the free</u>

It is important to note that Datum 1: more than banking and Datum 8: 'in your best interest' have been able to pass their messages across without a subject and a predicator.

Ungrammaticality

A case of ungrammaticality is found in the data. This is in support of Olateju's (2007:13) assertion that "advertisements often break the rules of grammar, syntax...". This is allowed in advertisement. An instance is found in:

Datum 19: Bank of the free

Here the word 'free' has been used like a noun.

This is a way of capturing the readers' attention and to showcase the numerous benefits of the bank.

Semantic Analysis

This aspect of analysis considers the meaning of some of the advertising slogans based on the relationship among word as well as the context of usage. The meaning of some of the slogans are arrived at through context and meaning relations.

that the slogan makers are interested in establishing their benefits first in the mind of the readers before any other thing. As a matter of fact, some of the slogans have made use of only subjects to pass their messages across to their readers. Some of the instances are found in the underlined expressions.

have been established by the subjects or predicators. Examples are cited in the following data.

Personification

The use of personification is found in data 2, 5 and 11.

Datum 2: We are fidelity, we keep our word.

Here, the bank has been likened to a human who can keep his words.

Datum 5: Wouldn't you rather bank with us?

Here, the bank has made use of 'us' as if it is referring to humans.

Datum 11: Your Timeless Wealth Partner: This also means that the bank can make someone rich. The bank has been likened to a living being, 'partner'.

Discussion

This research work is basically a stylistic study. The data gathered has been placed on a linguistic measuring rod to obtain the stylistic effects of bank slogans. Also the stylistic analysis has been able to describe the use of language of bank slogans at four levels—graphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic.

Graphologically, the bank slogan maker is a bid to advertise the bank has made distinctive use of capitalization. It has been discovered that the bank slogan markers try as much as possible to pass their messages across to readers is very few words. This is evident in the data. Even where

many words are required, the bank slogan maker has carefully made use of ellipses.

With the ellipses, the advertiser has been able to imply so much with few words. All these have contributed to stylistic communication between the bank slogan maker and his customers.

The lexical analysis features the choice of words of the bank slogan maker. The maker has made use of simple lexical items to deliver his message. A peculiar feature of the lexical analysis is the use of special collocates.

The syntactic analysis reveals how the bank slogan maker has combined his words to advertise his bank. The analysis was done using SPCA structural pattern. Strikingly, the advertiser has made use of several structures without the predicator to pass across his messages. Another peculiar feature of syntactic analysis is that a particular structure is not grammatical, yet the intended message is passed across.

The semantic analysis reflects the use of personification. Here the meanings of the bank slogans are determined through context and meaning relations.

It has been asserted through this analysis that language is an essential tool of advertisement and also that the variety of English used by the bank slogan maker may be standard or non-standard. The analysis has also revealed that despite the fact that language is governed by rules these rules may be broken by advertising slogans to achieve certain objectives. The language of the bank slogans are not complex but simple. The reason for this simplicity could be the people the advertising slogans are intended to reach (Literate, semi-literate, highly educated and lowly educated). Another fact evident in the analysis is that the advertising slogans are used to perform one basic function which is to gain customers. This explains why the slogan makers chose to use words such smarter, simpler, big, enough, good, best, succeeding, upgrading, forward, above, beyond, wealth, first etc.

Conclusion

The study has attempted an analysis of advertising bank slogans. These slogans were analyzed graphologically, lexically, syntactically and semantically. The study holds it true that language is a necessary tool of advertisements.

This study has shown that language is highly important in any organization in achieving set objectives. In the selected bank slogans, language has been used by the advertisers to paint clear pictures of the benefits the consumers stand to gain.

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