

NATECEP JOURNAL OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

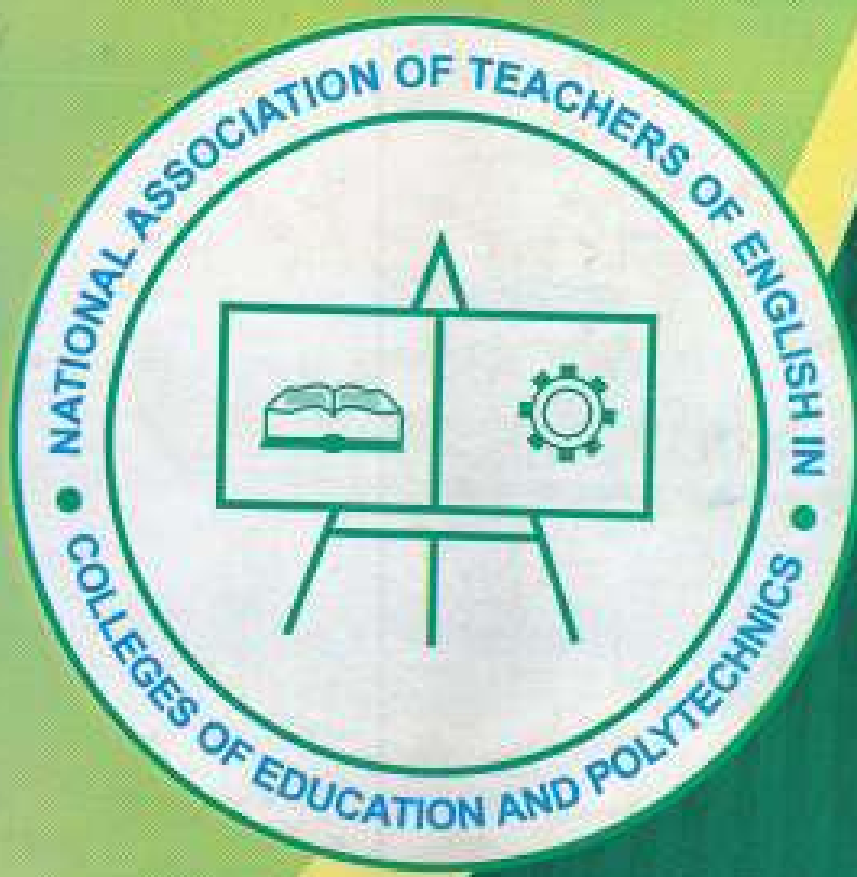
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NJECS

ISSN 1118 - 115 X

NATECEP JOURNAL OF ENGLISH AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Vol. 5 - Sept. 2009



A Publication of
**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS
OF ENGLISH IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION
& POLYTECHNICS (NATECEP)**

**NATECEP JOURNAL OF ENGLISH AND
COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

Omenogor, H. P.

VOLUME 5

SEPTEMBER, 2009

**A Publication of
the National Association of Teachers of English
in Colleges of Education and Polytechnics
ISSN: 1118 - 115X**

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Published by:

National Association of Teachers of English in
Colleges of Education and Polytechnics,
50 Department of English,
College of Education,
P.M.B. 1251, Warri,
Delta State, Nigeria.

Design and Printed in Nigeria by:
Cross Point Communication
14 Lokoja Road,
Laduna.

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NJECS is a peer review national journal published once a year by the National Association of Teachers of English in Colleges of Education and Polytechnics. It focuses on all aspects of English Language learning and teaching today. It extends to comparative literary studies, approaches and application of various literary genres and theories. Studies of individual writers as well as language and literature in contact with various cultures are also welcome. Communication studies of indigenous languages are also accepted. The other papers in this volume are the best of the articles that were presented at the 13th annual national conference held at Ozoro, Delta State. It is hoped that these articles have addressed the obvious steady decline in the quality of the spoken and written English in Nigeria sufficient enough to provoke self re-examination by all teachers of English in Nigeria, for the English Language is our daily bread and butter.

Baba D. D.

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Omerogun, H.D.

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**LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISEMENT:
A GRAPHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF BILLBOARDS
ADVERTISEMENT IN AUCHI METROPOLIS**

OYAKHIRE F.F.O. (MRS) And OMENOGOR, H.D.,

Abstract

This paper discusses the language of billboard advertisement as a distinct register. In any business transaction, communication between the businessman and his customer is a major determinant of the degree of turnover. For his product to reach his desired customers, there is the need for the businessman to "persuade" the prospective customer. This paper equally reveals that advertisements on the billboards carry simple sentences to quickly create impression and understanding in the mind of the readers. Readers, who are mostly passers-by in motion, are always in a hurry to get the message at a glance. The writer therefore writes great and lengthy things in the fewest words. In doing this, there are lots of violations of graphological rules. The deviation is deliberately either for aesthetic purpose or to create style. All are done to create effect on the target audience. Beyond the humour in billboards, we discover there lie more intents couched in aesthetically satisfying, psychologically appealing and professionally handed eye-catching language.

Introduction

Language, a phenomenon as old as the world itself, is the unifying factor of human race. It is one of the major things that every human being has in common, unlike animals that do not speak any language but make only sound. Human beings speak comprehensible languages. Several cultures have independently viewed the main function of language as the expression of thought. In view of this, language could be seen as a vehicle of expression and communication within a community. It therefore serves as a tool of unity among people. Language, according to Bloch B and Trager G.L. quoted in Obanya P. et al. (1987) is:

a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates. Language is a system for the expression of thoughts, feelings and social togetherness using spoken sounds as conventional symbols (P.1)

All human languages rely on sounds and symbols. It operates at two levels, the level of vocal sound (speech) and the level of graphic representation (writing) which is the writers' focus in this paper. Language is made up of words. These words could be in the form of signs and symbols. There is a strong agreement among humans to use words for communication as a way of expressing themselves. On the whole, language could be seen as an agreed instrument (words, signs or symbols) which serves as a means of communication within a group of human beings in a society. From the role language

Plays, we may opine that the major function of language in the society is for effective communication. To sum up, it can be inferred that the major reason for advertising any good or product is to pass information, to create awareness, to persuade the prospective customer about the advertised goods, and it is the customer's choice to search for the goods and services.

Language and Register

When people communicate, certain factors are taken into consideration. Such factors include the subject-matter, the medium, the audience, the context and even the type of relationship existing between the speaker/ writer and his audience. Of particular interest to this write-up is communication based on the subject-matter. For every subject that one wishes to talk about, there are always certain particular linguistic features identifiable with such level of language use. This is known as register. Register, according to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary by Hornby A. S. (2006), is "the level and style of a piece of writing or speech, that is usually appropriate to the situation that it is

Used in". We can therefore, say that register is a language variation according to use. Our view is buttressed by Ejiogu quoted in Mowarin (2006) when he opined that register refers to "those common vocabulary items which are associated with various fields of human activity and which the educated speaker of English should be familiar with." Following the above views, the present researchers believe that certain social situations dictate the appropriate variety or register to be used. We will further opine that in the formation of information on billboards, register will be culturally determined since it is the culture of a society that is likely do determine the form or pattern in which language can occur, hence variation of language is based on context and situation.

Advertising

No manufacturer or producer of goods will finish his or her goods and assume that the consumer will purchase them without creating in them the awareness of the product. To create this awareness is by advertising. Any time language is used, it is used for a specific purpose in mind. So the language of advertising can be seen as a register and it is intended to persuade prospective customers. The question now is: "what is advertising?" Advertising, in the *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, (2000) is seen as:

The practice of informing and influencing others not personally known to the communicator through paid messages in the media (p.35).

While advertisement according to stein and Urdang (1979) quoted in Bello (1991), is:

1. An announcement, as of goods for sale, in newspapers or magazines on the radio etc.
2. A public notice, especially in print
3. A calling to the attention of the public (144)

Advertising points out the qualities of the service, the idea or the product that would make it attractive to the persons the advertiser wishes to influence. This is why in most cases; people always perceive advertisement as a major way of selling their products.

The major characteristic feature of advertisement is the type of language employed. The language of advertisement is typically very "informal" and personal. In advertising a product, the advertiser sees his product through "rose coloured spectacle". He uses optimistic language to persuade the prospective customer into buying his goods. Most advertisers (hawkers, sales Boys/girls) address their prospective customers as "Oga", "Madam", "Aunty", "Papa", "Daddy", "Mummy", etc. though they are not biologically related, these nomenclatures are market strategies to influence the prospective customers to buy their goods/products. The unwary, customer is likely to be taken and attracted by these fashionable names to patronize these Advertisers.

The major aim of a manufacturer, producer or seller is to sell his goods and render services in order to make profit. To achieve this, he uses common language (English) or variants of the language he could employ to create awareness among the target audience. Using the two popular media of communicating language, one can talk of written and spoken advertisement. An extension of the classification is the print and electronic media. It should be noted that television performs the dual function of audio visual media.

The Print Media

Traditionally, the print media refers to newspapers and magazines, business publications, catalogues, direct mails, sales literature directory (Yellow pages) and out door advertising space.

Outdoor Advertising,

Outdoor advertising is another form of a print media. Billboard (which is the writers' focus) and Signboard advertisement come under this category. They are printed materials that are pasted or written directly on the boards. They are also placed out of doors for the general Public to see.

Billboards

Billboards categorized as outdoor advertisement, are found at strategic places along road sides, highways, road junctions, stadia or parks. Billboards are typically large wooden or metal signs with different dimensions ranging between 60"x20" maximum and 10"x7" minimum (width x height) as was revealed by the billboards sampled and measured by these researchers. The display is printed on a sheet, which is glued and starched over the face of the advertising structure. Billboard

Advertisements are designed to catch a person's attention and create a memorable impression very quickly, leaving the readers thinking about the advertisement after they have gone past it. They have to be readable in split seconds, especially when driving pass at high speed, thus, they are usually found on high raised boards and made to face the oncoming traffic. The advertisement sometimes appears on both sides of the board. They usually have few words in large print and a humorous or

Arresting image in a brilliant colour. According to Jenkins (1980), "the press material should be slight and simple as a brief news release and a well-captioned picture supported by a sample if that is feasible" (p. 109)

Jenkins hypothesis helps to avoid elaborate press packs, loaded with irrelevant items since readers or viewers are in motion. Message should be very simple; it should not be more than three elements—the text, the main illustration and the pack presentation. Companies erect billboards and sell or rent the space for limited or agreed periods. In each case, printed materials are pasted (temporarily) on the board for a period, since they may subsequently be rented out to other agencies. In some cases, the advertising agencies can print directly on the billboards owned by an advertiser.

An advertising agency is a professional plan writer and designer of advertisement. The agency works for their clients (manufacturers) by giving them the best quality work and helping the clients grow and prosper in marketing their goods and services.

Graphology

Graphology simply refers to writing system. It is the physical Realization of language on paper. It is a non-linguistic device but it has the effect of enhancing the message of the advertiser. Graphology according to the *New Encyclopedia Britannica*. Vol. 5 is, "the inference of character from a person's handwriting". The theory underlying graphology is that handwriting is an expression of personality. Leach (1981), sees it as "the line-by-line" arrangement of the words on the printed page.

Crystal and Davy (1983) see it as the "analogous study of language writing system or orthography as seen in the various kinds of handwriting and typography". They also opine that graphology has to do with a writer's distinctive uses of punctuation paragraphing, capitalization, spacing and so on.

The process of communication through graphic is what is referred to as graphic communication (a non-verbal way of communication). This is a potent means of communication because it can easily break many barriers to effective communication. According to Agba and Okoro (1995),

Graphic communication is the act of passing on information or intelligence from the source to its destination without any channel, mechanical or semantic noise. It is communication fidelity par excellence. (p. 2).

One of the principal purposes of graphic communication is that it attracts the reader's attention

To the message. Under this aspect are pictures of the product. The pictures make the message to be understood by the target audience irrespective of their educational status.

Graphological rules are sometimes violated by calligraphers deliberately for aesthetic purposes. Calligraphers or graphic artists, often have the onerous task of producing billboards that are attention-arresting, using special writing or symbols. The message must therefore be pounding, witty and short. The writer must know how to say great and lengthy things in the fewest words. Also, the important part of the message must be emphasized either through the use of a separate colour for it or by making the type size to be bigger than any other words on the advert in order to make it readable at a glance.

Graphology which has to do with writing encompasses punctuation marks, shape of the letters, gap between words, and Distance between lines. In any frame work, if there is a change from what one may call standard usage, then there is a deviation from the norms and such deviation has its own effect. It is in the light of the above conceptualization of graphology that the writers will proceed to analyse the graphological features that can only be found in the language of advertising. Such features include:

Capitalization

In conventional writing, capital letters are used to indicate the beginning of a sentence, to show proper names and titles, and sometimes to distinguish what is specific from what is general. In billboard advertisement, there is excessive use of capitalization by the sign-writers. This is a way of emphasizing key word(s) in an advert. It is a way of highlighting an aspect of a text; highlighting is a feature of fore-

Grounding. It makes the reader to focus more on the highlighted portion than on the other words. In most adverts, the names of the products are all capitalized. For example, in "RHINO Portland cement, "MALTONIC ... makes the end", "AMSTEL Malta" adverts. Here, an effort is made to highlight the graphological features: Even where lower cases are used, some portions are fore-grounded for example, Chelsea Teezers drink, "Let's get this Party started".

Here, we see "party started" specially fore-grounded albeit written in small letters. It was observed that even where small letters were used in the billboard advertisement, they were bold enough to be noticed easily by the target audience.

Lineation

Lineation is another very important aspect of the graphological analysis of billboard advertisement. Lineation may be considered as the line by line arrangement of words, phrases and Sentences. In English, the convention is to observe the left to right order of words in the

Punctuation

Punctuation marks are part of the orthographic conventions which must be applied in any discourse. Punctuation marks promote accuracy and clarity in writing. Language of advertisement is characterized by a deviant use of such punctuation marks as full stop (period), comma, apostrophe, exclamation, etc.

The full stop (.)

The conventional use of the full stop to show or indicate the end of a sentence does not necessarily apply in the language of billboard advertisement. Rather, in most cases, the full stop is only used to coincide with what one may call a graphological sentence and not necessarily a grammatical sentence. In some cases, most of the billboards do not make use of the full stop. It could be for endless communication with the customers or as a stylistic device. And it is possible that it was omitted deliberately for effect. See the Maltonic advertisement below.

"MALTONIC ... makes the end v" The full stop is replaced by a tick (v) mark. This kind of usage sometimes creates ambiguity in decoding the message sent. Here, the mark may be attesting to the good quality of the product while at the same time signalling the end of the sentence. It may even be thought that the sign writer intended to make an exclamatory mark. Generally, the use of the full stop is left to the whims and caprices of the sign writer because even in simple adverts where it is clear that a full stop ought to appear, we find that it is absent.

The comma (,)

The comma is used to show a pause in a sentence. It is used to separate items in a list. Nouns or groups used in direct address are marked off by commas. These and several other uses of the comma are conventional in writing. In most billboard advertisements, it is often observed that Most of the information placed on them are rarely set apart by commas. Where they occur, they are used conventionally. That is to list items or qualities of the goods and services being advertised. For example, as in Coca-Cola adverts:

Advert (1)	2 friends, 2 chilled cokes Possibilities.	Make it REAL
Advert (2)	Moving in, moving up Achievement.	Make it REAL

However, we can say that the comma in this case could have been replaced by the conjunction "and". The lack of commas in billboard adverts may be because the writers do not consider the structures as grammatical.

Exclamation mark(!)

Exclamation mark is used after emphatic interjection and after a word, a phrase, a clause or a

Sentence to express high degree of surprise, incredibility or other strong emotion. Exclamation mark is used extensively in the language of billboard advertisement. It helps to capture the advertiser's emotional feelings towards the product he is advertising. Since the models are happy people, their excitement and elation is aptly captured by the use of the mark. In most billboard advertisements, exclamation marks are used conventionally. They are used to show happiness and the positive assertion of the good qualities of the advertised products. *For example,*

1. (Limca advert) "Level Out Thirst!"
2. (Malta Guinness advert) "FEEL GOOD EVERYDAY!"
3. (Legend Stout advert) "It's your life. Xpress it NOW!"
4. (Maggi cube advert) "Tongues can tell!"
5. (Lipton advert) "Feel good!"

All these are instances where the use of the exclamation mark contributes to the graphological realization of the language of billboard advertisements. The exclamation mark is used to emphasize the last word in the sentence. In the advert on "Legend Stout", the writer capitalizes "NOW!" and goes ahead to append the exclamation mark. There is no need for the capitals since the exclamation mark is to be used. The mark alone still indicates his strong mood.

The ellipsis (...)

This is a very common punctuation mark used in billboard advertisements. The ellipsis shows a pause, an omission or a breaking off in a speech. It is used for effect and to economize the discontinuity marks on billboard advertisements and introduces the qualities of the product advertised. The break they create between what had been said and what else is being portrayed after, creates room for the audience to imagine other good or positive qualities not mentioned by the advertiser(s). This is observed in the following adverts:

1. "Maltonic... makes the end" (Maltonic advert)
2. "For the freshest breath... get Close up" (Close up tooth paste advert).

In the above examples, the suspense created by the gaps in the sentences is done to help the readers imagine or fill in the message by their own imagination. However, the need to create graphological finesse makes the writers retain the ellipsis. Other graphological markers (punctuation) like the hyphen, apostrophe and quotation marks, all contribute to the visual effect of the billboard advertisements on the target audience.

Conclusion

In this paper, the writers examined the graphological features of billboard advertisements and it was discovered that the use of properly combined colours, pictures of models and the products helps to highlight the aesthetic effect of the billboards thus making them highly attractive to the readers and prospective customers. The special calligraphy applied by the writers of these billboards equally help to fore-ground the concept of the advert to achieve the advertiser's desired purposes. It was

Equally stressed that the use of punctuation marks, the choice of words, their meanings and how they are strung together to form acceptable utterances matter much in the language of advertisement.

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SPOKEN ENGLISH IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF UKWUANI PEOPLE IN DELTA STATE

OMENOGOR, H.D.

Abstract

The long period of co-existence of English with Nigerian languages and its use for communication among Nigerians has yielded peculiar linguistic features in different aspects of language. This paper examines the peculiar features of spoken English in Nigeria with particular reference to the articulation of English phonemes. It uses the Spoken English of 'kw'an' people in Delta State as a case study. It attempts to answer the following questions. Does spoken English in Nigeria meet the standard of RP? Is spoken English the same in every part of Nigeria? Does it impede international intelligibility and what is the way forward for Nigeria with respect to spoken English?

Introduction

The phrase 'spoken English in Nigeria' refers to the English language expressed in speech which Nigerians use from time to time in the course of communicating with one another. As Wolf (2001) notes, 'Nigeria is the most populous state [country] in Africa'. Her numerical superiority in Africa makes the English spoken by her citizens a prototype of West African English. Nigeria has a very complex multilingual setting. This is why English language is useful to her citizens as it is one of the languages used as lingua franca.

Spoken English in Nigeria

For many years, education authorities in Nigeria placed priorities on the teaching of the semantic and the syntactic aspects of English and ignored the phonological aspect which is very important (See Omodiaogbe, 19). Spoken English can only be clearly understood if the speaker and the listener understand the phonology of English language. Van Weason and Theunissen support the above view of ours when they assert that:

Good pronunciation make for intelligibility and it gives the speaker's oral production 'a certain redundancy' which enables him to put his message across effectively and effortlessly. Good pronunciation has a high 'pay off' since deviant pronunciation marks one out as a non native abroad (109). While commenting on the problems of pronunciation nation wide, Amayo (1986) explains the linguistic difficulties of L₂ users of English. He regrets that pronunciation is poorly taught in Nigerian schools as the teaching of phonology suffers from lack of motivation for the teacher and for the learner. He also laments the high degree of incompetence of many teachers of English who have neither a

Grasp of the subject nor the methodology of imparting the knowledge. This unsatisfactory situation has given rise to a situation whereby, many English words are wrongly pronounced by many Nigerians. Some of such wrong pronunciations are cited in the following table.

Table 1. Some Phonological Features of Spoken English in Nigeria

S/Nos.	Words	PNE Pronunciations	Received Pronunciations
1	Thing	/tin/ /éiq/	
2	Them	/dem/ /ð?m/ or /ðem/	
3	Whore	/wD(r)/ /h:(r)	
4	Visitor	/visiDt(r)/ /vizit?(r)/	
5	Architect	/ætitekt/	/ɑ:kitekt/
6	Worm	/wDm/ /wɛ:m/ AmE. /wɛ:rm/	
7	worst	/wDst/ /wɛ:st/ AmE. /wɛ:rst/	
8	Worship	/wDip/ /wɛ:ip/ /Wɛ:ip/ AmE. /Wɛ:rip/	
9	Wicked	/wiked/ /wikid/	
10	Turn	tDn/ /t3:n/	

NOTE: 'P N E' stands for "popular Nigerian English"; (See Jowitt, 151). The above deviant pronunciations are occasioned by the inappropriate articulation of the sounds involved.

Some Phonological Features Peculiar to the Ukwuani Tribe

Williamson identifies Ukwuani as 'a minority language' (139) and notes that 'Ika, Ikwere, Izi ezaa, Ikwo Mgbo, Ogbah and Ukwuani form a language cluster with Igbo (141). Collins et. al. note that Igbo belongs to the kwa branch of the Niger Congo family (725).' Bendor, however, notes as recalled by Anyanwu that 'Igbo is a reclassified Benue Congo language (41). From the above classification and re-classification of the Igbo language, it can therefore be concluded that Ukwuani, which forms a language cluster with it and other languages, can be viewed as a member of the Benue Congo family. Ukwuani is spoken in Ndokwa West, Ndokwa East and Ukwuani Local Government Areas of Delta state as an indigenous language. The language is largely homogenous in the above areas. However, dialectical varieties are noticed in some boundary towns and villages. ?kw?an? language also serves as a mother tongue in Orogun, Ugbelli North Local Government area of Delta State and Ndoni in Ahoada Local Government Area of Rivers state. As Okolugbo notes, "the geographical position of ?kw?an? places the country (i.e the entire ?kw?an? land) within two belts. Deltaic swampy forest... and the South Eastern coastal towns (1)."

?Kw?an?

Vowels

?Kw?an? has nine vowels as Uti and Iloh (6), Enubunniga (11) and Ogude et. al. (33) note. The vowels are illustrated below.

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