

**THE USE OF FIGURATIVE EXPRESSION
IN THE LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISEMENT**

BY

**YAKUBU BELLO
ADM.NO.: 1011110035**

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APPROVAL PAGE

This research work has been supervised and approved having met part of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts in English (B.A English) in the Department of Modern European Languages and Linguistics, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto

Project Supervisor
Malam Mika'il Ibrahim

Date/Signature

Head of Department
Dr. Muhammad Aminu Mode

Date/Signature

External Supervisor

Date/Signature

DEDICATION

To my parents and students of Languages all over the world.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Figurative expressions are forms of styles in which words are used to express more than they mean ordinarily so as to make the idea very emphatic and effective.

On the other hand, hyperbole is one of the figurative expression and it means the use of deliberate expression for emphasis to achieve heightened effect or to produce some effect. In advertisements, hyperbole is mostly used to capture the interest of the public to patronize the product or the services been advertised.

Language forms the fundamental function of communication as social being. Man uses it as a medium of communication to help him communicate with other people that live within and beyond our geographical locations. It is noted that our live takes us through sires of activities that demand immense use of language.

Figurative Expression in language of advertisement is in the family of marketing management tools, which include product, price, promotion mix that also includes advertising

sales promotion publicity, personal selling and product packaging. In this respect, language of advertisement studies how the advertiser use language to persuade and convince their customers to introduce and buy their new product. It is through this techniques of advertising that customers are helpless to depend themselves (Filici, 2005).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research work is embarked upon because on several occasions you see advertisement on the media. You discover that figurative expression is mostly used to capture or win the interest of the customers.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Why is hyperbole been used in advertisement?
2. How language is used in order to attract more customers?
3. DO hyperboles give ambiguous meaning in expression?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- (i) To identify how language is used by the advertisers to make claims that are obviously doubtful.
- (ii.) To identify the ambiguities in meaning and usage.
- (iii.) To identify the characteristics of hyperbole in advertisement.

1.5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on the use of figurative expression in language of advertisement with emphasis on hyperbole. The study is strictly on the use of figurative expression in language of advertisement; it does not touch other areas.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 DEFINITION OF HYPERBOLE

Hyperbole is an exaggeration which may be used for emphasis and humor. Hyperbole is used in speaking and writing for effect or to make a boring story more interesting. Hyperbole involves the use of deliberate exaggeration for emphasis or to achieve a humorous effect. According to Omajofor, P. (2003) defines hyperbole as a figure of speech which involves an exaggeration of ideas forth sake of emphasis. However Yule (1996) defines hyperbole as a way of speaking or writing that makes something sound better, more exiting, dangerous, etc than really is.

Hyperbole could also be defined as a style of speech and writing were people exaggerate what they are saying in order to make something sound more impressive than realty (Synthia 1985).

Hyperbole can be found in literature and oral communication they would not used in nonfiction works, like medical journals or research papers; they are however

perfect for fictional works in adding colour to a character or humor to the story.

In literature, it is mostly found in poetry than prose or speech. In conversation between people we normally come across hyperbole expressions like.

“I am so hungry I could eat a house”

“This car goes faster than the speed of light”

“My mom is going to kill me”

“I have a million things to do”

“I drank a bucket of water”

2.1 APPROACHES TO ADVERTISEMENT

Bovee (1987) defines advertisement as a tool of marketing for communicating ideas and information about goods and services to a group. Again, Stanley (1977) defines advertisement as any paid presentation or promotion of goods and services by an identified sponsor. Thus, advertisement makes the audience know who the sponsor is. Advertisement is therefore a marketing tool whose aim is to build preferences for the advertised products and services.

Advertisement or advertising is based on the premise that every cloud has silver lining and acknowledges the fact on ensuring that every things is perceived from its positive angle. Advertisement ties the consumer towards a consistent and usually pleasurable relationship with the product (Chukwu, 2002).

In Nigeria, the relevance of advertisement in the social, political and Economic development of society cannot be over emphasized. According to Arologe (1989), Advertisement is certainly relevant to Nigeria because without advertisement people may not be aware of the products and that advertisement promotes general awareness of availability of products and services and creates preference for products by emphasizing the unique benefits each product offers to the consumer.

However, in Nigeria, advertisements tend to concentrate more on creating selective demands. The individual manufacturer who makes the branded product or services in mainly concerned with stimulating brand recognition and purchase. According to Chuku (2000)

creating a new want is the most important aspect of advertisements in Nigeria.

There are different types of advertisement. One of them is **counter advertisement** which is an advertisement that is directed against a product or services. Counter advertisement directed against products is rarely seen on national scale. Nevertheless, industry and public concern over such advertisement is therefore necessary to counteract some of the allegedly unwarranted claims found in standard advertisement.

Another form of advertisement is **advocacy advertisement** which is normally directed at a particular objectionable product, a company product or an industry responsible for creating a social ill. Advocacy advertisement champions preventive action against conditions affecting the public welfare. In most cases, advocacy advertisement is sponsored and paid for by an organization that wants to be associated with community development. The advertisement may not be directed towards the sponsor's own business interest.

Another form of advertisement is **corrective advertisement** is tries to correct exaggerated claims such “guench” has better nutrient that any other drink. Many government agencies participate in monitoring advertisement claims including the standards organization of Nigeria (APCON): Advertising practitioners council of Nigeria (APCON): and the national agency for good and drug administration and control (NAFDAC). They have established struck rules for ingredient disclosure.

2.2 LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISEMENT

The role of advertising is to draw attention to product or service in order to make higher sales. Whether we are reading the paper, shaping, watching television or simply laying around we cannot avoid seeing advertisement. They come in an extraordinary range of forms and contents. The largest and most noticeable group belong to commercial consumer advertising but they manufactures), retail advertising (from shops to consume) classified advertising (Want advertisement, house, sales e.t.c) and direct mailing

being offensive, in bad tested or simply too excusive (Felicia, 2005).

The activities involve posters, signs, notices, show cards, samples, circulars, catalogues, labels, wrapping paper, price tags, tickets, footballers' shirts, and many other devices. The ears can be assailed as well as the eyes, with slogans, jingles, street cries, loudspeaker messages, and the range of auditory effects heard in radio and television advertising.

In most cases, it is the visual content and design of an advertisement that makes the initial impact and causes us to take note of it. But in order to get people to identify the product, remember its name (or at least make them feel that it is familiar). And persuade them that it is worth buying, advertisement rely almost totally on the use of language. Both elements psychological and linguistic, are essential: they combine to produce a single 'brand image' of a product. However, little objective evidence is available to show how (or whether) advertisements succeed in their aims. A great deal of market research is carried out by firms and

advertising agencies (e.g. asking people whether they can recall the content of an advertisement), but the link between language and sales remains unclear.

Analysis of advertising style by linguists and professional copywriters have drawn attention to several important features of this variety. Most obviously, the language is generally positive, unreserved, and emphasizing the uniqueness of a product (e.g. there is nothing like X---. The vocabulary tends to be vivid and concrete. Figurative expressions are common e.g. eating sunshine which means cereals, smiling colour means hair shampoo. Rhythm, rhyme and other phonetic effects are noticeable e.g. "Wot a lot I got," "milk has gotta Lotta bottle". There may be deviant spellings, especially in the brand names. And considerable use is made of inexplicit grammatical contractions, which lend an air of vagueness-and thus safety-to the claims for the product: X gets clothes cleaner.

The field of advertising is a controversial one as people dispute the ethics and effects of hard selling tactics, fraudulent claims, commercial sponsoring in sport, the

intrusiveness of advertisement, and their effect on children. Its language therefore needs careful investigation and monitoring. But it is not an easy field to make generalization about. Its boundaries blur with other forms of persuasive language, such as speeches, sermons, and public announcements. And within the genre, there is so much variations in subject matter that it is impossible to maintain a single attitude that will encompass everything. Wherever our view about advertisements for cigarettes, washing power, or cough remedies, it is unlikely to be the same as the view we hold about advertisements dealing with dangers of smoking the sale of houses, or the needs of the Thirds World.

TELEVISION ADVERTISING

This form of advertisement shares many of the linguistics features of consumer advertising through it also has certain important differences. Less use is made of written language, partly because of the limited size of screen, but also because there is no time for the viewer to

read lengthy material. On the other hand, the medium makes available the infinite possibilities of the spoken languages, with its reliance on voice qualities, spoken dialogues, and many other kinds of interaction.

The simultaneous use of sound and vision can present problems. However, most advertisements use speech to make their main linguistic claims, and use writing to reinforce what is said, or to add any disclaimers (e.g. Battery not included, while supplies last). But it is easy to ignore the 'small print' on the screen. It is not there for long and the viewer may turn away at the crucial moment. Also, the fact that television advertising takes place in real time can lead to difficulties of comprehension and evaluation. In printed advertisement, there is always time to reread the material, and thus to analyze what the advertising actually says. On television, this opportunity is lacking, and there is thus little chance of evaluating the nature of the claims that are made. Some analysts have argued that these issues pose a particular problem when considering the kind of advertising that is aimed at children (Geis 1982).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the general methods employed and used for data collection for this research work. These comprise sources of data, methods of data collection and analytical procedure.

3.1 SOURCES OF DATA

The sources of data for this research work are divided into two sources, primary and secondary sources. The primary source of data for this research work involves the use of figurative language by advertisers, the secondary data for this study were obtained through the observation of compositions of different students of the Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto and of different scholars.

3.2 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher in most cases observed the case of figurative language use in advertisement. This is done

because it is not like a structure interview that needs recording. Sometime the data were obtained during advertisement to advertisers.

3.3 ANALYTICAL PROCEDURE

This research work is the issue of the uses of figurative language used in advertisement. The study carried out in such a way that it is strictly according to the arrangement of the research questions. The discussion is based on the finding drawn form the analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents and analyses the data for this study. It focuses on the characteristics of hyperbole in advertisements, ambiguities in meaning created by hyperbole and how hyperbole is used in advertisements to make claims that obviously doubtful.

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF HYPERBOLE

In this chapter, it is paramount importance to present other characteristics of language used by advertisers during advertisement, which are:

- a) **Ellipsis:** refers to a literary device that is used in narratives to omit some parts of words, sentence or event, which gives the reader a chance to fill the gaps while acting or reading it out. The mission is usually presented by three dots (...). This style unfortunately is obtain abused through overuse, and also requires a lot of fact to avoid making the advertisement balky and unwieldy, for examples:

- i.** You need TOLLY BABY PRODUCTS...
 - ii.** Star Beer... head on test...
- b) **Parallelism:** This refers to parallel structures of the idea balancing one idea with a similar idea, a word with a word, a phrase with a phrase, a clause with a clause, etc. parallelism clarifies or emphasizes relationship between ideas. In most advertisements, however, parallelism is not conclusively used, thus tending towards deceptive advertising, for example:

“Be successful, be important: use Macleans tooth paste”

- c) **Repatriation:** This ordinary is a rhetorical device. In advertisement, it is used to emphasize brand name so buyers do not go for the limitation. Let us examine these:

“If it is not Panadol, it cannot be like Panadol...”

“Double your pleasure, double your fun with double good, double mint, double mint gum”

As you can see from the above examples the language of advertisement is at once vivid, creative and clever, sometimes load and lusty.

- d) **Superlatives:** this is used to differentiate a company” product from that of the other companies that is very similar product in the market. Example:
“Gulder: the ultimate in beer,
The finest money can buy,
The symbol of protection,
The greatest of all times”.

Part for having many features, the language of advertisement also has varieties. It can be formal, informal, collegial, vernacular and even pidgin depending on the pact of the advertisement, purpose and audience.

4.2 AMBIGUITIES IN MEANING CREATED BY HYPERBOLE

Ambiguity occurs when something is open to more than one interpretation. Ambiguity is possible in literature, ideas, statements, arts, music, and math. At times,

ambiguity is reliant on context; something can be ambiguous in one situation while unambiguous in another. On the course of this study it was discovered that hyperboles may have ambiguous meaning as we can from the following examples:

“Got your beering right?”

“Live the brighter life in style with star”, an advertisement for star larger beer.

These, as we can see above, are comprised of ordinary everyday words than an average user of language needs dictionary to know what they mean. Notice especially the first advertisement in which “bearing” an instrument for finding the right direction has been given the spelling of “beer-ring”, thus suggesting that if you have not began to drink the type of beer advertised, you get your bearing right. In other hand you have been ‘missing the road, by drinking other brands of beer. The language of advertisement apart from that been neologism or creative use of words as we can see from the foregoing, especially “get your beering right”,

neologism mark the deference between a good copy writer and the opposite or good advertisement and a poor one.

4.3 THE USAGE OF HYPERBOLE RESULTS TO CLAIMS THAT ARE OBVIOUSLY DOUBTFUL

It was discovered that hyperbole is mostly used in advertisement to clear the doubtful minds of the customers by using different features in print adverts. One of them is;

A. Use of Picture

Pictures serve to consolidate the advertiser's request or claim. They are semiotic pictures aimed at exemplifying and therefore, making real the advertisers' claim. The advert stylisticians often draw the mental picture of particular things and compare it with other products in order to win the interest of their consumers. Examples: The picture of man, jump as just drunk "Coca Cola".

2. The picture of relief person while taken "Cafenol"
3. The picture of children celebrating after they took "indomie"

The advertisement above by different companies uses picture in order to compare the symbolic feature of their companies which equivalence in purpose and function.

B. Preponderance of Imperative mood functioning as requisite comparative:

Is the typical mood in advertisements; Myers (1994:47) says it is “the generic sentence types for the adverts. Examples are:

- 1- Keep your money with us, sleep like a baby first bank Plc. Current account statement, personal statement (2015).
- 2- Thank you for banking with us (ATM Banks in Nigeria).
- 3- Peak and pack (peak milk advertisement)
- 4- Stay connect by subscribing now and enjoy the best entertainment on the move (DSTV mobile ad. Punch, June 2011).
- 5- Every where you go- MTN (Vanguard March, 2014)
- 6- Now you are talking) Glo Advert 2015).

C. Heavy Modification of Nouns

Nouns in adverts are usually modified to achieve communicative precision. Example:

A. Union Bank

- Big, strong and reliable (Union bank's advert)

B. Usman Danfodiyo University, Sokoto.

The most peaceful University in Nigeria (UDUS's Slogan).

C. Caution: Counterfeit cartridges, dodgy, fake and unreliable.

All you are doing by not using Hp original cartridges is entering a danger zone. (Advert of Hp cartridges, Punch, January 4th, 2015).

It should be noted that multiplicity of adjectives is used aimed at persuading the target audience through conviction. Besides cluster of adjectives, most adjectives employed in adverts in language expression are either comparative or superlative as the advertisers natural are aware of their competing products.

D. Neologism/Lexical Substitution

The language of advertisement often form or create new words or use the existing ones in strange but in effective way.

- a) Be a “gentleman” (Chelsea, London dry gin advert)
- b) I can “C” u.
- c) “Classical Barbing Saloon.

The “genesis’ of my “genesis”

From the above examples, the words are modified and restructured to form a new shape. This distinctive way deviate from the normal convention but it has a shouting effect to draw the attention of the customers.

E. Brevity Through Ellipsis

Most of advertisements are laconic: some are phrasal and even disjunctive. The reasons for this can be the cost of advert placement especially in the daily and consideration of the limited time of the target consumers. The following adverts are exemplify by advertisers.

- a) Men’s shoe festival
... give wings 2 your personality.

(Italian shoes advertisement, punch, June 2nd 2011).

b) First Bank

... truly the first

(First bank Nigeria Plc).

c) The genesis of Nigeria's democracy

... the right spirit, the right feeling

From the above examples, it is clear that, even the busiest potential customers would read the advertisement unconsciously.

F. Parallelism

Is a form of tautologies (repetition) that do not lead to boredom but ensures communicative efficacy. Parallelism is a fundamental device of repetition often used by different advertisers to create stylistic effect on their target readers.

Examples:

1. Thank you, thank you
2. Very very reliable
3. Red readers test.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND FINDING

5.0 SUMMARY

The study of the use of figurative expression in language of advertisement is an interesting one. The study begins in its introductory part by defining figurative expressions and also the definition of hyperbole which is the sole component of the study. The aim of the study was to bring out the areas where language is used by the advertisers to make claims that are obviously doubtful and to bring out also the ambiguities in meaning and usage and make use hyperbole or exaggeration by advertisers in order to make people buy their product. The primary use in conducting this research work includes textbooks, journals and encyclopedia. The literature review brings out clearly the different defecations of hyperbole and advertisement by different scholars. The data was presented and analysis was made to show how advertisers use language to exaggerate, deceive and capture the people's interest to buy their product.

The research cuts across the use of hyperbole in advertisement by bringing out or exposing how advertisers use language exaggerate and make people to buy things (their products) i.e. to win customers.

5.1 FINDINGS

The topic language use in advertisement: a case study of the use of hyperbole to the knowledge of the research has not received patronage from writers in the past. This formed the basic problems encountered during the course of this work. This made it difficult to get very particular literature for review. It was observed that even though language of advertisement is evident in our everyday life, people hardly notice some embedded ones. It cannot be rolled out that every other sentence is not meant to make less severe of search on thing or the offer.

The use of hyperbole in the language of advertisement use noticed here is an extensive work but that involves statements to achieve effect. It is very risky and in dismissing it, case must be taken, that is, there must be an

analytical framework such that one does not end up discussing different essays. During the advertisement, the advertisers were been sponsored by the producers to create awareness and knowledge about the product.

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