

**Communication and Language: A stylistic study Advertisement as
imperative skills for mass communication students**

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Abstract

Communication and language are intricately intertwined and, thus, represent the two face of a coin. Language is a symbolic system that is being used to communicate shared meaning between a sender and a receiver of a message in a context. Communication cannot exist without language, *even though language purpose is communication, not on its own*; this makes language proficiency a prerequisite for communication competence. Therefore, language is not a mere tool of communication but an influential device to communicate and persuade the receiving audience. Persuasion occurs only when language is well apprehended and some of its axes are played on. In this article, we argue for the importance of language proficiency for mass communication students whose jobs rely wholly on writing using language to get their work done effectively. Coming from communicative competence background, we exhibit the imperativeness of language to communication through method of stylistic analysis of some selected newspaper advertisements using rhetoric and linguistic devices to demonstrate language influence on communication; also the language devices used are identified. Finally, we discussed some competence areas that formed our proposed theoretical framework as variables to investigate communicative competence in journalism and mass communication.

Keywords: advertisement, communicative competence, journalism and mass communication, language proficiency, persuasion.

Introduction

Mass communication study has become a point of attraction to many students in Nigeria and around the world and a lucrative business to tertiary institutions. Despite the large number of mass communication graduates – in Nigeria – resulting from the high rate of admission, many of them find comfort zone working outside their specialisation upon graduation. This has become a source of worries mostly to mass communication scholars in Nigeria and, thus, question this phenomenon.

Our teaching experiences, supervisions, and growing research literature on student's writing efficiency show that many graduates of mass communication do not have the requisite of quality writing and thus are engulfed in the phobia of writing because of their poor command of language. This phobia of writing has made many mass communication graduates to seek employment where little or no writing will do; and those that could summon courage or had no alternative pursue their career in journalism to exhibit vagueness in their use of language. For example, our yearly visit to Industrial Training (IT)

students in media industry or affiliates, managers who are of English background argued that mass communication students do not write well even with master degree. Also, another colleague of as English major revealed how in his undergraduate group assignment used to review newspapers content for grammatical blunders. That many writers who work in the media are either from English language background or from different discipline with a certificate in English language or a writing class is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but across the globe.

Writing as an art of communication requires competence in some essential writing skills (Ukwuegbu, Okoro, Idris, Okebukola, Owokade, & Peter Okebukola, 2008). The art of good writing which is the core area of mass communication for students involves, among others, appropriateness of language use and mechanical accuracy. Good grasp of what makes an eloquent writing is imperative to mass communication. From this vantage point, many schools or faculties especially in the US have initiated a proficiency test in good writing as a prerequisite for admission into mass communication and Journalism major because of students' inability to write competently (Brocato, Furr, Henderson, & Horton, 2005).

However, this gap has not been properly addressed in Nigeria. For student's capability building on writing skills, we argue that language competence is critical to student's academic and career success. How language variables influence communication is of the greatest importance for mass communicators who are the purveyor of information. Studies have shown the importance and effect of language proficiency on communication competence (Adeyemi & Mohammed, 2016; Carroll, 2008). Mass communication students, therefore, are intrinsically in need of the language tool. To fill the lacuna of good writing skills of mass communication students, we argue for the accommodation of language proficiency course in the curriculum from linguistics repository. Our aim, therefore, is double-barrelled: first, we will stylistically analyse some selected advertisement messages on the levels of graphology, phonology, lexical semantics, and cohesion to prove how language competence and word play are employed in the art of writing to enhance communication competence; second, we will propose a theoretical framework for investigating communication competence variables in journalism and mass communication.

The Conceptual Framework

Considering journalism and mass communication core functions which is disseminating of news, information, and persuasive communication through elegant writing skills, we situate this discourse within Communicative Competence (CC) as conceptualised by Hymes (1972). By communicative competence, we mean grammatical and communicative skills. Grammatical skills constitute the knowledge of phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical forms and the ways these are

structured to form Universal Grammar (UG) according to Chomsky (1965) language competence of which a speaker/listener has tacit knowledge of language structure. And language structure implies that there are universally agreed rules on grammatical structure and writing style to be used in any given communication context. Therefore, Universal Grammar is the general rules of language grammatical structure that are common to all natural languages (Kurcz, 2004). Communicative skills refer to journalism and mass communication constitutive courses that form the basis of professionalism such as: news reportage, information dissemination writing style, and persuasive communication. By competence in this context, we mean the underlying knowledge in journalism and mass communication sphere that is associated exclusively with the knowledge of communication functions and the rules of grammar combined together here form the concept of communicative competence.

Though controversies trail Chomsky communicative competence which she equalled to grammatical competence, but Hymes proposed communicative competence that includes language user's knowledge of rules of language use in context (Canale & Swaine, 1980). We do not support in totality the notion of Chomsky that communicative competence is mainly on grammatical competence. Instead, we are in-between that is proponents of Chomsky, and Hymes (1972) notion of communicative competence components of: 1- the knowledge of language use, 2- socio-cultural code, 3- discourse competence, and 4- strategic competence.

So, from the communicative competence realm and the gap of mass communication student's inability to write well, we see an imperative call for a *situational approach* to teaching quality writing that focuses on the relationships and interactions between regularities in mass communication competence and regularities in grammatical competence to solidify the writing quality of the students.

Our proposition that language and communication competence should go in partial parallel is, therefore, borne out of scholars' general consensus that communication is the essential purpose of language (Canale & Swain, 1980). This implies that language is of fundamental importance to communication but what is obtainable in journalism and mass communication in Nigeria across the board is the basic constitutive components of mass communication; in other words *communicative tasks* of (journalistic writing style and format in a subjective or objective way and the associated rules) without emphasising on the grammaticalness and appropriateness of the language aspects.

The Imperative of Writing Skills for Mass Communication

Scholars would agree with us that in Nigeria context, fundamental learning of English grammar for contemporary graduates –except English or Linguistic majors– stops at the secondary levels. This has made the students to lose the sense of proper use of English grammar thinking that pre-university

rudiments knowledge of language use is sufficed without brushing up on English grammar. This fact reflects the general consensus among scholars that many mass communication students do not have the requisite skills for quality writing for their career upon graduation (Haberstroh, 1995; Hines & Basso, 2009; John, Ruminski, & Hanks, 1991; Ward & Seifert, 1990). Though, Ondrusek (2012) observed that the concept of bad writing skills is not limited to one discipline of study but to all graduate students. Unfortunately, many communication departments devote little or no effort to accommodate English courses to polish up students' basic rules of grammar (Hines & Basso, 2009); so, writing has been difficult for many students that they now face language with anxiety and "...are unsure about various mechanical and grammatical rules"(Rose & McLafferty, 2001, p.28). This imprecision in English proficiency is responsible for bad writing skills and high unemployment of graduates in Malaysia; students with strong writing ability do well in career success with financial reward increase (Sarudin, Noor, Zubairi, Ahmad, & Nordin, 2013). On this, scholars and lecturers have expressed their exasperation about the declining of the students' quality of writing skills (John, Ruminski, & Hank, 1991; Rose & McLafferty, 2001); thus, they have declared the importance of good command of grammar rules as a core course in mass communication (John, Ruminski, & Hanks, 1991). While some scholars have called for instituting standardise language skills entrance examination as a prerequisite for mass communication students (Brocato, Furr, Henderson, & Horton, 2005; John, Ruminski, & Hanks, 1991), others go for collaborative strategy between disciplines.

For example, Gaspar and Wetzel, (2009) assert that George Washington University, in 2003, created University Writing Program designed to train students, fresher and stayers, on quality writing and research skills to foster their future careers. Moreover, studies have shown that employers considered the ability to communicate effectively more important than job-specific technical knowledge (Titsworth & Okamoto, 2017); thus, some university libraries and writing centres have developed collaborative partnerships to build students writing skills (Foutch, 2010).

A Relational Concept of Communication Competence and Language

Communication refers to the process of transferring of verbal and nonverbal messages from one person to another to create and share meaning. On its own, communication has two perspectives: *information exchange perspective* and *meaning-based or constitutive perspective* (Frey, Botan and Kreps, 2001). From these views, we see communication as a meaning-based, creative process, and a tool for information exchange (Frey, Botan and Kreps, 2001); thus, the creative process of it is the competence of language use appropriate to the given context situation-communication. So, communication competence means "... the effectiveness with which communicators draw upon and

deploy communication behaviours to accomplish tasks and relational outcomes in a wide range of personal and professional setting” (Titsworth & Okamoto, 2017, p1).

Communication competence emerge as a construct and scholars’ area of research in 1960, though focused initially on children ability to communicate with others using language; but later future career success became the focal point of research (Titsworth & Okamoto, 2017). Communicative competence is an important construct for researchers who attempt to define and study principles of effective communication; and is also related to other constructs: relational competence, communication apprehension, argumentativeness, emotional intelligence, and linguistic competence (Titsworth & Okamoto, 2017).

So, critical to communication competence of a writer is to engage in search of internal representation of information and take cognisance of the symbiotic relationship between communication and language. These form the ability of a writer to think and plan on how to mentally represent the information through the use of units of thought: *images*, *concepts*, and *language* (Coon & Mitterer, 2011).

Images are mental representations of *concepts* that represent narrative of related objects or events through the use of words or symbols with the governing rules in form of language. Many students or graduates of mass communication have the mental imagery of how news is written or reportage is compiled in the conceptual frame of journalism and its language. This knowledge gives them the denotative idea or way of journalism. However, they lack the connotative idea (how we think about presentation of important issues) of journalism which is the *conceptual rules* or skilful use of language in a narrative form.

To clarify the concept of *connotative idea* or way of mass communication, we go linguistically. Logically, connotative meaning resides in linguistics’ realm and is measured with a method referred to as semantic differential scale; and semantics deals with the study of meaning and language. Here lies the link between thinking as an art of writing that dwells heavily on intelligence and language use. Writing and thinking, therefore, are synergistic processes because as we teach the students how to write well, we are also teaching them how to think (Schmidt, 1999).

Moreover, psychologists have observed that intelligence can no longer be defined as a g-factor (general ability) or be determined by it (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2006). Though controversial but experiments have shown that people can be smart in many ways other than the present IQ tests that partially measure real-world intelligence such as: linguistic, logical-mathematical, and spatial abilities (Coon & Mitterer, 2011). Since the fundamental goal of IQ is to better predict “real world” success and not just success likelihood in school (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2006), IQ tests should be broadened. On this premise, Gardner (in Coon & Mitterer, 2011) lists and theorizes eight kinds of

intelligence- with their applicable pursuits- which are different mental languages that people use for thinking. One of the intelligence mentioned is *language* (linguistic abilities) with users such as: writer, lawyer, and comedian (see, Coon & Mitterer, 2011). The implication is that communication and language relational concept would form a perfect much-needed multiple intelligences for mass communication students as well as build their writing capability that leads, in turns, to career success.

Identifying Communicative Competence with Communication Accommodation Theory

On the empirical plane, communicative competence resonates with Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) which explains, in a context, reasons communicators adjust their communicative behaviours to facilitate their identity (Pitts & Harwood, 2015). Communication competence is defined as the language competence use appropriate to the given social context and situation (Hymes, 1972). The theory predicts basically that the greater the amount of effort in accommodation (language choice) that a speaker was perceived to expend on the dissemination of messages, the more favourably the listeners would perceived the sender.

Accommodation theory is a sociopsychological theory of the effect of similarity on attraction that the more similar a speaker is to the receiver, the chances that the receiver to like the sender increases (Koslow, Shamsadani, & Touchstone, 1994). This attraction which is the intent of communicators can be achieved through adaption of message using linguistic devices.

Sociolinguistics scholars have adapted the basic principles of speech accommodation theory, an offshoot of accommodation theory, to examine communication behavior in mass communication (Koslow et al.1994, p576). Similarly, Hymes (1967) elucidated components that are critical to and govern rules of language use and to analysis of social meaning of speech events. Some of the components mentioned by Hymes are similar to the rudiments of elements of communication [*in bracket*] which are: participants (sender and receiver), setting (context), type of message (information, entertainment, education, or persuasive), purpose (objective), channels (medium: radio, television, or newspaper), code (symbol, sign, and language). These are the "...activities that are governed directly by rules of language use" (Canale & Swain, 1980, p.17). If these components form the crucial part of rules of language use and we agree that the purpose of language is communication, the question now is that adopting these components as fundamental to our teaching principle to nurture students for communication competence, have we altered our syllabus in mass communication? By accommodating language aspect into mass communication domain, we just strike a balance between communication and language. This can *only* be achieved by adapting the communicative competence variables as we will propose later here.

Research Methodology

This is purely a qualitative research that analyses advert language text through discourse analysis and text analysis methods. Discourse analysis does not deal with language alone but also examines the communication context (Cook, 2003). Though discourse analysis, as understood to many scholars, is to examine the structure of spoken language (Inegbe, 2020). In this sense, it neglects its application to conversation that can take the form of spoken or written language. Discourse analysis in the context of this paper deals with text and context together (Cook, 2003; Yule, 2007).

The universe of the study is national dailies in Nigeria, while three newspapers: The Punch, The Guardian, and The Nation were selected as the sample based on national circulation. The month of December was focused as it is the peak month for festivities and adverts tend to be intense in most of the national dailies. All adverts in the three selected newspapers, regardless of the advertiser, were analysed. Therefore, the stylistics analysis of advert language is studied through: graphology, phonology, lexical, semantics, and cohesion.

Rationale for the preference for newspaper as the medium of advertisement

The medium used strongly influences the language content of an advertisement. Mediums of advertisement differ from product to product as well as the execution strategy. One of the variables that affect medium selection is the advertiser's budget and this invariably affects the language content. For example, radio appeals to the hearing sense of the audience relying on aural-oral mechanisms to create the intended picture in the audience's mind. Television appeals to both sight and ear of the audience relying heavily on aural-oral-visual mechanisms through the use of psychological devices that make television more economical with words such as: colour, music, and graphic effects to attract attention of the viewers and induce them to action. Newspaper appeals to sight only and it is the most versatile among the media due to the lexical items of its content such as: punctuation marks, signs and symbols that make the whole text conversational and convincing explanation on effectiveness of communication through variety of language use. Since stylistics aims at bringing out exceptional qualities in the use of language, the print medium is the most appropriate to showcase this.

Linguistic Description

Linguistics is described by Dong (2006) as the exploration and classification of linguistic features of a given text that are reflected by style markers as linguistic elements that only appear in a specific text which represents a particular work genre. In this sense, the goal of stylistic analysis is not only in describing the *formal features of text* but in actually showing the functional significance of those features for the interpretation of the text in relating to linguistics effects of the writing piece (Wales, 2001).

Stylistics from the language use view is defined by Crystal (1992) as the study of any distinctive use of language and of the choices made by people in their use of language. This shows that stylistics does

not only aim at bringing out the linguistic feature in a given text, but also showing the effect, the meaning and the interpretation that indicates reason the writer has employed that linguistic qualities. Saussure (1960) says it all that linguistic sign unites a sound-image and a concept.

The Concept of Advertising

Advertising is an art form of mass communication, and a very powerful marketing tool which advertisers use to influence the attitude and behaviour of the target audience to buy a particular product or patronise a particular service. Advertising responsibility from this view is to communicate, educate, convince and influence the target consumers to buying behaviour. For advertisement to perform these functions, creativity comes to the fore.

Creativity in Advertising

Advertising's responsibility to inform, educate and influence is greatly enhanced by creativity. Good creative work makes advertising more vivid. Creativity in advertising thus involves ideation and formation of new concept that provides a basis for the selection and arrangement of the advert materials. Thus, creativity is regarded as the lifeblood of advertising and essence of an effective advertising. So, the greater the degree of creativity in advertising, the greater its effect is on the target audience.

In advertising, copywriters endeavour to employ any strategy that would enhance the memorability of the advert. Since consumers are becoming "more sophisticated, fastidious and not easy to convince" (Duboviciene & Skorupa, 2014), advertisement must be attention capturing and memorable to the target consumers. To achieve creativity in advertising, students are taught to defy formal grammar's rules, besides other techniques to gain consumers' attention and purchase behaviour.

Language arsenal is a tool use by copywriters to achieve the advertisement aim of purchase. A copywriter plays on words and uses language to emphasise the uniqueness of the brand being advertised. For example, to make the brand rise above being a product, adjectives are used to build up and add value to the brand, convey mood and emotion; to give the impression of movement and action, verbs are used in the bodycopy; to emphasise and foreground the uniqueness of the brand, copywriters use definite article 'the' instead of indefinite 'a', and also use phrases for the same purpose (Brierley, 2002).

Moreover, other creative strategy copywriters use include visual metaphors and metaphoric expression to work together to form a powerful combination of persuasive message because they know that metaphors make advertisement more forceful and leave a long lasting impression that reverberates on the target consumers. All these strategies are left out in mass communication syllabus.

The Language play in Advertising

Language is a vital tool of marketing communication and a powerful tool of influence on consumer's attitude and behaviour especially in the field of advertising. Since advertising is one of the communication mix a marketer uses to communicate with the potential customers on the benefit and feature of the advertised product with the aim of persuading the consumers to buy the product; the choice of language to convey these messages or ideas is therefore of utmost importance to the copywriter. Copywriters understand that they are constrained by time, money, and fear of losing the attention of the readers, thus, they employ linguistic items that will effectively and succinctly pass the message to the target consumers within the shortest possible time (Akinbode, 2012).

Language is playful in advertising, and is employed to help the brand stand out, disarm, or distract the prospective consumers and aid memory. Therefore, it conforms to its unique writing style that "is a little bit less formal" (Li, 2009) which neglects the conventional rules of grammar and writing (Akinbode, 2012) by using short sentences. Scholars relate advertising language to poetic language in which rule breaking is allowed to be used by authors to create a specific effect. Therefore, the language of advertising can be referred to as a special language of mutilation that helps to grab attention and make a reader remember the advertised brand (Akinbode, 2012; Cook 2006; Leech, 1966; Myers 1997).

In the *Advertising Handbook*, (Brierley, 2002) explicated the strategies of language playful, which is deviation from formal rules of grammar and language, such as: misspelling or mispronouncing of words, inventing new words, making an adjective out of a verb or noun using the y-suffix, as language playful of attention grabbing techniques.

To make a powerful effect and aid memorability, copywriter's employ rhetoric technique of repetition of certain words or sentences through alliteration which is repeating the same sound of the first or last letter or syllables in words or assonance. Simile is another way of using language playful to highlight sameness. So, language is one of the factors responsible for communication and advertisement effectiveness. This implies that advert language distinguishes itself from common language using various kinds of devices by its own features in morphology, syntax and rhetorical devices.

Stylistics Analysis Levels

The stylistics elements employed in the analysis are: Graphology, phonology, lexis, syntax and lexical semantics.

1. Graphology

Crystal and Davy (1989) see graphology as the study of a language writing system that has been devised to communicate language in written form in different kinds of writing. Leech (1969) believes graphology is concerned with the whole elements in writing system.

Thus, graphology features or layout norms to adopt during writing entail indentation, capitalisation, gothic and bold typing, the foregrounding of quotation marks, ellipses periods, hyphens, contracted forms, the full stop, the colon, the comma, the semi colon, lower case letters and special structures.

2. Phonology

Phonology, an offshoot of linguistics and part of phonetics, deals with sound patterns of language is the study of sound patterns in a language (Hawkin, 1984). So, a phonology stylistics analysis entails the use of alliteration, assonance, consonance and phoesthesia (Udofia, 2011).

3. Syntax

The word 'syntax' originally is a Greek word which literally meaning is 'placing together' or 'a setting out together' or 'arrangement' (Lyons, 1990; Yule, 2007). Words are the primary units in syntactic analysis and, thus, it concentrates on the structure and ordering of components within a sentence. In other words, syntax is concerned with the arrangement of words and the rules governing how they are joined together to form different sentence constituents.

4. Lexical Semantics

Semantics is the study of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. In everyday talk, we frequently give the meanings of words in terms of their relationships. In doing so, we are characterising the meaning of a word not in terms of its component features, but in terms of its relationship to other words and this procedure is referred to as lexical relations. Thus, lexical relations that are usually analysed are lexical semantics elements which are: synonyms, antonym, hyponymy, prototype, homophony, homonymy, polysemy, metonymy and collocation etc.

5. Reference

Reference is the act by which speaker show the existing relationship between words and things. Thus, reference can refer to things outside the text, this is known as exophoric, and can refer to things within the text, this is known as homophoric. Further division of reference is referring backward which is anaphoric, while referring forward is cataphoric.

6. Cohesion

Cohesion is the organisation or creation of ties between sentences by lexical and grammatical means through the use of reference, ellipsis and conjunction.

7. Foregrounding

Foregrounding is a creative way of using language such that the foregrounded items attract more attention than any other items in the text or message (Lawal, 1997). Foregrounding can be achieved in two ways: deviation and repetition foregrounding. Deviation refers to a deliberate alteration of spelling a word to suit a new situation; while repetition refers to repeating a word deliberately in the same construction for emphasis and memorability reasons.

Data Analysis of the Language Used in the Selected Advertisements

- Datum 1: COUNT CASH. NO NETWORK FAILURE, NO DELAY¹ Zenith bank
- Datum 2: YOU_{letide}² First Bank
- Datum 3: no box can contain the joy this season brings³ FCMB
- Datum 4: let's draw a message of joy, hope and sharing this season⁴ MTN
- Datum 5: THE THREE WISE –CHOICE THIS SEASON⁵ VALETE fruit drink
- Datum 6: life is a celebration. Enjoy it everyday⁵ VALETE fruit drink
- Datum 7: enjoy simpler internet banking, enjoy enhanced look...⁶ Stanbic IBTC
- Datum 8: BIG IDEA? SLEEP ON IT.⁷ VIRGIN Atlantic
- Datum 9: Give your grand plan the overnight test⁷ VIRGIN Atlantic
- Datum 10: get a good night's sleep in your fully flat bed⁷ VIRGIN Atlantic
- Datum 11: Food is SME. Food is First⁸ First bank
- Datum 12: Going Strong 10 years long⁹ LG
- Datum 13: Soul Sharing Sound with Dual subwoofer⁹ LG
- Datum 14: NEW LOOK... SIMPLER, SMARTER BANKING¹⁰ Union Bank
- Datum 15: Cash is King. Scan and Pay | quick Pay via SMS| Pay withNFC-¹¹ Paywithcapture
- Datum 16: Be Illimitable¹¹ Paywithcapture
- Datum 17: Our newest Branch in your pocket¹² First Bank
- Datum 18: Here for You. Here for life¹³ MTN
- Datum 19: conduct transactions on your mobile phone- whenever, wherever¹⁴ Wema Bank

1. Graphology Elements

Graphology analysis deals with the physical characteristics and patterns of writing. Areas of graphology are: type of print, shape of the text, capitalization, punctuation marks, etc. Some elements of graphology are meant to foreground particular items of the text; while others are used for stylistic reasons.

Graphology devices were employed in some of the selected adverts messages to foreground certain points to the readers and potential customers. For example, capitalization is noted in samples: 1,2,5,8, and 14 in writing the slogan, and is also noted in samples: 3 to 10, and 12, 13 and 18 in writing the

brand's names. The capitalization was used to emphasise and to make prominent the message and brand name.

1.2 Capitalisation

Example:

Datum 1: COUNT CASH. NO NETWORK FAILURE, NO DELAY- Zenith bank

Datum 2: YOU_{letide}² First Bank

Datum 5: THE THREE WISE –CHOICE THIS SEASON- VALETE fruit drink

Datum 8: BIG IDEA? SLEEP ON IT- VIRGIN Atlantic

Datum 14: NEW LOOK... SIMPLER, SMARTER BANKING- Union bank

1.3 Gothic Writing

Gothic writing is a prominent device of graphology used in the bank adverts.

Examples are;

Datum 2: YOU_{letide}

Datum 5: THE THREE WISE –CHOICE THIS SEASON

1.4 Question Mark (?)

Example: Datum 8: BIG IDEA?

1.5 Orthographic Modification

This refers to a way of writing that departs from the usual way of spelling a word. A copywriter creatively spells a word in the bank advert in a manner that deviates from the word usual spelling. This is deliberately done to attract attention and to produce a psychological effect on the prospective customers.

Example: Datum 2: YOU_{letide}

2. Phonology

In bank adverts, elements of phonology are usually employed by the copywriter in order to have a kind of rhyming pattern which makes an advert pleasing to the ears of its customers. Phonology devices used in the selected advert: Alliteration-Assonance, Consonance, Phonaesthesia

2.1 Alliteration

This is achieved by repeating same consonant at the beginning of the words used.

Examples of alliteration are in data 1,3,5,9,10,11,13, and 14 of the samples

Datum 1: Count Cash

Datum 3: /C/ can contain

Datum 5: /T/ THE THREE

Data 9-10: /G/ Give your Grand plan; Get a Good

Datum 11: /F/ Food is First

Data 13 & 14: /S/ Soul Sharing Sound; Simpler Smarter

The use of alliteration in these bank adverts gives tone and musical colour. It also aids memorability and makes the adverts pleasing to the ears of the customers.

2.2 Assonance

It is a half rhyme which is realized by repeating the same (stressed) vowel but with different final consonants in a sequence of nearby words.

Examples are;

Datum 3: /C/ can contain

Datum 5: /T/ THE THREE

Datum 9: /G/ Give your Grand plan

Datum 13: /S/ Soul Sharing Sound

2.3 Consonance

This is opposite to alliteration in the sense that the final consonants of words are repeated but with different preceding vowels; it is known as half rhyme.

Examples are;

Datum 3: /n/ no box can contain the joy this season brings

Datum 10: /t/ get a good night's sleep in your fully flatl bed

In these adverts, the purpose is to help foreground sounds to the readers and also to awaken their emotions.

2.4 Phonaesthesia

Datum 1: COUNT CASH.

3. Lexical Semantic Elements

Also noted in sample 2 is the deviation pattern in writing. The 'Yu' in Yuletide is written as YOU to achieve two things is stylistic analysis. First, the 'Yu' is written as YOU (in the sense of second person single) as a deviation pattern; two, the deviation pattern is written in upper case-capital letter- to foreground the personal pronoun; both are used to achieve stylistic effects. These two styles were used creatively to create stylistic effects and to change the mental disposition of the target audience of how important 'you' as the reader and customer is to the banker, therefore, have the impression that the banks will give you, when patronized, personal attention that concerns your individuality.

3.1 Anaphora

Datum 1: NO NETWORK FAILURE, NO DELAY

Datum 7: enjoy simpler internet banking, enjoy enhanced look

Datum 11: Food is SME. Food is First

Datum 15: Cash is King. Scan and Pay | quick Pay via SMS| Pay withNFC

Datum 18: Here for You. Here for life

3.2 Epiphora. EG Datum 19: conduct transactions on your mobile phone- whenever, wherever that occur at the syntactic level to help create mental image of the things being advertised to foreground certain facts.

Some examples are;

3.3 Metaphor

Metaphor is described by starting or implying another thing with which its action, quality or state can be compared without using 'like' or 'as'. It gives direct comparison. Metaphor and its sisters are used as figure of speech in advert to create the brand's cognitive image, to stress the brand's uniqueness, and to emphasise the brand's selling point.

Examples:

Datum 12 - Cash is King- Pay with capture

Datum 6: life is a celebration.

Cash here is compared to king and life is compared to celebration without using the comparison preposition such as: 'like' or 'as'.

4. Cohesion

Cohesion is the organization or creation of ties between sentences by lexical and grammatical means through the use of references, ellipsis, conjunction and lexical cohesion.

Examples of cohesion in our data are:

4.1 Reference EG. Datum 18: Here for You. Here for life

4.2 Substitution EG.

Datum 6: life is a celebration. Enjoy it everyday. 'it' here substitute Valette fruit drink

Datum 8: BIG IDEA? SLEEP ON IT.⁷ VIRGIN Atlantic 'it' here substitute Virgin Atlantic flight

4.3 Conjunction

Example: Datum 15: Cash is King. Scan and Pay | quick Pay via SMS| Pay with NFC-

4.4 Ellipsis

An example can be seen in Datum 4: let's draw a message of joy, hope and sharing this season

4.5 Verbs

A verb is a word or a group of words indicating that an action is executed. Verbs are used to put life in the message of the advertised brand and to catch the readers' attention.

Examples are:

Datum 1: COUNT CASH.

Datum 4: let's draw a message of joy

Datum 7: enjoy simpler internet banking, enjoy enhanced look

Datum 9: Give your grand plan the overnight test

Datum 10: get a good night's sleep

Datum 19: conduct transactions on your mobile phone- whenever, wherever

4.6 Adjectives.

Examples are:

Datum 7: enjoy simpler internet banking

Datum 12: Going Strong 10 years long

Datum 14: NEW LOOK... SIMPLER, SMARTER BANKING

Datum 16: Be Illimitable

In these adverts, the use of adjectives gives precise and accurate description about the products and/or services.

4.6 Deviation

Example: Datum 2: YOU_{letide}

Datum 16: Be Illimitable

4.7 Repetition

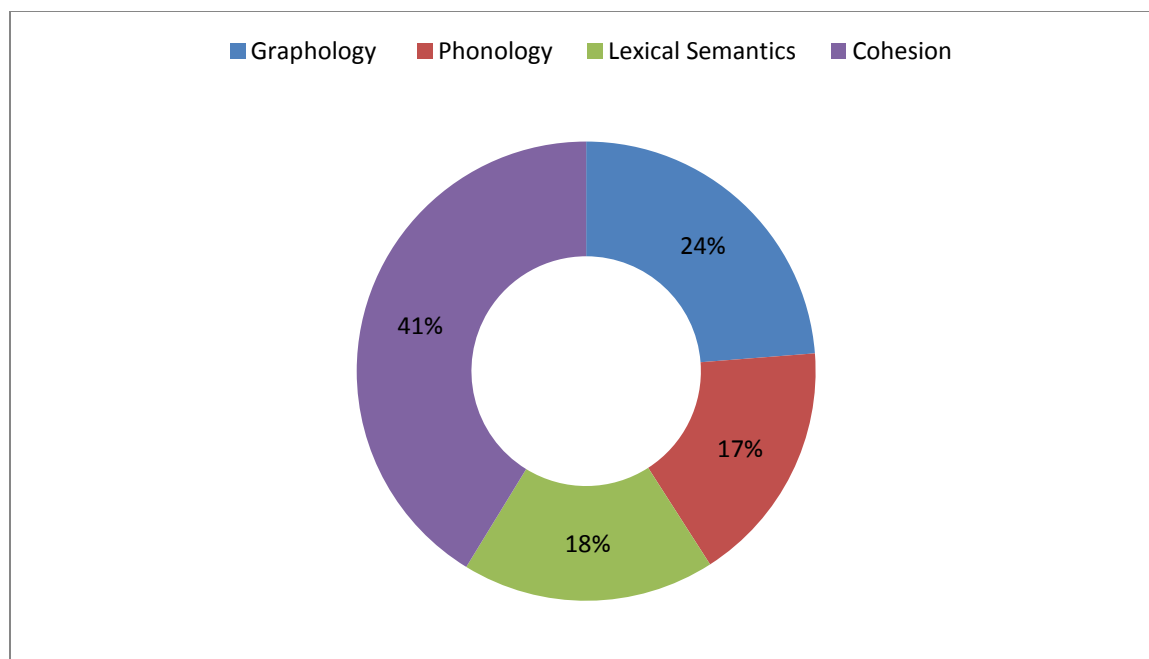
Example:

Datum 1: COUNT CASH. NO NETWORK FAILURE, NO DELAY

Datum 18: Here for You. Here for life

To understand the proportion of the stylistics elements has used in our analysis, figure 1 below shows the proportion percentage of the four levels of our analysis: graphology, phonology, lexical semantics, and cohesion.

Figure1. Distribution of stylistics devices used in the selected adverts.



Proposed theoretical framework for communicative competence and its Implications for mass communication pedagogy

We propose here a theoretical framework for investigating communicative competence theory in mass communication. Therefore, we suggest that the following competences: 1. Grammatical competence (Language proficiency), 2. Sociolinguistic competence, 3. Critical thinking & problem solving skills, and 4. Analytical competence; are variables that can be investigated in mass communication competence.

The theoretical framework we propose is intended to prepare and enhance mass communication student's writing capability in the context of constitutive components of the profession. The communicative competence framework we envisage for mass communication is an integrative one in which a balance is struck that comprises of four distinctive competences between language and communication. The competences are: *grammatical competence (Language proficiency)*, *sociolinguistic competence*, *critical thinking and problem solving skills*, and *analytical competence*.

Grammatical competence or Language proficiency: This competence deals with the knowledge of lexical items, rules of morphology, syntax, and sentence-grammar semantics as well as mechanics such as parts of speech, punctuation, sentence structure and formation, writing style, organization, and word usage. This grammatical competence will, no doubt, teach the students how to use words and

terms in the sense of literal and figurative meaning to express their thoughts and ideas and thus filling the lacuna of writing capability.

Sociolinguistic competence: This competence comprises of two rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse which are of utmost importance to communicators in interpreting discourse and negotiating social meaning that changes across different cultural and discourse contexts (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Sociocultural rules of use tackle how discourses are produced and understood *appropriately* with respect to the components of communication. How suitable certain propositions and communicative functions are in a given sociocultural context based on contextual factors such as the topic of discourse, the role of the communicator, the setting, as well as the norms of interaction form the main focus of these rules. While other focus of these rules is on how a particular grammatical form is used to convey appropriate attitude and style of communicative function in a given sociocultural context (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Rules of discourse here focus on the combination of narrative discourse and communication functions in contextual mass communication. Also, rules of discourse will make reference to articles and features writing and writing of diverse commentary in the real sense of journalism to form the basis of communication competence.

Critical thinking and problem solving skills: This competence deals with active questioning nature of self-reflective method for students. It also deals with the writing ability of the students since writing is thinking and thinking is geared towards finding solutions to problems. Studies have shown that most graduates lack the quality of critical thinking on the basis of logical reasoning and problem solving skills which most employers are looking for in prospective staff (Rodzalan & Mohamed Saat, 2015). This shows a gap in academic excellence that must be addressed by making critical thinking a must learn skill for the students' effectiveness not only in their academic success but also in dealing with their social life and practical problems in workplace. This is important especially for social science courses where nature is always dynamically not stable; unlike science and engineering courses that are always straightforward formula. For the students to be able to solve different problems, they must be taught how to think critically, and, in turn, communicate their idea in oral or written effectively (Schmidt, 1999).

However, having the practical knowledge in a subject matter discipline is not enough to make effective decisions to solve complex problems students may encounter in their social or work life; they need to question and evaluate things. Therefore, the present passive lecture mode and rote memorization cannot nurture critical thinking; rather it "...must be developed, practiced, and

continually integrated into the curriculum...” (p.91) to enable students to deal with practical problems and engage in active learning (Snyder & Snyder, 2008)

Analytical competence deals with the ability of student to self-management in the learning processes. This competence is considered as a type of meta-subject competencies that “... includes a set of educational competencies related to cognitive, logical, exploratory, research, [and] creative processes of students...” (Trostinskaya, Pozdeeva, Evseeva & Tanova, 2018, p.1441). This set of educational competencies reflects reasoning and other mental processes.

Analytical competence is also viewed as a set of students’ special mental processes to identify, evaluate, and generalize the acquired knowledge and translate it into a new qualitative state (Trostinskaya, Pozdeeva, Evseeva & Tanova, 2018) that can be used to assess and solve complex problems. This competence also forms part of lecturers’ expertise to properly perceive and analyse their teaching mode from professionalism repose to identify significant teaching situations for possibilities of their method improvements and students’ academic effectiveness (Frommelt, Hugener, & Krammer, 2019; Plöger, Krepf, Scholl, & Seifert, 2020). This competence is essential not only for the students to evaluate their academic satisfaction but also for the lecturers to monitor their teaching effectiveness towards achieving academic excellence.

Finally, within these four components of the proposed theoretical framework for communication competence in mass communication discipline, we believe each of the components has addressed and filled the missing gap of lack of English proficiency, lack of critical thinking, lack of narrative discourse production and proper understanding of discourse, and accurate analytical skills.

Conclusion

From our discourse and advertisement analysis so far, we have shown, through the analysis of some advertisement in newspapers, the effect of language variables of writing skills on communication, and we have also succeeded in suggesting areas of competences that form the theoretical background vital to investigating communication competence of our students in mass communication.

The analysis of advert messages shows how linguistic devices (graphology, phonology, lexical semantics, and cohesion) and the use of grammatical expression enhance the elegance of good writing. This analysis demonstrates how language operates as a mirror that reflects the world is connected to our thoughts in the way we use language. This is especially true to all writing genres let alone advertisement in which word play and good choice of language use is fundamental to persuade the target audience and influence their behaviour.

Understanding language use is imperative as an essential tool to mass communication student's competence. This is evident in some of the analysed advertisements where stylistics devices are used profoundly. Applying stylistics devices in a specific writing context indicates that the author knows and understands linguistic devices as stylistics method to show the elegance of English and exhibit evidence of language proficiency.

Our experience with students across different universities, faculty and departments has shown and proofed that tertiary students stopped learning formal English in their secondary schools, hence poor use of English language. This inform our main proposition in this paper which is a clarion call to all stakeholders in mass communication to facilitate the integration of communicative competence using the proposed theoretical framework as contextualized in this paper to enhance the writing skills of students of mass communication through teaching language skills in a way it would not be overemphasized over the core aspects of mass communication.

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End Notes

- 1: Sunday Punch, December 27, 2015:3
- 2: The Punch December 25, 2015:7
- 3: The Punch December 25, 2015:9
- 4: The Punch December 25, 2015:14
- 5: The Punch December 25, 2015:19
- 6: The Punch December 9, 2015:33
- 7: The Guardian December 1, 2015:26
- 8: The Guardian December 2, 2015:7
- 9: The Guardian December 3, 2015:3
- 10: The Guardian December 8, 2015:28
- 11: The Punch December 2, 2015:2
- 12: The Punch December 29, 2015:9
- 13: The Nation December 1, 2015:15
- 14: The Punch November 1, 2015:13

