



The Use of Northern Nigerian Pidgin English in Advertisement in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the communicative qualities Northern Nigerian Pidgin English as a language. It also seeks to understand the perception of broadcast media audience towards the use of Pidgin English in dissemination of adverts messages as a language of popular communication especially as regards to advertisements. Kano, Kaduna, Borno and Adamawa was used as the case study. The results will be obtained through the use of structured questionnaires. The study reviewed some related literature, which include: the origin of Pidgin English in Northern Nigeria, the pervasiveness and influence of Pidgin English, the origin and evolution advertising, concept and nature of advertising, imperative of using Pidgin English in advertisements, the interface between Pidgin English, advertisements and broadcasting in Northern Nigeria and the theoretical frame work anchored on Anthony Downs' Preponderance Theory.

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INTRODUCTION

Communication is simply the act of transferring information from one place, person or group to another. Every communication involves (at least) one sender, a message and a recipient. Communication is described as an act of interchanging ideas, information or message from one person or place to another, via words or signs which are understood to both the parties. Communication is vital for the organisation because it is a principle means by which organizational members work with each other. It flows in various directions, such as upward, downward, horizontal or diagonal. However, language can be simply put as what members of a particular society or culture utilize in order to communicate or make mutual interaction possible. According to Akindele and Adegbite (1999), language is a human phenomenon that has form which can be described in terms of units of sound (phonemes), word, morphemes, phrases, sentences and paragraphs or discourse. This definition shows that language has often been identified as the most unique attribute of man. It is through language that human beings grasp and

understand reality and transmit it from one generation to another. This view is buttressed by Blakar (1979) who asserts that "we actually live and behave in a world of language". Fromkin and Rodman (1980) quoted Noam Avram Chomsky as saying that "when we study human language, we are approaching what some might call the human essence. The distributive qualities of mind that are so far as we know unique to man". This underlines the basic fact that man is continuously using language, be it spoken, written or printed form and is constantly linked to others via shared norms or behaviour. Language has been a major tool, chiefly responsible for the social consciousness of any country's citizenry, because it is essentially with the usage of language that information about the on-goings in the environment get to the people, either directly, through contact with any medium of mass communication, like the television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books and journals, and other forms of the mass media; or through indirect means such as conversations, meetings and discussions.

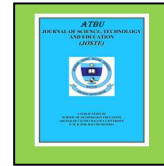
It is clear that with the level of illiteracy and knowledge-gap between the literates and the

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illiterates in the country, there seem to be an ignorant discrimination in the rate at which information, especially advertisements, is disseminated, at the time it is, its accuracy and the populace in the country that it reaches. There is however, the general perception that majority of the Northern Nigerian populace, especially those in the rural areas are not carried along on issues of national interest due to their inability to understand what is being broadcast or advertised on television and radio.

Consequently, there has been a lot of misinterpretations and misconceptions of advertisement messages by a good number of residents in North due to the elitist language used in disseminating these messages. They seldom understand broadcast advertisements made in Standard English language and as such, try to ignore these market information in Northern Nigerian Pidgin English and develop a negative opinion or attitude towards the products or services as well as the communicated messages itself. The problem motivating this research thus is that, to what extent are residents of Benin-City aware or informed on latest events and products or services availability in the market? How often and timely does information reach them and how has the use of Pidgin English assisted people in getting informed, and enhance their attraction to a product?

This study shall carry out solely on the investigation of advertisement in pidgin English in the Northern part of Nigeria but shall also be of significance theoretically, practically and otherwise. In terms of theoretical impact, this research could increase and add to the existing volume of literature available on the study of Northern Nigerian Pidgin English and advertising. This could in turn lead to further investigations, thereby expanding existing depth of knowledge and at the same time, exposing certain areas that require further investigation. By the same token, the result of the study could be of great value to advertising regulatory bodies such as APCON, ADVAN, BON etc., advertising agencies and the mass media as well as other relevant organizations as it could reveal areas where decisions should be made to improve effective

utilization of Pidgin English as a potent language for broadcasting and advertising.

Although the study universe is Northern part of Nigeria, due to the fact that time constraints will not permit the sampling of residents in all the towns and villages in the states, four states have been chosen to serve as the case study for this research because they are part of the Hausa speaking states, and due to the strategic location of the Norths, it attracts individuals from Northern Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, who have diverse views regarding the value of Pidgin English as a language of broadcast and advertising communication

This study is done within the larger framework of the Integrated Marketing Communication and Language. The focus on a single case study or single city in this instance, presents a challenge in generating the findings of this research to other cities in Northern Nigeria.

Meanwhile, the techniques that shall be used to collect data may prove to be valuable as a framework for future research, even if the findings may not be effectively and comprehensively generalized.

To foster a clear understanding of this research, the following key terms/concepts are here defined within their operational context. Audience perception, which is the focal point of this study, is employed to denote the attitude, view, opinion and assessment of advertisements which they are constantly exposed to through the major broadcast media outfit operational in the environment of study. In the context of this study, Pidgin English is a non-specific name used to refer to any of the many pidgin languages derived from mainly from Standard English language and two or more dominant languages present among the intended users. The researcher chooses to call Northern Nigerian Pidgin English as NigPE or NPE in the context of this study. It attracts individuals from Northern Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, who have diverse views regarding the value of Pidgin English as a language of broadcast and advertising communication

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In the framework of this study, advertisements are the direct messages or sort of notice disseminated by the broadcast media channels such as radio and television, informing or telling consumers and potential consumers about the availability of products or services as well as necessary information needed to purchase or have access to them. However, it is used interchangeably with the conceptual word "advertising". In the context of this research, are the modern channels of mass communication that disseminates its messages via electromagnetic waves, through the sky. The major of these media focused on are radio and television broadcast outfit.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the dominant perception of the public with regards to the use of Pidgin English language for broadcast and advertising messages in Northern Nigeria. Along this line, the specific objectives of the study shall be to:

1. Investigate the rationale of Pidgin English use in broadcasting and advertising in Northern Nigeria.
2. Examine Pidgin English as a language of popular communication in Northern Nigeria.
3. Determine the basic challenges and prospects of Pidgin English use for broadcasting and advertising in Northern Nigeria.

4. Examine Pidgin English as a language of popular communication in Northern Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions shall guide this study and in the course of this research, we shall attempt to find answers to the following questions:

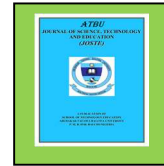
1. What is the rationale of Pidgin English use in advertising in Northern Nigeria?
2. What is the status of Pidgin English as a language of popular communication in Northern Nigeria?
3. What are the basic challenges and prospects of Pidgin English use for advertisements in Northern Nigeria?
4. Are there any advantages inherent in the use of Pidgin English in advertisements?

Literature Review

This chapter discusses the concept of Northern Nigerian Pidgin English, its pervasiveness and influence, origin and definitions of advertising, its classifications, role and functions as well. It also discusses the interface of advertising and broadcasting in Northern Nigerian Broadcast media and the imperative of Pidgin English in advertisement. Besides that, the theoretical framework of Anthony Downs "Majoritarian" or Preponderance theory has been proposed for this study. The later framework, which is adopted in this study, will be discussed in detail. Finally, this chapter gives an overview of related studies in the field of advertisement.

The Origin and Concept of Northern Nigerian Pidgin English

Northern Nigerian pidgin is basically an English-based pidgin and a Creole language by nature. Wikipedia (2017), the free encyclopaedia states this is so because most speakers of the language are not native speakers, although many children do learn it right from childhood. Pidgin or "brokin", as it fondly called, is spoken as a defacto lingua franca across Northern Nigeria. Elugbe and



Omamor (1991), in their effort to define the concept pidgin, opines that it is "some kind of a marginal language that arises to fulfil specific communication needs in welldefined circumstances." The above position indicates that pidgin is not an official lingua franca, but a subsidiary language employed for interaction particularly by individuals who do not share the same language. Elugbe and Omamor, quoting Hall (1966), stated further that there are two indices that qualified a language as pidgin. In their idea, for a language to be eligible as pidgin, "Its grammatical structure and its vocabulary must be sharply reduced; secondly, the resultant language must be native to none of those who use it" (Elugbe & Omamor, 1991). In agreement with the above statement, Rickford (1998) confirmed that: The origin of Northern Nigerian Pidgin may be difficult to accurately ascertained, however, it could be traced back to the contacts between Europeans and Northern Nigerians. Evidence in literature shows that, as far back as the eighteenth century, Northern Nigerian Pidgin English was already being spoken particularly in the coastal city states of the Niger Delta (Agheyisi, 1984; Ogu, 1992). Agheyisi (1984) opines that this early pidgin was restricted, if not exclusively, to the context of trade. But steadily, the social conditions as well as the introduction of schools by the missionaries and colonial governments led to its spread and development as noted by Flint (1960): Equally, Elugbe and Omamor (1991) states that "Northern Nigerian Pidgin rose from the contact between multilingual coastal communities of Northern Nigeria and visiting European explorers/traders – first, the Portuguese, then briefly the Dutch and finally the English". As a result of this, there was an urgent need to converse in a mutual language. A Portuguese-based Pidgin was developed initially but it was later swapped for an English based pidgin which is still widely spoken till today. Jowitt (2000) puts it this way:

This is because the visiting Europeans traders/explorer probably felt it was not important to learn the language of the locals possibly for the reason that they were more superior to their local hosts hence, reluctant to study a local language.

On the other hand, it might actually be because of the myriads of dialects and languages that the local host speaks. Consequently, the foreigners began to interact with Northern Nigerians in their language. Elugbe and Omamor (1991) put it that "Northern Nigerians had to accommodate the visiting Englishmen by resorting to some makeshift form of English".

The Pervasiveness and Influence of Pidgin English

Pidgin English is very pervasive in the entire Nigerian nation. Yinka (2010) echoes this point when he states that long considered the language of the uneducated, Northern Nigerian Pidgin with its oscillating tones and playful imagery, is now spoken by Northern Nigerians of every age, social class and regional origin. Underscoring the functionality of the Pidgin English in Northern Nigeria, Yinka (2010) states pointedly that: In a country with wide disparity in education provision, Pidgin operates as a de facto lingua franca; a bridge between social classes, ethnicities and educational levels. Public announcements and information campaigns are often made in Pidgin which has a wider reach than Standard English, the official language.

The Origin and Evolution Advertising

The concept of advertising, just as communication, has been with man for time immemorial. Before the advent of modern advertisements, man had constantly been in the business of making known to potential consumers the availability as well as affordability of his products and services. The urge to advertise, according to Klepper (1979), seems to be part of human nature evident since ancient times.

Concept and Nature of Advertising

The nature of advertising has attracted diverse and myriads of definitions to it as a concept. Scholars of Marketing and Communication as well as the general public have developed different definitions of the subject matter "advertising". Journalists may define it as a communication or public relations or even a persuasive process; Sociologists and Economists

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may view it from the angle of its social and economic significance respectively; Philosophers and Moralists may want to view it from its ethical perspective and impact on behaviour; for the common man, it may mean television commercials, radio jingles, and print advertisements. These perspectives are not erroneous, but however, they have only succeeded in over-simplifying the concept and nature of advertising.

Classification of Advertisements

have been classified into many categories, depending on the scholar in question. However, the overriding factor that is quite prevalent in classifying advertisements is: (i) the nature of the target audience/consumer (usually determined by the products/services) and (ii) the purpose for which the advertising message is being communicated.

However, the researcher decided to discuss the classification of adverts under two broad categories and treat the types separately for a better understanding of the subject matter.

1. Classification by Target Audience:

These classes of adverts, according to Hasan (2013) are adverts directed at the public in order to create awareness about the availability of a product or services as well as build loyalty for a brand. Fashomi (2013) stated further that this concern specific segment of the population for whom the product, service or idea appeals to.

2. Classification by Purpose:

Hasan (2013) posits that these are adverts that are disseminated to a specific audience for a specific purpose. She calls these categories of adverts 'trade advertising' in the sense that they are directed at wholesalers or distributors who resells specific brands of commercial products or services to the public. Fashomi (2013) however termed them 'Business-to-business advertising' in that they are targeted at people who buy products for industrial use or for more production.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This session provides the detail of the methods used in collecting data for the research which also include the instrument used. It defines clearly the target population for the research, the data gathering; instrument used for research, the procedure for data collection and also the data analysis techniques. In a bid to achieve a detailed and effective outcome for this study, survey research design was employed. The survey methodology was used, in which information and data were collected and analysed. Ohaja (2003p.11) defines a survey as: A study of the characteristics of a sample through questioning that allows a researcher to make generalizations concerning a population of interest. The population refers to the total number of people who have been included in the survey. Ohaja (2003p.75) also defines the population of a study as: All those persons or things that fall under the umbrella of the topic or that can be examined to address the research problem or meet the research objectives. Osemwota (2007p.126) says that sampling is "a scientific method of obtaining an unbiased and representative data from a given universe or population." A sample thus, is a variable carefully chosen at random from a population and used to test assumption about the population

The purpose of studying the sample is to make generalization about the universe. A sample size is the representative of a focus population. The sampling technique adopted for this study is simple random sampling where each individual of the population has equal chance of being chosen without replacement. As a method of collecting data for research, the survey is a technique that involves asking the same questions of a number of people who are either representative or all the members of a group one wishes to study (Osemwota, 2007). The instrument to be used in gathering the data for the study is the questionnaire. According to Babbie (2010p.255) "questionnaire is an instrument that is designed to gather or elicit information that will be subjected to further analysis". The self-administered questionnaire of the survey methodology will therefore be the instrument for



data collection. The import of this is that the researcher has already indicated the variables of his interest. In addition, the questionnaire will be in two sections (A & B). Section A is the demographic data which comprises sex, age, religion, educational background, marital status and occupation. The section B is the questions and answers and it is structured in a manner that would reflect the perceptions of the respondents. The answers are pre-coded so that the responses can be easily analysed. Consequently, the researcher chooses questionnaire for this study because: i. It is cheap and economical ii. It is easy to understand and interpret. iii. For anonymity sake. iv. Its answers are easier to code and analyse statistically.

Ogbeide (2007p.224) states that "validity refers to the extent to which a scale actually or accurately measures the variable it is supposed to measure." He further states that if the measured variable is a reflection of what actually goes on in the empirical world then the instrument is said to be valid.

The questionnaires were administered by the researcher, and he was aided by three research deputies who help him ensure that all the established sections of residents are reached in the course of the survey. This was further give credibility to the survey as it ensures that the research universe is covered in the best possible way, giving the time frame of the data administration, and reducing the risk of misplacing research instrument. The data to be used for the purpose of this study was collected through two main sources, namely; Primary and secondary sources of data.

The primary source of data was obtained through the use of questionnaire which will be designed and distributed to two hundred (200) respondents who are residents of Benin City, by the researcher. The secondary data for analysis in this study shall be derived essentially from a detailed review of relevant literature volumes available on the subject of investigation, through a critical study of the advertising messages and the interplay of the broadcast media world. The data collected will be analysed on a comparative basis using mostly tables.

Analysis of data will be carried out by classifying information collected through the questionnaires using the descriptive statistics known as simple percentage; the arrangement will be in frequency and finally coded into simple percentages. Thus, data will be analysed on the basis of frequency rate or percentages; through the research questions that was answered, relevant deductions, inferences and conclusions was drawn.

CONCLUSION

The finding revealed the perception of broadcast on the use of Nigerian pidgin English in Kano, Kaduna, Borno and Adamawa. It also seeks to understand the perception of broadcast media audience towards the use of Pidgin English in dissemination of adverts messages as a language of popular communication especially as regards to advertisements. It can be said that the pidgin in this advert makes the message across the people. It is a serious ailment in Northern Nigeria. Pidgin is humorous and the use of a comedian in the advert kills the seriousness in the message being passed across. All classes of people seek to understand the perception of broadcast media audience towards the use of Pidgin English in dissemination of adverts messages and as a language of popular communication especially as regards to advertisements.

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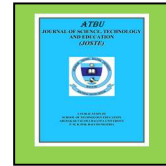
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