

Language, Style, And Ideology in Selected Nigerian Banks' Advertising Slogans: Doing Things with Words Exemplified

Ayodabo, J. O

Dept. of English

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

08033604983

jo.ayodabo@acu.edu.ng

Oduola, M. O

Dept. of English

Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo

08034227134

mo.oduola@acu.edu.ng

and

Olanrewaju, R. F

Dept. of English

Kwara state College of Education, Ilorin

08037177174

[*folukeola@gmail.com*](mailto:folukeola@gmail.com)

Abstract

Studies in Applied Linguistics have examined the use of slogans in political campaigns and social advocacies with meagre considerations for its entrepreneurship relevance. This study, therefore, investigated 'critical stylistic canons' in selected banks' advertising slogans to examine the discourse-bearing linguistic elements with functionally packaged ideological loads, constitute marketing strategies for staying ahead in the competitive banking business world. Lesley Jeffries' (2010) Critical Stylistics (CS) was complemented with Fairclough's (2021) stripe of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the framework. These were used in analysing seven advertising slogans sourced from the official facebook pages and websites of the selected first- and second-generation Nigerian banks. The data were subjected to qualitative analyses, using descriptive research design. The paper revealed that (i) the form and structures of the banks' advertising slogans examined are noun phrases deployed with the use of excessive modifiers (ii) The thematic focusing styles identified are those of *naming and describing*, showcasing the qualities of

the banks, and *enumerating and exemplifying* to elliptically imaginatively make a list of the benefits of the banks. (iii) The examined slogans revealed, through the use of language, the ideological underpinnings such as *power dynamics* that were supposed to influence the perception of the potential customers. Banks' advertising slogans are indexical of a gamut of inherent discursive facilities as a matter of choices from various linguistic or stylistic options for socio-economic and entrepreneurship purposes. Studying further such functional sloganeering performance in other commercial sector-contexts provides unique 21st century entrepreneurship discourse.

Keywords: Stylistics, Language and ideology, Bank advertising Sloganeering performance, Entrepreneurship discourse, commercial sector-contexts

Introduction

Advertisements as meaning-expression entrepreneurial instruments are discourse-sensitive phenomena whose importance has attracted scholarly attention not only in Nigeria but also on global entrepreneurship discourse platforms. They, however, constitute an important aspect of Applied Linguistics whose functional operations have been strongly considered for sloganeering campaigns in the banking industry. It is, therefore, necessary to attempt a study which projects some ideological thoughts that are often housed (overtly or covertly) in the Nigerian bank's advertising slogans. Such investigative discourse platforms should necessarily seek to examine certain communicative elements that guarantee productive propagation of the ideals-on-sale of the selected banks regarding their unique products and services.

Slogans are specially structured and content-laden textual materials with unique discourse-bearing linguistic elements that are deployed for advantageous promotionalism. An advertising slogan, therefore, is a tagline promotional catchphrase associated with a particular product or service by which a manufacturer or its middlemen create awareness about the product or service at the expense of others.

The main interest of this study is to examine the systematic packaging of textual collateral contents used to enhance product sales in the competitive financial bank market. What should be looked out for here is, given that studies on language use are of high interest to linguists, the sloganeering study must critically interrogate the effectiveness of such language use in bank product or service advertisements in non-text-linguistic forms, birthing our idea of critical stylistics. The bottom line is the need for 'further steps' in considering how 'stylistic forms' function in projecting life-streaming philosophical campaigns that remain part of the best marketing strategies for staying

ahead in the competitive banking business world. This boils down to language, being a fascinating phenomenon in itself, is a necessary part of any investigation into human and social organization (Brown and Miller 1999:1). Thus, advertising slogans are to be ‘discursively’ presented as promotional tools that enable companies or organizations, banking institutions inclusive, to introduce themselves, their products or services (Olateju, 2007: 122). Exploring these, with all the organizational ideals and motifs adequately secured and well projected in brand-specific and consumer-friendly manners (Abdi and Irandoust, 2013: 62), has to be a matter of critical discourse-stylistics (Jeffries, 2010; Oduola, 2017; Abegunde, 2019; Oduola and Abegunde, 2021).

Statement of the problem

Studies abound in the field of applied linguistics that have considered advertisement as a domain of language use mainly from text-linguistic perspectives. Haulofu (2012) carried out a stylistic analysis of English online advertisements by Telecommunication providers in a case study of MTC and MTN mobile. Targeting young adults, the study explores how Namibian telecommunication providers use rhetorical devices in advertisements with incorporated non-verbal elements to persuade the considered productive population. The study found that advertisers use the AIDA principles (Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action) to attract the attention of young adults.

In his investigation of the language of online Bank advertisements in English, Lazovic (2014) establishes the fact that trust in banks has declined over the years due to the significant impact the global financial crisis has had on ordinary people’s lives. Thus, the need to revitalize customers’ confidence in banking products and operating systems projects the idea to focus on bank advertisements. The study, therefore, purposively examines the main linguistic strategies deployed in such advertisements to gain a better understanding of how the banks affect the customers’ emotions about their products and services.

Also, in 2016, in a case study of Dangote cement’s billboard advertisement in Bameda, Cameroon, Famukong examined what is communicated, and how it is communicated and interpreted. It is crystalised that advertisers on billboards use different stylistic devices that carry positivity and common ground that makes the readers (that is, prospective buyers) identify with the advertisements, persuading them to buy Dangote cement.

In Agbede's (2016) comparative interrogation of selected Bank advertisements in South Africa and Nigeria Newspapers and Magazines, it is found that the effectiveness of language choice in bank advertisements is a matter of style.

Finally, Namwandi (2019), did a stylistic analysis of language use in advertising in which the most common stylistic devices used in attracting the attention of customers by small to medium entrepreneurs (SME) in Ohana region are discussed. In the desire to further brighten the horizon in the field of entrepreneurship mostly in socio-economic terms, and then project the primary themes that constitute entrepreneurs' language use, Oduola and Abegunde, (2021) examine the ideologies by the means of critical linguistic applications in entrepreneurship discourse in selected Nigerian newspaper advertisements. Averting that advertisement, as a business communication form, is an area of entrepreneurial discourse that cannot be ignored. This is so in the sense that language is found a psycho-social reflex of intrusion into the potential consumer world for entrepreneurial profitability of socio-economic interests.

The main thrust of the foregoing review is that restricting scholarly stylistic exercise to mere text-linguistic description can be described as rather too atomistic. Considering the socio-economic nexus with ideological motifs is necessary for the 21st Century globalisation drive. Therefore, pursuing a critical stylistic scrutiny of Nigerian banks' advertising slogans in the line of Oduola and Abegunde's (2021) discourse-stylistic thoughts seems a step in the right direction.

Aim and Objectives

Searching into the Applied Linguistic drive of entrepreneurship discourse is a plausible enterprise that requires knowing the nitty-gritty of Critical Stylistics (CS), as a field of practical applications for problem-solving purposes. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the potentials of language use in projecting peculiar stylistic considerations and underpinning ideologies in the selected banks' advertising slogans. Capturing the wealth of linguistic representationspotential and discourse-stylistic complexes of the selected banks' advertising slogans requires answers to the following questions:

1. What are the forms and structures of the banks' advertising slogans?
2. How can the thematic focusing style of the banks' advertising slogans be understood?

3. In what ways are the ideologies behind the banks' advertising slogans explicable?

Addressing such questions, as above, spells out the focus of the research problem, and then provides the guide to appropriate qualitative analysis of the lexico-grammar, stylistics and the ideologies behind the banks' advertising slogans.

Significance of the Study

Studies such as this are capable of hugely contributing to the growth of informed scholarship in the field of applied linguistics with a special interest in critical stylistics that projects the crucial imports of language and ideology in a social context. Such scholarly contributions are capable of facilitating psycho-social comprehension of the inherent discourse mechanisms of banks' advertising slogans. A sloganeering discourse of this nature is capable of projecting useful entrepreneurship discourse pedagogy that can trickle down the important gains of applied linguistics in its practical sense.

Besides, and more importantly, the socio-economic advantage that is channelable by the intents and contents of this critical stylistic study is what the Nigerian commercial banks and other financial institutions can thrive upon, for sporadic growth. In the final analysis, the relevance of researching banks' advertising slogans in ideological terms, as contemplated in this study, could, in the long run, reveal some communication strategies being employed by advertisement content producers.

Review of Related Literature and theoretical framework

Targeting similar goals, as above had inspired scholarly efforts on 'how to do things with words'. Reviewing such academic positions on language, style and ideology to pin-point their discursive importance in the field of advertisement is, therefore, a step in the right direction.

Language - Forms and Structures

Language, that symbolic system which enables representations and communication of thoughts, ideas, and emotions (Sandler and Lillo-Martin, 2019), has been identified as a dynamic and ever-changing phenomenon that evolves. Crystal (2020) discusses the concept of language change and emphasizes the ongoing nature of linguistic variation. He highlights that language adapts and develops in response to social, cultural, and technological changes, leading to the emergence of

new words, expressions, and grammatical structures. Two years earlier, Ochs and Schiefelin (2018) had isolated the socio-cultural significance of language, leading to the exploration of the socialization processes and language acquisition within specific cultural contexts. They emphasize that language acquisition involves not only learning linguistic structures but also understanding and adopting the cultural norms, values, and practices associated with a particular speech community. Examining the operational relevance of such understanding and adoption within the Nigerian banking industry, typifying such speech community has remained a gap to be filled.

Systemic grammar emphasizes the social function of language

According to Osisanwo (1999:10), systemic grammar is referred to as scale and category grammar in Halliday (1961), and later called systemic grammar in Halliday (1966). “The core concept of this theory is that there are four fundamental categories: UNIT, STRUCTURE, CLASS and SYSTEM” (Olujide 1999:56).

Unit: This is the category that accounts for structures carrying grammatical patterns. In other words, unit accounts for grammatical patterns that must be followed in our utterances. The unit can be illustrated with the examples below:

The red car belongs to the medical doctor.

The statement above is a stretch of utterance within which we can identify some other utterances which can be put together neatly. E.g.

The red car

The medical doctor

Since we can neither say “car red the” nor “doctor medical the”, this shows that there are acceptable grammatical patterns an utterance should have. The units of English grammar include: morpheme, word, group, clause, and sentence.

Structure: This is the category which describes the likeness between events successively. Osisanwo (1999:15) says the structure is the category set up to account for the pattern that the unit carries. For example, consider the sentences below;

The students swept the class.

The class was swept by the students.

The two sentences mean the same thing but have different patterns. In grammar, five units are identified; morpheme, word, group clause and sentence.

Structure therefore accounts for the nature of the patterns of the relationship at the grammatical level; such as mhq (modifier, headword and qualifier) in nominal word group and SPCA (Subject, Predicator, Complement and Adjunct) in sentences. E.g.

S	P	C	A
Debbie	swept	the floor	neatly

Class: Class is the grouping of a number of units. It is referred to as any set of items having the same possibilities of operation in structure. (Olujide 1999:57). Words from different utterances, with the same function, are members of the same CLASS. This implies that individual words used in utterances have natural groupings. For example

<i>m</i>	<i>m</i>	<i>h</i>
<i>The</i>	<i>red</i>	<i>car</i>
<i>The</i>	<i>medical</i>	<i>doctor</i>

From the above pattern, it is obvious that words in the same column belong to the same group.

System: This is the category that accounts for the occurrence of one rather than another from among several similar events. Alabi (1997:58) says a system implies a list of choices. The sentences below are used as illustrations:

Example 1. I gave it to the children.

Example 2. I gave it to the child

Why do we have 'children' in Example 1 and 'child' in Example 2?

The system accounts for this.

With the notion of SFL, we are enabled to look at language as a matter of choice from various linguistic or stylistic options for socio-economic and entrepreneurship purposes. This is further

strengthened by the SFL's stratification quality that makes it possible for language to be 'functionally' analysed in terms of four strata: context, lexico-semantics, lexico-grammar, phonology, and graphology.

Quoting Bex (1996: 158), Ayodabo's (2002: 312) seminal observation on 'cohesion as an aspect of textuality in 'vacancy' advertisement in the newspaper' presents advertisement as a unique aspect of the various field of communication in which text requires a careful blend of dexterous grammatical construction in a limited space. The grammatical items of a sequence of construction and the "novelty" they facilitate remain the hallmarks of text-variation in the perception of the potential consumers of the various goods and services being advertised. Similar investigation relating to language, style and ideology in banks' advertising slogans is, therefore, long overdue.

Style and Stylistics

Style is the mood and message of the inner mind of the writer conveyed to the audience or reader. The style employed in writing dictates the type of responses of the reader. This is to say that style can stimulate the reader to read the text further, and at the same time style can weaken the interest of the reader. Even if the writer is equipped with good points and the techniques of using them are not there, the reader cannot understand the message. Style is an essential ingredient employed in writing to enhance the interest of the reader. The poor use of style makes a text uninteresting and unintellectual. Ayodabo (2019), identifies three approaches to the study of style. These include:

- i) Style as choice from variant forms: This involves the study of style as deliberate choice from variant and competing forms. This is predicated upon the selection possibilities and constraints which exist within each language regarding the paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations among linguistic elements. Here, the language is at liberty to make certain choices from an array of possible elements and their combination for easy expression.
- ii) Style as Deviation from the Norm: This refers to the study as divergence in frequency from a norm. Such divergence may depend on the breaking of normal rules of linguistic structure (phonological, grammatical etc) or overuse of normal rules of usage (Wales, 2007).

- iii) Style as Idiosyncratic and Constant Forms: This approach derives from the sociolinguistic concept of idiolect and the pervasive influence of science and computers. It aims at a more objective description of the relative frequencies of stylistic features in a text or a group of related texts.

Jefferies (2010) presents a set of analytical tools through which critical stylistics uncovers the ideologies hidden in the texts and discourse thereby saving the analyst from subjectively looking for them in an attempt to confirm preconceived assumptions. The tools of critical stylistics include the following:

- (a) Naming and describing
- (b) Representing Action/Events/States
- (c) Equating and contrasting
- (d) Exemplifying and Enumerating
- (e) Prioritizing
- (f) Assuming and implying
- (g) Negating
- (h) Hypothesizing
- (i) Presenting the speech & thoughts of other participants
- (j) Representing time, space & society

Ideology and critical studies

The term "ideology" refers to a system of beliefs, values, ideas, and principles that shape and guide individuals' understanding of the world, their behaviour, and their social interactions. Analyzing recent sources, we can gain insights into the multifaceted nature and contemporary understanding of ideology.

Using the lenses of Eagleton (2016), ideology is to be perceived as socially constructed framework that influences our perception of reality and structures our thoughts and actions. Eagleton highlights that ideologies are not neutral or objective but are deeply intertwined with power relations and serve the interests of particular social groups. This perspective emphasizes the role of ideology in maintaining or challenging existing social, political, and economic structures just as Slater's (2020) analysis underscores the persuasive and hegemonic nature of ideology in shaping collective consciousness.

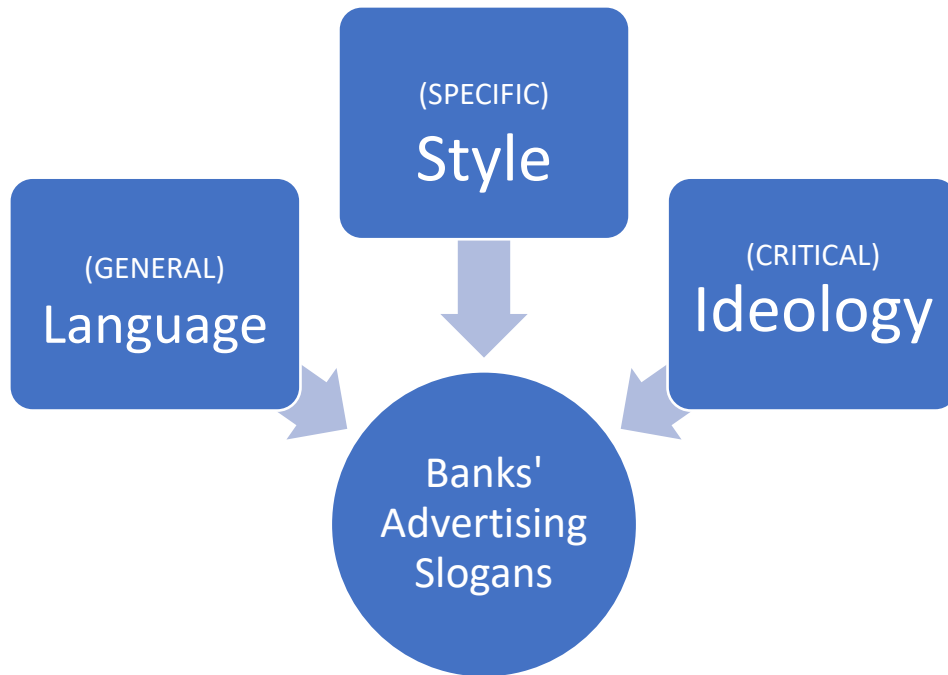
The main thrust of the foregoing discussions is that certain philosophical thoughts underlie every opportunity to use language in any field of human interaction, banking industry for instance. language is thus intertwined with power relations, discursive formations, political preferences, entrepreneurial discourse and social identities.

The contemporary understanding of ideology and the insights into its roles in social control as well as the construction of collective consciousness contained in the selected Nigerian banking slogans establishes the importance of the present research engagement. In the view of Lupyan and Bergen's (2016) argument, therefore, language is to be seen as the instrument that shapes and influences our thinking processes which in turn affect how humans perceive and understand the world around them.

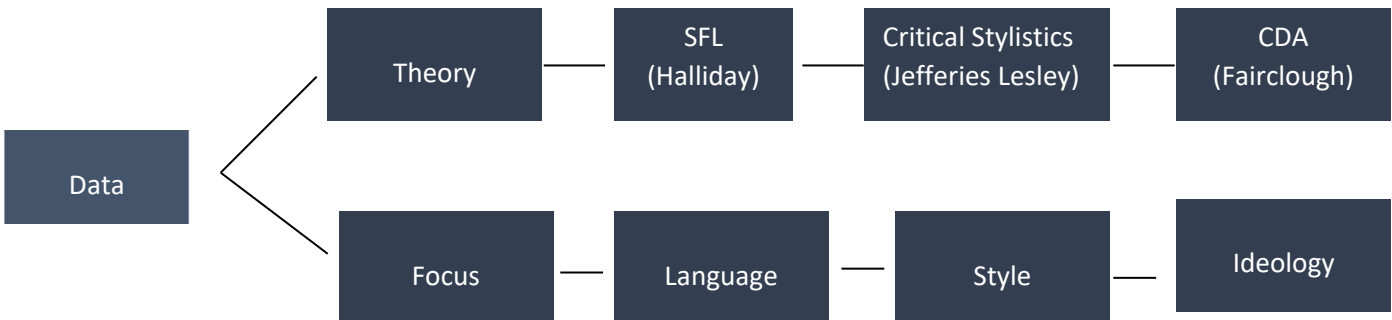
In the submission of Fairclough (1995) the exercise of power is dominantly achieved through ideology. He says ideology is pervasively present in language. In his version of CDA, he says that critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views language as a form of social practice. Fairclough (1995) says that any case of language is a communicative event. Fairclough's CDA, is concerned with how power is exercised through language. He developed a model for CDA which consists of three categories which he referred to as three dimensions. These are: text, discursive practice and social practice. In his opinion, language helps create change and can be used to change behaviour, therefore he sees language as a power tool.

Arising from the review of literature done, so far, there is the need to come up with a framework that can assist us in the analysis of data collected for this study. This framework is premised on the fact that just one existing theory may be incapable of satisfying the dynamics of data on the language, style and ideology of the slogans.

Framework for analysis of Nigeria banks' advertisement slogans



The model



From the framework and model schemed above, it is crystalised that the sole reason for ‘discoursing’ banks’ advertising slogans in ideological terms calls for theoretical orientations that are critical. This is informed by the deliberate desire to avoid the usual text-linguistic studies that often generally end up with atomistic stylistic analyses. The sole interest of this research is rather to examine the functional, social and contextual interpretations of the entrepreneurship discourse contents and intents housed in the Nigerian commercial banks’ advertising slogans. Hence, for the reason of ideological pursuit, our preference for Lesley Jefferies’ Critical Stylistics which is cast in the mode of MAK Halliday’s Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). For the same critical, social and contextual reasons, this framework is backed up by Fairclough’s strand of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

Study methodology

This study is structured within the methodological framework of Lesley’s stylistics. The data for this study comprised advertising slogan-extracts from three (3) Nigerian commercial and microfinance banks’ advertising slogans. The restriction to three banks is informed by the temporal limitation in the sense that the study has to be carried out within a short period. The slogans are drawn from the official websites and television adverts of the selected banks. The slogans are purposively categorized to suit the thematic interest that calls for an adequate description of the various stylistic options so displayed in them. This enables the functional explication of the lexico-grammatical, lexico-semantic and graphological discursive elements, inherent in the slogans.

Data presentation

Thus, the three (3) advertising slogan-types collected from 3 Nigerian banks as pilot data are hereby presented for analysis in this Seminar Presentation. These, as earlier mentioned were extracted from the official websites, and Facebook pages of the selected banks:

Data	Bank	Advertising Slogan
Datum 1:	Access	More than banking
Datum 2:	UBA	Africa’s global bank

Datum 3: Eco Bank The Pan African Bank

Data analysis

Datum 1: “More than Banking”

Form and Structure

The structure of Datum 1 is a noun group (NG) or Nominal Word Group (NWG). This group is an ellipited clause/sentence. It is a noun group with the structure **mmh** (*more than banking*) with banking being the headword, ‘more’ and ‘than’ as modifiers; mmh as used here spells out one structure of NWG.

The elliptical group appears to be a completive element of Clause expression:

//We/do/more than banking// or //We/offer/more than banking//. This simple structure is so deployed to launch the idea that the bank provides something beyond the concept of saving and withdrawing money (banking).

Thematic Focusing Style

The Group consists of only three words making it concise and direct. The slogan is suspected of a succinct intentionality; a kind of deliberate ‘deviation from the norm’ approach, that leaves room for multiple interpretations, allowing potential consumers to individually imagine, by enumerating and exemplifying what and what the bank offers beyond traditional banking services.

Metaphorically, the phrase “more than banking” extends the meaning of the word ‘banking’ beyond its literal financial context. It suggests that there are additional dimensions or aspects associated with the concept that go beyond traditional expectations.

Ideological underpinnings

The slogan “more than banking” implies that the bank possesses additional capabilities beyond traditional banking services thus positioning the bank as powerful. By positioning themselves as more than just a financial institution, the bank may be attempting to establish a sense of power and influence in the industry. This can create a power dynamic where the bank assumes a dominant position potentially influencing customers’ perceptions and

decisions. Presenting themselves as “more than banking” may create a perception of expertise, trustworthiness or reliability. This can establish a power dynamic where customers can rely on the banks’ guidance, thus potentially limiting their ability to critically assess or challenge the banks’ actions.

Datum 2: Africa’s global bank

Form and structure

The structure of this expression is a Noun group (NG). The ‘boastful’ nominal expression ‘Africa’s global bank’ has the Nominal Word Group (NWG) structure with the constituents ‘mmh’ with ‘bank’ being the headword while ‘Africa’ in possessive case form and derivational attributive adjective ‘global’ remain as modifiers.

Thematic Focusing Style

The slogan is typically carved out to ‘name’ to ‘describe’ UBA’s matchless, wider and continental coverage. The slogan ‘Africa’s global bank’ conveys a tone of confidence and ambition in its strategic way of ‘naming and describing’. It aims to project a positive and assertive mood, emphasizing the bank’s strong presence and influence in Africa while also highlighting its global reach. The choice of ‘Africa’ in the possessive case form as the focal point of the slogan establishes a sense of pride and ownership, appealing to the bank’s African clientele and emphasizing its commitment to the continent.

In describing the qualities of the bank, the use of the term ‘global’ exaggerates the bank’s reach and suggests that it operates on a wider scale, thus enhancing its prestige and authority. The attributive adjective ‘global’, is strategically placed to emphasize the bank’s international and intercontinental standing and further enhance its reputation.

Ideological Underpinnings

The slogan implies that the bank holds a position of power as it presents itself as a global entity originating from Africa. It positions the bank as a dominant player in the financial sector, suggesting that it has influence and control over resources and markets beyond Africa. The slogan’s positioning of the bank as ‘*Africa’s global...*’ institution suggests that it plays a leading pivotal role in driving economic development and progress within the

continent. The phrase “Africa’s global bank” may evoke a perception that the bank represents Africa’s interest on the global stage.

Datum 3: The Pan African Bank

Form and Structure

The Pan African Bank is also a ‘boastful’ nominal expression, operated in the Nominal Word Group (NWG) structure with the constituents ‘mmmh’ (The Pan African Bank). The headword here is ‘bank’ while ‘the’, ‘Pan’ and ‘African’ are modifiers. “The Pan African Bank” employs a linguistic graphology strategy of capping every first alphabet in every word to convey the bank’s unique positioning and identity. The definite article ‘The’ indicates the importance placed on the specific bank being referenced, thus suggesting a sense of distinction and importance. The modifiers ‘Pan’ and ‘African’ emphasize the bank’s festering and extensive reach and involvement across the entire African continent. Thus, the slogan is structured deliberately that way to communicate the intention of the owners of the Bank.

Thematic Focusing Style

The advertising slogan has also strategically employed the tool of naming and describing to present the bank’s wide and matchless coverage. The choice of words in the slogan is straightforward and concise. The advertisement slogan thus contains a few words that are thematically structured to project the scope and reach of the Bank. The inclusion of “Pan African” emphasizes the bank’s broad coverage and presence across the African continent. With the slogan, the bank has been able to effectively ‘describe’ the bank’s commitment to serving the African continent as a whole and implies a sense of inclusivity and understanding of the diverse African market.

Ideological Underpinnings

The use of the term “Pan African” in the slogan suggests broad coverage and inclusivity across the African continent. The word “Bank” inherently implies financial power and influence. By positioning itself as “The Pan African Bank” the slogan suggests a certain level of economic dominance and scope across Africa. This can indicate a desire for market

control or a claim to being a significant player in the banking industry on the continent. the adjective of origin, ‘African’ indicates that is not just operating on the African soil, but one that is rather truly African, and therefore, knows the shoes pinch in Africa and how to address the pang financially.

The use of the definite article “the” in the slogan suggests a definitive position of authority. It implies that the bank holds a significant position in the African banking landscape, potentially creating a power asymmetry between the bank and other financial institutions. This power dynamic can impact competition, market control and the bank’s ability to influence financial policies and practices.

Summary of Findings

Arising from the analyses of data, we can succinctly report that:

- i. The linguistic forms and structures identified in the data reveal that all the examined slogans are Noun Groups. It is interesting to note that all the Noun Groups, in the three data use, with the structures ‘mmh’, ‘mmh’ and ‘mmh’ exhibit much use of excessive modifiers. This is a marketing strategy that is meant for advantageous profit.
- ii. Of stylistic interest, is the use of the critical stylistic tools of *naming* and *describing*, *enumerating* and *exemplifying*, and other stylistic devices through which the ‘canons’ of the banks’ hidden agenda of organizational interest are ‘fired’.
- iii. The examined slogans have revealed, through the use of language, the ideological underpinnings of power dynamics, and the scope of operations that are used to influence the perception of the potential customers.

Overall, these findings corroborate some of the existing views interrogated in our literature review. In particular, the forms and structures, so revealed, are in line with Halliday’s (2004)’s SFL. This is beside the fact that critical linguistics is assigned to Lesley Jefferies’ work, which is based on CDA using different analytical methods to display the link between language, power and ideology (Tesler and Sears, 2021).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the three banking slogans reveals significant insights into how language is strategically used to shape customer perceptions and construct ideological power dynamics within the banking sector. The linguistic forms, particularly the Noun Group structures, serve as effective tools for conveying specific messages that align with the banks' broader marketing and organizational goals. These slogans, while simple in structure, leverage modifiers to create a sense of superiority, dominance, and extensive reach, positioning these institutions as powerful and influential players in the financial industry.

Stylistically, the deliberate use of naming and describing, alongside other rhetorical devices, enables the banks to portray themselves as indispensable entities that go beyond traditional financial services. This use of language not only reflects the banks' broad operational scope but also embeds an underlying sense of authority and trustworthiness, encouraging customer loyalty and potentially limiting critical engagement with their practices.

From an ideological standpoint, the slogans function as tools for reinforcing power dynamics. The use of phrases like “more than banking,” “Africa’s global bank,” and “The Pan African Bank” suggests that these institutions are not merely financial service providers but are actively shaping the economic and political landscape. By positioning themselves in this way, these banks influence customer perceptions, ultimately establishing themselves as dominant forces in the market.

These findings align with theoretical frameworks such as Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as outlined by Lesley Jefferies, which emphasize the relationship between language, power, and ideology. The study thus underscores the importance of understanding how linguistic structures and strategies can subtly influence consumer behaviour and reinforce organizational power.

Recommendations and suggestion for further studies

The analysis of the three banking slogans highlights several key areas where future studies and practical applications can benefit the banking sector and beyond. One important

direction for future research is expanding the exploration of linguistic forms, particularly Noun Group structures, and their impact across industries such as telecommunications or retail. A comparative study could offer a broader understanding of how these linguistic tools influence consumer behavior and shape brand identities, while also providing insights into how power dynamics are constructed in different contexts. This approach can help organizations refine their marketing strategies across sectors.

Additionally, given the ideological power embedded in these slogans, there is a need to raise consumer awareness about the role of language in shaping perceptions. Banks and other financial institutions should consider the ethical implications of using rhetorical devices that might limit critical engagement with their services. Future research could focus on enhancing consumer education, helping individuals critically evaluate advertising slogans and marketing strategies, and fostering a more informed and empowered customer base.

While the analyzed slogans convey a strong sense of authority, future campaigns should emphasize inclusivity and transparency. Financial institutions could benefit from using language that fosters trust and addresses concerns about monopolistic power dynamics. By providing clearer information about their operations and services, banks can create a more open dialogue with customers, potentially enhancing loyalty and building long-term relationships.

A cross-cultural analysis of these slogans is also recommended, as they are rooted in specific cultural and geographical contexts. Examining how similar linguistic structures are perceived in different regions could help multinational banks tailor their marketing strategies to resonate with diverse audiences, without relying on overly dominant or exclusionary language. This could lead to more effective global campaigns that are sensitive to varying socio-political environments.

The study also underscores the need for further integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in understanding the relationships between language, power, and organizational practices. Researchers can build on this framework to analyze discourse within other business contexts, such as internal communications or leadership rhetoric, revealing how

language shapes organizational culture and authority. This could promote more ethical and equitable practices within organizations.

Finally, banks and financial institutions should focus on improving linguistic flexibility and adaptability in their marketing communications. With the rise of digital banking and a growing influence from younger, more diverse consumer groups, updating slogans to remain relevant is crucial. The future of banking communication may benefit from adopting more flexible and inclusive language that aligns with evolving consumer values such as sustainability and social responsibility. The uniqueness of our research design has provided a valuable platform for analyzing the critical stylistic tools used in banking advertising slogans, offering detailed lexicogrammatical explanations. These insights can guide Nigerian commercial banks and other financial institutions in strategically deploying language as a dynamic system to achieve operational goals.

This study offers valuable insights into the strategic use of language in banking advertisements and highlights the connection between language, power, and consumer behaviour. By implementing the recommendations outlined above, banks and other organizations can better navigate modern marketing complexities while fostering stronger, more ethical relationships with their customers. In sum, Banks' advertising slogans reflect a wide range of discursive choices that are carefully selected for socio-economic and entrepreneurial purposes. Further exploration of such functional sloganeering in other commercial sectors could provide unique insights into 21st-century entrepreneurship discourse.

References

- Abdi, S. and Irandoust, A. (2013) "The importance of advertising slogans and their proper designing in Brand Equity". *International Journal of Organization Leadership* 2013 vol 2 No 2:62-69.
- Agbede, G. T. (2016) "Stylistics in Advertising A Comparative Analysis of Selected Bank Advertisements on Newspapers and Magazines from South Africa and Nigeria". (An unpublished master's thesis submitted to the Department of Media, Language and Communication Durban University of Technology).

- Al-Marsumi, N. H. and Al-Janabi, S. F. (2021) ‘Doing Stylistics versus critical stylistics: An analysis of if by Ruyard Kipling. *In Arab World English Journal* DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol 12 no 1.17> pp 239-252.
- Ayodabo, J. O. (2002). “Cohesion as an aspect of textuality in vacancy advertisement in Newspapers”. In S.T. Babatunde and D. S. Adeyanju (Eds.). *Language, Meaning and Society. Papers in honour of E.E. Adegbija at 50*. Ilorin: Haytee Press.
- Ayodabo, J. O. (2019). *English in Nigeria and Beyond. Essays in Pragmatics, Stylistics & Socio-Linguistic. A selection of publications of Olatunde Ayodabo*. Shoguro, B.O (Ed). Oyo: English Dept, ACU.
- Breeze, R. (2020). *The Language of Political Leadership: Style, Identity and Legitimacy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Brown, K. and Miller, J. (1991). *Syntax: A Linguistic Introduction to Sentence and Structure*. London: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2020). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eagleton, T. (2016). *Ideology: An introduction*. Verso Books.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, London: Longman.
- Famukong, SEA (2016) “Stylistic Analysis in advertising discourse: A Case of the Dangote Cement Advertisement in Bameda- Cameroon”. In *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, Vol. 7 no 6 pp105-112
URL:<http://dx.dor.org/10.7575/919c.all.v.7n.6p.105>.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (2004). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Oxford Univ. press.
- Haulofu, L. T. (2017) “A Stylistic Analysis of English Online Advertisements by Telecommunication Providers: A case study of MTC and TN mobile”. (An unpublished masters thesis submitted to the Department of English studies, University of Namibia).
- Jefferies, L. (2010). *Critical Stylistics the power of English*. London: palgrave Macmillan.
- Lazovic, V. (2014) “The language of online Bank advertisements in English” in *Journal of English for Specific Purposes* vol. 2(1) pp 88-104.
- Lupyan, G., & Bergen, B. (2016). “Language as a tool for thought: The hypothesis of linguistic relativity”. *Trends in cognitive sciences*, 20(6), 399-401.

- Namwandi, A. I. (2019) "A Stylistic analysis of language use in advertising 'a study of advertisement of selected small to medium entrepreneurs in Ohana region'
[URL:http://hdl.handle.net/11070/2581](http://hdl.handle.net/11070/2581)
- Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. B. (2018). "Language acquisition and socialization: Three developmental stories and their implications". In B. B. Schieffelin & E. Ochs (Eds.), *The handbook of language socialization* (2nd ed., pp. 1-26). Wiley.
- Oduola, O. and Abegunde, K. (2021). "Advertisement Discourse Strategy and Critical Linguistic Roles in Business Context". In *Journal of Africa Society for the study of Sociology and Ethnics of Religions*.
- Olaluwoye, L. (2015) "A critical stylistic Analysis of the identify of minority groups in the Nigerian print media" In *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics* vol. 16. Pp 87-93.
- Olateju, M. A. (2007). "The Structure of Yoruba Local Drug Advertisement" in *Socio-Linguistics in the Nigerian Context*. (Ed.) Adeyanju, D. Ile-Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press. Pp 123.
- Olujide, M. T. (1999). "An Overview of English Syntax". In *The English Language and Literature in English: An Introductory Handbook*. (Ed.) Adegbija, E. Ilorin: Department of Modern European Languages, University of Ilorin. Pp 46.
- Osisanwo, W. (1999). *An Introductory Analytical Grammar of English for Undergraduates A Systemic Approach*. Lagos: Femolous Fetop Publishers.
- Padrakali, A. & Chellam, K. (2017). "Advertising slogans- Its emphasis and significance in marketing". *International Research Journal of Management and Commerce* Vol. 4 No. 111.
- Page, R. (2021). *Linguistic Style and Online Engagement: Text-based Analytics of Political Tweets*. London: Routledge.
- Sandler, W., & Lillo-Martin, D. (2019). "Sign language". In K. Allan (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the history of linguistics* (pp. 319-336). Oxford University Press.
- Simpson, P., & Mayr, A. (2019). *Language and Power: A resource book for students*. London: Routledge
- Slater, D. (2020). "Ideology and discourse". In *The SAGE handbook of discourse studies* (2nd ed., pp. 123-140). Sage Publications.
- Somayeh, A. Abdollah, I. (2013). "The Importance of advertising slogans and their proper designing in Brand Equity". *International Journal of Organization Leadership* vol 2 No 2:62-69.

Tesler, M., & Sears, D. O. (2021). "The rise of affective polarization: Understanding the partisan divide over policy preferences". *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24, 129-147.

Wales, K. (2001). *Dictionary of Stylistics*. England: Pearson Educational Ltd.