

**ANALYZING COMMUNICATION IN TELEVISION ADVERTS: THE
CASE OF MTN TV ADVERT "ETO'O PEUT".**

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the advertiser uses modes of communication in TV advertisements in an interactive way to communicate the advertising message to the consumer. These modes of communication, language, visuals, music, sound, and paralinguistic elements, are often seen and studied as semiotic resources. Very few look at it from a communication angle, that is, how they are used to pass the advertising message to the consumer present in the advert. What is of interest to them, is the structure of the semiotic resource, that is, the grammatical and syntactic structures of the semiotic resources used. Some studies have equally looked at each of these modes of communication individually, forgetting that in a TV advert, they automatically interact to share the message. This study is undertaken within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) drawing from Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA), which provides methodological tools that are applied in the analysis of the TV advert "Eto'o Peut". The data of this study consists of the linguistic, visual, musical, and non-verbal elements obtained from the observation of the TV advert. The analysis shows that the advertiser uses mostly nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs for verbal communication, sound quality, rhythm, and pitch for musical communication, contact and social distance for visual communication, and dress code and tone for non-verbal communication. All these communication devices interact to convey the advertising message to the consumer.

Keywords: communication, modes of communication, advertising message, Eto'o Peut, consumers.

Introduction

Communication is the process of transmitting a message by a sender to a receiver through a specific medium or different media. Therefore, for communication to be complete, the decoder must be able to interpret the message. To arrive at that, the encoder must ensure that the message is accurately communicated, using appropriate tools that will not hinder

interpretation and thereby produce an unwanted response to the message. Advertising as a medium communicates specific messages that are mostly about the product being advertised. To transmit the message and enable the consumer to interpret it appropriately, the sender uses the various modes of communication available through the medium used. Therefore, since it is TV advertising, the sender uses the different modes of communication present in TV adverts, which are language, visuals, sound and music, and non-verbal communication modes. These various modes are not put in the TV advert accidentally, they are put for a precise purpose to help the consumer to construe the meaning of the advert. To arrive at that then, these modes interact. This interaction, Cook (2001) states, is vital for the interpretation of the message without which the meaning of the TV advert is partial.

In advertising, two people are involved: the producer or advertiser and the consumer. This form of communication is a one-way type, that is, just one person is talking who is the producer, whilst the other, the consumer, is passive. In this wise, each of the modes of communication used should be able to affect the emotions of the consumer to have a positive response but also draw his attention and persuade him to react to the advert.

In this activity, for the advertiser to persuade the consumer, audience, or viewer, the advertiser designs his advert putting psychological, social, political, economic, cultural, environmental, and linguistic contexts in the setting of the advert. The advertiser will then use all kinds of strategies to create an identity between him and the consumer. To arrive at this, the advertiser will use powerful devices from the various modes of communication to ensure that their consumers can identify with them through the positive images and the perception of life they present. Despite this, research on TV advertising concentrates mostly on either the linguistic aspects or the visual aspects. From the research carried out, they rarely present both to my knowledge, that is, none has looked

into studying the different modes of communication used in TV adverts to transmit the message and ideologies as well as to understand its meaning. Whereas in TV adverts the message as well as the meaning is distributed unevenly among the various modes of communication. This implies that failure to consider it that way leads to a partial understanding of the advert. The trend in research in advertising is that most researchers look at the structural aspects of some of the semiotic resources used, and very few look at the functional aspects; whereas each of the modes or means of communication is not used and structured the way it is unwittingly. What trends in most research on TV adverts is the fact that the message, as well as the meaning, are mostly seen from the linguistic and visual modes of communication, neglecting the other modes of communication equally present in the TV ads. Thus, the advertising message is not just derived from the two modes of communication cited above but also from the other modes of communication, which also carry part of the message. This study questions this irregularity to demonstrate the importance of considering the other modes of communication to get the message.

Literature review

Music can be studied from a Discourse Analysis point of view. This is the case of Bouvier and Machin (2013) and Morteza (2017) who used Discourse Analysis, particularly Critical Discourse Analysis to look at music in an advertisement. Bouvier and Machin (2013) focused on how music communicates ideas, values, and identity about the product advertised and to show how music communicates, they used the social semiotic approach drawn from the linguistic works of Halliday (1978) and the visual design of Kress (2010). This approach describes detailly, the features of music theory that communicate adjectives such as 'thoughtful'. They examine how this music utilizes melodic form, sound quality, vocal and instrumental articulation, and rhythm to communicate

its meanings. The methodological design for such a work is the qualitative method and purposive sampling technique in data collection and analysis. The new Peugeot is targeted at a woman with several children though the features are not mentioned. It is the internal world of the woman that is, what she thinks and her attitudes, as well as her appearance and the settings where she appears that are utilized to load the car with its brand meaning. This is done through images, words, and sounds. The sounds contribute to creativity and space to think and place her identity as a person who has the space to think but, in a way, where she is confident enough and capable of being intimate with us. The sounds are delicate and lively yet with a chilling promise, delivered as the car appears in the final scene. In a sense, they suggest that this advertisement is one further step away from documenting products towards symbolizing them and towards symbolizing the relationship to have with them. Machin and Van Leeuwen (2007) in Machin and Bouvier (2013) indicate that changes in the kinds of images that we are now finding in the mass media are evidence of a shift away from documenting reality towards symbolizing it.

Morteza (2017) differentiates her work from that of Machin and Bouvier (2013) in that, the work tries to bring out a new methodological approach for the critical analysis of musical discourse in audio-visual advertising. It investigates the social meanings communicated by musical discourse in audio-visual advertising with different types of targets. When dealing with a multimodal text it is important to study the communicative mode as contributing to the whole text. This is the focus of this work.

Cook (1992) posits that studying these modes singly or focusing just on one mode is giving a partial meaning of the whole text and this is supported by what according to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) in Cara (2017) sees multimodality as the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event. Communication therefore can be considered as that process in which the product of one or more semiotic

modes is “articulated and interpreted” at the same time (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001:20) in Cara (2017). The qualitative methodological approach to this study was composed of three basic phases. Their analysis proved that music serves as a brand narrative and sometimes it participates in the process of persuading consumers by employing its semiotic modes. The results indicate that the tendency in YouTube commercials of women’s and men’s perfumes is to use exclusively original recordings or incidental music as soundtracks. They realized that it is difficult to interpret unambiguously such a trend. The absence of any other typology of advertising music in our corpus (e.g., jingle, Ad song, or cover version) could only be explained by analyzing a more extended number of commercials for fashion products or comparing them with different market segments. It also showed that explicitly giving a voice to female characters in the audio-visual narration is not considered necessary by advertisers for effective persuasion; hence, they are more likely to let the music speak for women. This study analyses in detail the other modes of communication and their effect on the consumer. Cara (2017) tries to bring out a methodological approach to musical discourse, which is quite different from what this study focuses on. This work stands out from others in the sense that it examines primarily how each mode of communication communicates and equally how they work together to affect the consumer.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is undertaken within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis abbreviated CDA which draws from the Multimodal Discourse Analysis (MMDA). MMDA is concerned with the analysis of both written/verbal and visual texts as modes of communication (O’Halloran, 2011). Therefore, looking into specific elements such as contact, social distance, linguistic elements, pitch, rhythm, sound qualities, dress code,

and tone enables us to show how they interact to help the consumer get the meaning.

In a TV advert, the modes of communication include visuals, verbal, sound, and music, as well as non-verbal elements. This approach then helps to demonstrate how the different semiotic resources considered as modes of communication interact among themselves. This article uses this approach because it combines almost all the semiotic resources to communicate the message and disclose the ideologies present in the TV advert. The analysis of contact and social distance will be interpreted following Kress and Leeuwen's visual grammar, language from Halliday's Systemic Functional language, and Music and sound from the social semiotics of Halliday.

The distribution of the message to the different modes of communication in an advert is made in such a way that the meaning of the message of the advert, can be clearly understood but one can also identify the hidden ideologies put across. This is because each of the communication modes carries a certain degree of the message and at the same time its meaning. So, each of the modes of communication from the most salient to the less salient communicates in one way or the other. Cook (2001) states that the meaning of each of these means of communication cannot be understood only by looking at them in isolation. It must be analyzed in relation to the other modes because each of these modes overlaps with each other, in the sense that language can be sung and this is the case in this advert.

Methodology

This paper makes use of qualitative research design and analyses MTN TV advertisement '*Eto'o Peut*' translated as '*Eto'o Can*'. The rationale for the choice of this MTN TV advert was due to the presence of various modes of communication. Due to a checklist, the TV advert was watched and the different modes of communication were identified and analyzed in line with the selected theory. The analyses considered discourses as

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verbal communication, contact and social distance as visual communication, dressing style and tone as non-verbal communication, and pitch, rhythm, and sound qualities as "musical" communication. All these elements were examined as the communicative components of a TV advertisement.

Data Analysis and Discussion

The 'Eto'o Peut' advert used in this study portrays the different modes of communication where each carries a degree of the message and how from these modes of communication ideologies are conveyed. One of the ways MTN has seen to draw the attention of their consumers to their TV adverts on internet services *linguistically* is through naming, and the use of lexical items such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. In the TV ads, this is done to arouse the interest of the consumers to the internet service, which according to what they say is abnormally fast, and there is the possibility to do whatever you want to do. In the description of the internet service, MTN is trying to portray a lifestyle that will attract the youth who are the main target here. Since Eto'o is a known public figure admired by the youths, they use him as the main protagonist for the youths to continue to dream to be like him but also to do the things he does. One of the linguistic choices is the noun phrase 'Eto'o Peut' translated as 'Eto'o Can'. There is the use of adjectives such as 'amazing, pretty, fast, impossible', and verbs such as 'can, do, make' adverbs (abnormally). MTN's use of the vocabulary in this advert is positive and familiar. For example, the images shown come to sustain what is said linguistically. Part of the lyrics says, "He makes the impossible an easy task" and this is sustained as he is shown doing something impossible to do and with no stress. He is carrying two people on a bike, kicking pineapples, and browsing on his phone. When looking at his facial expression, he is smiling and there is no presence of wrinkles because he shows no sign of his face being frowned out of doing something very

strenuous. The music, especially the sound quality particularly the plainness of the voice which implies that he is unaffected also accentuates the linguistic message of the advert.

In the interaction of the modes of communication seen above, the idea the advertiser is trying to build and put in the minds of the consumer is that of strength. This idea is portrayed by the words such as “impossible”, “amazing”, “can”, “do” and “make”. The advertiser addresses himself to the youths because it is at this stage of life that power is mostly seen and used. It is at this very stage of life that they like to show that nothing is impossible to do and they are seen trying hard just to show that they have strength. So, the advertiser agrees with them by making them see that just like Eto’o they have the strength to do whatever they want to as they want to. He equally makes them believe that if Eto’o can, then they too can do.

Music and sound are used by advertisers to communicate ideas, attitudes, values, and identities (Bouvier and Machin, 2013). Each of the aspects of music has a potential meaning, which indicates an idea, attitude, value, and identity about the service advertised. In the advert ‘Eto’o Can’, there are some music and sound elements used such as tension and plain sound qualities, rhythm, and pitch meaning. The sound qualities found in this advert are that of tension versus relaxed and plain. The voice of the male singer is relaxed and at the same time plain but that of the music is tense. According to Van Leeuwen (1999), tense music connotes energy, therefore, since the music in the advert is tense it connotes energy and the relaxed and plain voice implies nature, innocence, and faith. Rhythm in Bouvier and Machin (2013) is either even or uneven as well as fast or slow. Therefore, the rhythm of the music in the advert is even and at the same time slow. This indicates ease, relaxation, and lightness. Under pitch, the meaning is accentuated mostly on the pitch movement, which shows that the music is static and this implies unchanging. Visually the energy reflected from the tense

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music is demonstrated as Eto'o is shown doing several things at a time. The gesture of the hand also reflects energy or strength in the sense that, the hand lifted indicates a sign of strength and energy.

The lexemes attached to the internet connection advertised by MTN from music and sounds are words such as relaxation, energy, ease, innocence, and lightness. These characteristics of the internet connection are mostly directed to the younger generation since they do have a lot of energy as compared to the older generation whose strength is fading away due to old age. Since the younger generation has a lot of energy to give out, they are therefore able to do several things at the time, especially things that give them pleasure. This can be seen as Eto'o is presented as multitasking: he is kicking pineapples, holding a bike with two people on top, and most importantly browsing by texting and twitting, skypeing, and dipping. One of the factors that show that this advert is concentrating on the youths, is the fact that the advertiser provokes them to compete with Eto'o to see if they can do the same as him by saying this: "*if Eto'o can do it, then so can you*". This implies that the idea put across by the advertiser to the consumer is the idea of competition. Life in a sense is a life of competition to know who is best at what than the other. They are equally trying to portray the idea that with the internet connection, everything becomes easy to achieve or to get. What was difficult to get, with the internet connection has become so easy to acquire as it is said in the lyrics of the song of the advert, "*he makes the impossible an easy task*". MTN advertisers indirectly are trying to bet that their internet connection service is better than that of the other mobile telephone companies. The use of phrases such as "while surfing the internet abnormally fast, crazy, crazy fast internet" tends to show that their internet is faster than the others are.

In **visual communication**, one of the ways used to address viewers directly or indirectly is *contact*. Contact is constituted of two kinds of

image acts: demands and offers. Demand has to do with the demand of particular goods and services and it takes place when the represented participant looks directly at the viewer and what is demanded depends exclusively on how the look is conveyed. This demand is realized using a gaze that indicates a form of direct or indirect statement to the viewer. Gaze usually takes the form of a vector, which is formed by the glance of one or more of the animate represented participants outwards to the viewer of the visual, which is most often supported by a gesture (Kress and Leeuwen, 1996). Offers have no contact made between the participant and the viewer. At this point, the viewer is the subject of the look and the represented participant is the object the viewer looks at. This means that the represented participant is being offered as an item of information, an object of contemplation.

In the advert under study, the contact fluctuates between visual demands and offers. **Visual demands** occur when towards the end of the advert Eto'o Fils gazes directly at the viewer with a smile and makes a gesture with his phone towards the direction of the viewer. In doing this, he establishes a contact between himself and the viewer, which is a sort of relation because the represented participant Eto'o Fils shows the viewer the image of him he searched on Facebook. This is seen in the images below.



Plate 1: images showing visual demands

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Visual offer is seen from the beginning of the advert where the whole body of the star Eto'o is being presented but the represented participant, Eto'o does not look directly at the viewer. As the advert continues, he is shown as an object of contemplation as he is shown doing several things at a time, as can be seen below:



Plate 2: images showing visual offers

The interaction of the different modes of communication at this level brings out another idea directed to the youths which is that of presenting life as being easy. The lyrics of the song of the advert talk of Eto'o making the impossible an easy task, the musical notes of the music are made of three simple notes and this brings us back to the idea of ease that is portrayed throughout the advert. The dress he wears is simple reflecting the idea of ease. The advertiser aims to offer the youths everything simple and easy, things that will not complicate their lives. Therefore, MTN offers them this opportunity with the advert 'Eto'o Can' where chatting and skyping become very easy and stress-free.

Social distance is another means of communication in *visual communication*, which builds an imaginary relation between the represented participant and the viewer. They can be portrayed as friends or as strangers. It is equally used to establish or show respect for authorities in face-to-face interaction or even on television. This relation therefore is portrayed or presented through the size of frames. These sizes of frames go from extreme close-ups to medium-long shots.

The size of frames can be used to convey a sense to the viewer of his or her social closeness to the represented participant (op. cit. 124) in Micheal O’Toole (2011). These social relations are realized by the varying size of the frame that goes from very close-ups shots to long or distance shots as presented below.

Frame Size	Characteristics	Social Relation
Extreme close up	Face and head	Intimate distance
Close up	Head and shoulders	Personal distance
Medium close shot	Cuts approximately at the waist	Far personal distance
Medium shot	At the level of knees	Close social distance
Medium long shot	Shows full figure	Social distance

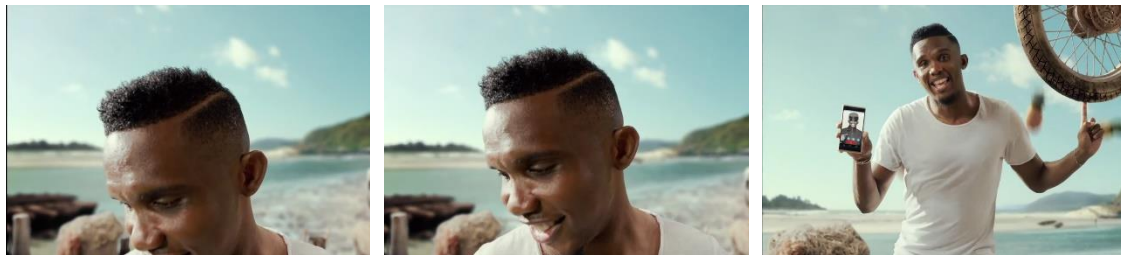


Plate 3: Images showing the social distances between Eto’o and the viewer

In the advert Eto’o Can, Samuel Eto’o Fils is presented as a very close friend to the viewer as he is presented from the head and gradually takes his distances as the size of frames becomes longer and stops at the

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medium-long shot that shows a social relation with the viewer. This implies that the advertiser considers that Eto'o is intimate since he is loved and admired by many, especially the younger generation but also must be respected viewing or looking at his social status. This is also reflected in the lyrics of the song, which says, "*This guy Eto'o is amazing..., if Eto'o can do it, then so can you*". The rhythm of the music also plays a role in emphasizing the kind of relationship between the viewer and the represented participant. This is shown by the fact that the rhythm is slow and even.

Paralinguistic communication is part of the various modes of communication and some of them fall under non-verbal or paralinguistic communication. This form of communication deals with the act of communication with the entire body. David Abercrombie (1968) says, "We speak with our vocal organs, but we converse with our entire bodies. Paralinguistic phenomena occur alongside spoken language, interact with it, and produce together with it a total system of communication. The study of paralinguistic behavior is part of the study of conversation: the conversational use of spoken language cannot be properly understood unless paralinguistic elements are taken into account". As an important component of communication, it can either enhance or alter the meaning of verbal communication. Its features are so important because they can completely change the message in the sense that they are cues, which are intentionally used to express real thoughts and emotions alongside the verbal message.

One of the first elements used to communicate is the **tone, which** represents the quality of sound. The tone of a voice according to Mehrabian (2013) in Tameh (2016) is responsible for about 35-40 percent of the message sent. Tone includes the volume used, the level and type of emotion that is communicated, and the emphasis laid on the words

chosen. The tone used in MTN's advert Eto'o Can is jovial. This joviality is seen in the lyrics as follows:

*Look at those people and the man with the knife,
Just wishing they could be amazing at life,
tatatara tatarata.
Just wishing they could be amazing at life
Tatataratatarata) 2x
Texting and twitting, skypping and bipping
Crazy, crazy fast internet) 2x
Ta ta ta ra ta ta ra ta*

The images also contribute to emphasizing this joviality as he is shown shaking his body from left to right and at the same time smiling. Life is stressful especially nowadays, where things have changed for the worse. Consequently, when the advertiser uses such a tone, to present their internet services, they are presenting illusionary ideas in the sense that, a real normal human being cannot carry a bike with two fat people on top of it with a finger

The producer tries or wants to bring the consumer who is also the observer to trivialize the hardness of life, demonstrating that the human being can do anything if he wants. He still gives the idea that the impossible can become possible. In the sense that Eto'o can carry with his finger two people on a motorcycle. He invokes a strong and serene state of mind. The youth is the future of tomorrow

Dress Code is another paralinguistic form of communication. Dressing can speak, that is, communicate a particular message with the person with whom the wearer is interacting. For example, the kind of dress a woman wears when invited by a man sends a message to the man either to woo him or show her indifference. From someone's dress, the person can communicate his or her social class, identity, and even the image the person wants to portray.

"Eto'o Peut".**Plate 4: images showing the dress code of Eto'o fils in the advert**

In the advert under study, the advertiser uses the dress code to communicate to the consumer. The idea the advertiser communicates then is the idea of simplicity and from the dress code, it is clear that it is addressed to the youths. Eto'o in the advert is wearing a brown trouser with a white t-shirt and sneakers as seen below. His dress is not just simple but is equally the type a youth will easily wear and this makes it in such a way that the youth will effortlessly identify himself with Eto'o Fils who is a model for them. The youths need a model that they can emulate.

Conclusion

This paper sought to investigate how the advertiser uses various modes of communication interactively to transmit the message and bring about hidden ideologies. Although it is necessary and important to consider the other means of communication apart from language and images to get the message and meaning in the advert, researchers and advertising agencies still concentrate only on the language or only on the visuals or go to the extent of considering both. Very few have come to understand that not taking into account the other means of communication, which are also vital for the comprehension of advertising as a text is erroneous. Each of them has a specific way to pass across the message and give the meaning. Thus, if the consumer is unable to understand a specific mode, he can easily understand the other because each of them is passing along the same message and meaning but in different manners. The primary aim of advertising is to persuade the consumer and the advertiser in the

advert Eto'o Can therefore, targets the youths through the communicative devices they use in passing out the message of the internet service. Due to the interaction of the modes of communication, the hidden ideologies are revealed from which the consumers identify and which, can eventually contribute to persuading them into buying the internet service advertised.

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