

The Structure of Yoruba Local Drug Advertisement

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This paper presents a breakdown of the analysis of the structure of the monologue of advertisers of local drugs in the ancient city of Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Since this practice of selling local drugs seems to solve some health problems of many in the community, people from all walks of life all over the country identify with this mode of drug selling. The data consists of texts from the advertisers of the drugs who move from city to city in motor vehicles. Both personal and non-personal contacts are used in the advertisement and sale of the local drugs. Since computer and Internet facilities are still not within the reach of many people in Nigeria, being a developing nation, Internet advertising and its benefits are yet to be realized. Analysis of the data showed that the advertisers and sellers of these drugs enjoy the patronage of the restricted populace they serve probably because of the mode of advertisement, the supposed efficacy of the local drugs, the psychology of the not fully educated sets of people they serve, as well as the low cost arrangement ensured by the manufacturers and vendors.

1. Introduction

The study of discourse in language is part of the research into the basic function of units above the rank of the sentence. In discourse, we examine the function of utterances, i.e. statements, commands and so on, and terms- such as informative, elicitation, directives and the like. Scholars in the past have tried to study and find out how and why people speak the way they do and the implications of such utterances for listeners. Coulthard and Montgomery (1981) worked on the structure of monologues with special attention to science lectures. They noted that earlier work on classroom interactions, interviews and discussions and committee meeting did not solve a major problem of how to analyse long utterances. They therefore proposed units in the analysis of long utterances and these are those, which open transactions, and those, which close them. The utterance which opens transactions is referred to as 'prospective focus' and the one that close them is the 'retrospective focus.' Today, in some of the developing nations, one of the human endeavours where long utterances may be used situation is the world of advertisement and marketing. Advertising is very important in modern business because it is one of the best ways of introducing a customer to goods and services. Initially, advertising was informational. It gave information about the utility of the product. Today, advertising talks about the product's status (style, appearance). In the U.S.A of the 1920s, the World War 1 affected the mode of advertising and consumer culture. Manufacturers had to find means of paying off debts on mechanisation by getting more people to pay attention to their goods. Manufacturers then turned to advertising as a means of generating interest in the products.

Advertisement is more than simply talking to people. It is important to know what motivates people to go for a product and what people wanted from a product. Richard, F. Taflinger (1996) says advertising is the non-personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various

media. Ricahrd. F. Taflinger (1996) notes a series of ten psychological appeals that advertising uses to motivate people to buy products. These are self-preservation, sex, acquisition of property, self-esteem, personal enjoyment, constructiveness, destructiveness, curiosity, imitation and altruism. A psychological appeal is a visual or aural influence on the sub-conscious mind and emotions of the people. To be effective, a psychological appeal doesn't have to make sense. The society determines what is right and what is wrong and the individual responds to such stimuli unconsciously. Advertising aims at making you marginally dissatisfied with the way you are and it is only by purchasing the product that you can get or gain the desired self esteem. Ron Roats (1997) working on 'The Social Effects of Advertising' notes that manufacturers generate interest in their products by creating an affluent interesting lifestyle for their advertisement, attaching products to that affluent, interesting lifestyle and selling products as attachments to the lifestyle. Philip Kotler (2003) working on 'The Principles of Marketing' notes that advertising can build awareness, build market share, allow a company to be heard above the noise in the market place and set a product apart from competitors. Advertisements must get consumers' attention, aim at getting them to buy and identify the product, and deliver the selling message. Advertisements often break the rules of grammar, syntax, image and even society. Words (printed or spoken) and illustrations (pictures, either drawn or painted) are important in advertisement. Effective advertisement can depict how a product can enhance listeners' social lives by improving their sex appeal or self esteem or increase their earning power. The advertising agent has a wealth of information about the product being sold and to whom it is targeted (especially their habits, past, present and future).

It was in the 19th century during the industrial revolution that true product advertising began. Products were being mass-produced and this led to three areas in marketing. The first was production-oriented when demand exceeded supply. So there wasn't much need to promote products. Later on, production increased and supply exceeded demand and this led to sales-oriented era, when companies promoted their products to cause consumers to buy their products. As time went on, production expanded and this created surplus of goods, which made producers to begin to find out what consumers wanted instead of trying to talk them into buying their goods. This is the marketing- oriented era, which is where we are today. An example of this progression is the American auto industry, which has grown so much that when non-American manufacturers entered the American market they first tried to find out what Americans wanted in their cars, and then built their cars to suit that taste. Marketing orientation does not mean 'no advertising;' it only means a change in the advertising strategies where the advertiser readily responds to consumers' inquiries relating to their products. Advertising serves as a booster to the economic activities of manufacturers and industrialists generally. Henry K. Skolimowski (1977:19) says:

The advertising messages are psuedo-messages, not genuine messages. They do not contain factual information. At any rate, this is not to inform but to force us to buy..... The illogical man is what advertising is after. This is why advertising is so anti-rational, this is why it aims at uprooting not only the rationality of (people) but (their) common sense.

Precisely, the advertiser tries to bombard prospective consumers' visions and sense of

hearing with a lot of emotive words such as 'best', 'finest', 'quality', 'top', and 'king size' to entice them to buy their goods without really thinking much about it. Advertisers also use phrases or expressions, which are popularly admired by people. Phrases such as 'none like it,' 'settle for the best' and 'you can't afford to miss it' etc. are good examples. Advertisers structure their sentences and other language units in such a way as to produce a dramatic effect. Additional visual reinforcement also has vocative functions, all of which serve to entice the listeners or viewer to buy their goods. Supporting the above claim that the advertiser does not use language to 'inform' the advert audience but to subtly cajole through emotive words. Eric Webster (1969:68) says:

Not only do you have to address the consumer in the right words, you have to make sure that the concept you present are acceptable. Right or wrong, people will only accept ideas that fall into line with their previous experience and their existing opinions

Concepts like 'class', 'good taste', usually invoke 'wisdom' and 'prosperity' and this attracts social recognition. Advertising has assumed another great dimension through Internet facilities. Almost everything and anything can get advertised on the Internet. Consumers' attention can be obtained by attracting attention through animated objects stimulating their interest by asking a question, creating mirth or by promising something.

Research has shown that the word 'free' is a very powerful word in advertising language. It stimulates a quick response from prospective buyers. Everyone likes free products, services or samples. Inclusion of 'free' items or services often gets positive response from consumers. Manufacturing companies and firms now advertise on the Internet as the Internet gets bigger and bigger everyday. Advertisers now include search boxes, scroll bars, pictures of beautiful women not associated with the product being sold, drop down list boxes especially for banner advertisement all, and pop-ups to get the attention of consumers. There are all kinds of instructions and icons to get viewer to open up the list.

There is also the type that is explicitly designed to make the user pick up the phone and by-pass the Internet correspondence. Advertisers check the effectiveness of their advertisement quickly by finding out how many people visit the website each month. Jay Conrad Levinson who is probably the most respected marketer in the world invented Guerrilla marketing and is responsible for most of the outrageous marketing campaigns in history including the 'Marlboro Man' talks about 'the new power of advertising' by referring to a website as an island. To him, in the past, the goal of advertising was to make the sale but this has changed with the growth of "dotcom" companies all over the Internet. To Conrad, the current goal of much advertising is not to make the sale but to direct people to website where they can get far more expressions all in a bid to attract prospective buyers.

In Nigeria, advertising tends to persuade people or warn them against one social evil or danger as the case may be and many of the government advertisements are on preventive health care. Advertisements can be through the radio, television, newspapers, handbills and motor vehicles. Doghudje (1977) notes in his article on 'Advertising Strategy and Tactics' that the average Nigerian customer is a hungry, angry and frustrated person who does not know where to turn to for solace in terms of health services. The public hospitals that are easily accessible now charge exorbitant fees though they are no more than mere consulting clinics. An average Nigerian

customer can therefore be easily cajoled into patronizing advertisers of essential things and drugs at affordable prices. In Nigeria, a lot of essential things are hawked including traditional drugs. In a bid to be current too, manufacturers of traditional medicine in Nigeria have tried to use modern ways of advertising their wares. Some of the advertisers use motor vehicles with microphones and they move round towns and villages advertising traditional medicine, which have already been modernized in production. Opinion surveys carried out by scholars on some villagers concerning their medical care reveal the high dependence of villagers on such traditional medicine (Adegbite. 1991). Advertisers of local drugs do not however limit their advertisement to the villages. They advertise in the cities as well. Despite the western medical practice prevalent in the cities, many cities dwellers turn to traditional medicine to cure disease that seem to defy modern medicine. In relation to this fact, Adegbite (1991:11) says:

Speaking in most nationalistic terms and in line with the recent favourable posture of the World Health Organisation (W.H.O) on the practice, some literate members of the Nigerian community, among whom are journalists and university scholars, have in the decade consistently challenged the colonially induced sole official recognition of modern medicine in the country-and have called for the recognition and consequent integration of traditional medicine with modern medical practice.

This is probably one of the reasons why the sale of the local drugs cannot be discouraged. Some scholars even hold the view that lack of recognition of traditional medical practice will only lead to a waste and total extinction of wisdom, creativity and originality of our forebears. In the Yoruba language, a wide range of oral literature has been researched into and documented by scholars such as Oladeji (1980), Olabode (1981), Babalola (1982) and Akinnaso (1982) just to name a few. All these scholars have worked in areas of stylistics and socio-linguistic analyses of texts in order to observe the linguistic, literary or situational contexts in them. However, not much has been done on the discourse functions of Yoruba language registers in the area of advertising. Our focus in this paper is therefore on the local advertising agent and sellers of traditional medicine from Oshogbo, Osun State of Nigeria. They advertise and sell drugs like *agunmu jeidjedi* (medicine for pile), *oogun ajerun*, *lapalapa*, *eela*, etc (medicine for dandruff, eczema, ringworm, skin infections, etc.) by moving round towns and villages in motor cars or buses. At this point, the contributions of Ricahrd. F. Taflinger are worthy of note on the issue of personal/non-personal contact in advertising. He differentiates between personal and non-personal contact in advertising. To him, advertising is non-personal but effective; it is far cheaper than personal selling and deals with hundreds or thousands of people at the same time. Advertisers conduct research about customers and determine how best to get the message across to them. On the other hand, personal selling is expensive, labour intensive, time consuming and results in more rejection than sales and can be nerve-racking, frustrating and potentially humiliating for the sales person. In Nigeria, advertisers of local drugs use both personal and non-personal contacts. They start from non-personal by using their loud speakers to announce their presence and arrival at crowded streets and places. Some of them even have already recorded versions of what they say. They drive round while the cassette player does the work of introducing the drugs, its advantages, efficacy, prices as well as prescribed method of usage. The drug seller ends up with the personal contact, which according to Taflinger is very laborious.

Some prospective buyers move close, touch and smell the drugs and move away again. Some buy the wares after much explanation and the drugs seller goes on with his monologue. Unfortunately, the computer services and the Internet have just started gaining ground in Nigeria; therefore, not many people have access to them. So this personal and non-personal contact in advertising and marketing of local drugs in Nigeria will still go on for a very long time to come.

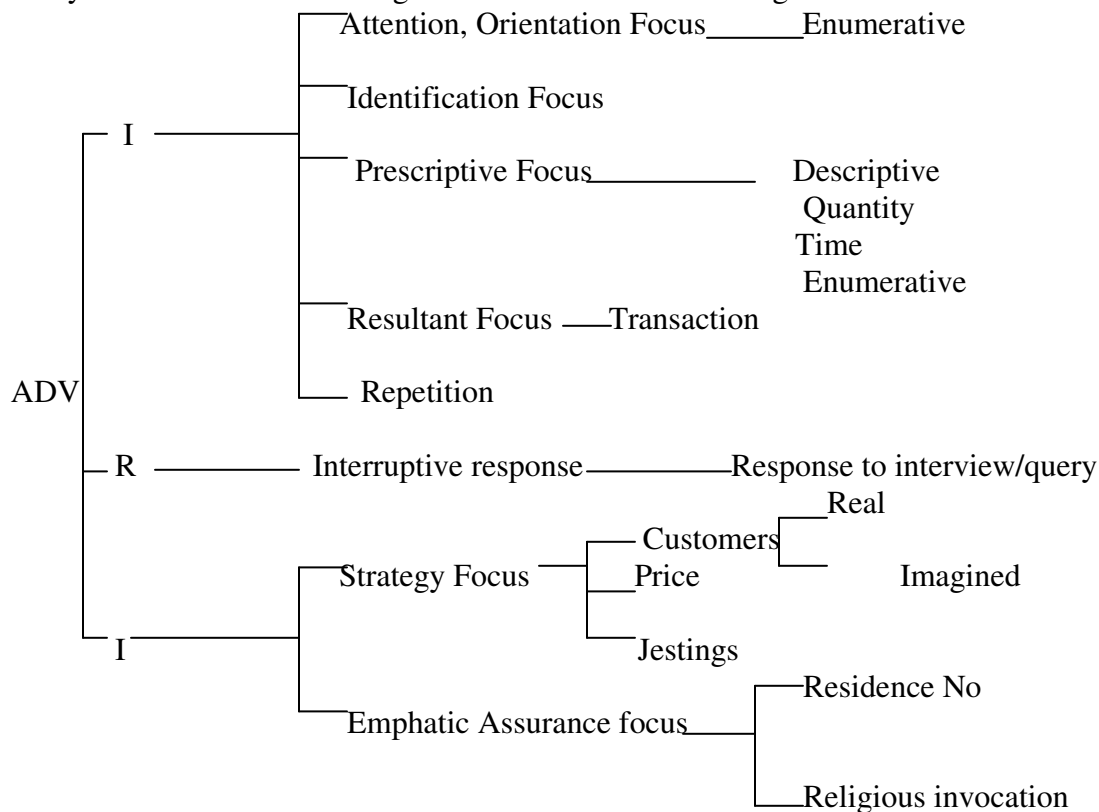
Ethnographic Background

Information gathered reveals that the family of Aranfaajo, Odofofin's compund, Osogbo, started the idea of advertising locally made drugs some decades ago. The family name 'Aranfājo' literally means 'Body needs attention'. Just like other local enterprises, some of the people making and advertising locally made drugs today trace their mastery to that family. The type of locally made drugs advertised by these people range from those that destroy cockroaches, bedbugs and rats to those that clear off skin infections like pimples, craw craw, rashes, etc. The local drug advertisers travel and advertise their drugs in many cities in the southwestern states in Nigeria like Ondo, Ibadan, Ile-Ife, Akure, Ado-Ekiti, Lagos, Aramoko, Efon-Alaaye etc., making substantial amounts of money. Some of these advertisers of locally made drugs use electronic gadgets like loud speakers and microphones connected to the batteries of motor vehicles. The sales agents advertise using the microphones and draw the attention of the public to the wares they are selling. It is not only their advertisement that has been modernised, even the presentation of the drugs has. The drugs are now neatly enveloped and instructions for usage are written on the packs. In an attempt to advertise the drugs, the local advertising agents engage in long monologues, which are intermittently interrupted by customers wishing to buy from them. Some of these customers buy out of curiosity while some are already convinced of the efficacy of the drugs. In this paper, we hope to be able to:

- ❑ Examine the structures of the monologues of these advertisers of local drugs and determine the discourse functions of the structural choices.
- ❑ Determine why, in speaking the way they do, they attract customers to themselves.

The data for this work was collected from some advertisers of local drugs from Oshogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. It was collected through some means of a cassette recorder and through verbal interviews and dialogue with the agents in the city of Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. A trip was also made to Osogbo to find out more facts about these sellers of local drugs. 10 foolscap pages of transcribed data were collected from the drug advertisers. These were carefully studied and analysed. The transliteration and translation of the data was thereafter done using part of the framework identified by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975), Coulthard and Montgomery (1981) and Ventola (1987), which is the initiation, response, feedback (IRF) exchange structure. This is in addition to the modifications and additions introduced by the researcher. The framework is summarised with the following systemic network.

A Systemic Network Showing the Structure of the Monologue of a Local Advertising Agent



ADV –Advertiser

I- Initiation

R- Response

The IR (F) exchange structure used in this network is as outlined by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975).

Analysis of Texts

In the texts examined, the advertiser’s monologue has its major component as identified in the systemic network. The texts will be analysed with reference to these component.

Attention Orientation

This term was borrowed from Ventola (1987). Here the advertiser introduces himself/herself and the medicine for sale in a particular street. He/she informs the people of the type of drugs available for sale. With the microphone he alerts expectant prospective buyers to listen and draw near as in:

A tun gbe de o, e maa bo
 Emi baba Adio, oko jedijedi ni
 E maa bo
 We have brought it again, you come

I, Adio's father, master of pile
Keep coming

It will be noted that the advertiser mentions the fact that he/she has brought it again. This shows that it was not his first trip. He/she has been visiting the area and has been making sales and this encourages the advertiser to keep coming, as there is the likelihood that the patronage will continue. In trying to alert the buyers, the advertiser mentioned his name with the belief that those who have used his drugs before and have been relieved of their ailments will not only come but also bring others along. In the text below which is also attention orientation, the advertiser draws attention to his professional ability in traditional medical practice by mentioning what the drugs cannot do in lines 4 and 5.

Sample 2

Oogun ti awa nta yi.....1
Eleyii kii soogun ara riro.....2
Kii soogun efori.....3
Ti jedijedi ataran4
abi kinu maa kun ni.....5

The medicine we are selling
This is not medicine for body pains
Nor is it for headache
It is the one for pile and worms
Or rumbling stomach

Identification Focus

The advertiser knows that many people have great belief in traditional African medicine and so brings in the identification focus in the following text:

Sample 3:

Oogun awon eniyan dudu ni.....1
Agunmu ni taa fi n paran ati.....2
Jedijedi tabi kinu o maa kun.....3

It's black people's medicine
It's pound and eat medicine
For destroying worms
And pile or rumbling stomach

In the identification focus, a number of diseases or symptoms of diseases are enumerated and people who suffer from such diseases tend to move near the advertiser or be tempted to do so especially when those diseases defy Western medicine in the individual. Some Nigerians believe that black peoples' medicine is actually more efficacious than Western medicine. That is why the advertiser probably emphasises in line 1 of sample 3 that it is black peoples' medicine. The following text enumerates the type of diseases that the drugs can cure, i.e.,

Sample 4

Ifo ni o, eela ni o, kuruna ni.....1
Abi tanmona, tabi ajerun tabi.....2

Be it eczema, be it skin infection, be it rashes
Or ringworm or dandruff or...

The diseases and skin infections mentioned are some of those common in the lives of people in the area. Some of these diseases such as eczema, ringworm, and skin infections, rashes are common where the standard of living of the people is very poor. Maintaining good environmental sanitation and living in modern and well-ventilated houses may be difficult because of the level of poverty of the people. As a result of the contagious nature of these diseases, people get infected and re-infected continually. The advertiser repeats this diseases conditions several times until she/he feels that everybody in the neighbourhood has heard. The act that is used to realise this move is enumerative and this also re-occurs under resultant focus.

Prescriptive Focus

The prescriptive focus has to do with how to use the drugs, the people that can use it, the quantity to use, the time of the day and with the food that goes with them. The advertiser takes time to go over the method of administration of the drugs as in the following text:

Sample 5:

O le da a sinu girisi, o le da a.....1
Sinu adin agbon.....2
Tomode tagba lo le lo.....3
Ko si igba to o le lo.....4

You can put it in pomade, you can put it
In locally made pomade from coconut
It is for both young and old
You can use it anytime.

The prescriptive focus in the structure of the monologue of the advertiser present some form of modernisation in the sale of locally made drugs in that they indicate the use, the duration and quantity of the drugs packed.

Eekan soo la' n lo o, e da a sinu tî gbona
We use it only once, pour it into hot tea

Our findings showed that most of these drugs are in powdered form while a few are in tablet form that needs to be grinded before use. It was also discovered that most of them have multiple function. For example, the drugs for pile and worms can also cure rumbling stomach, painful spinal cord or constipation. In other words, the presence of worms in the human body, according to traditional medicine healers is the cause of many other diseases. This is unlike Western medical practice where specific drugs are made for specific ailments at a time. The advertisers of

local drugs make us realise that the use of these drugs will produce some effects in the body system of the user. This leads to the next move which is the “Resultant Focus” as in:

Sample 6

O o ni gburo aran ati jedijedi mo.....1
Waa ya mogbe danu.....2

You will not experience worms and pile again
You will expel it with your faeces

Here, the advertiser enumerates the resultant healing effect of the use of the drugs such as quick and fast relief from pains, total eradication of the symptoms of the disease, etc. With the resultant focus, interested buyers will be tempted to draw near and buy. The advertiser repeats this over and over again to prove to the buyers that he/she means business. Occasionally, prospective inquisitive customers interrupt the advertiser’s monologue as in:

Sample 7

E mu kan wa.....1
Bring one

The coming of the customer gladdens the heart of the advertiser who goes over the types of drugs that are available again to attract more customers. The advertiser normally has another apprentice in the vehicle who will attend to customers as they come while the speaker rattles on with the microphone.

An interruptive response can also come from a researcher or someone trying to make enquiries about the sale of the drugs. Some strategies are employed by the advertiser to promote sales and this leads us to the strategy focus.

Strategy Focus

The following are examples of strategies used by the advertiser.

Sample 8.

Won ni e duro, oo ri bayi.....1
Oun ni gbogbo eniyan ngba yi o.....2
E ba mi mu kan fun won.....3
Naira marun la’ ta.....4
Abi ko maa so leemewaa.....5
Waa gbo foon hah!.....6
Won a ni iya Aduke o tun bere.....7
Okore a ni o tun de.....8
Oun a ma sa jade ninu yara.....9
Jedijedi lo fa, walahi.....10

You are asked to wait, you see now
That is what everybody is asking for
Kindly give him/her one
We sell it for five naira
Or you foul the air several times
You hear foon ha!
They will say mama Aduke you have started again
The husband will say she has come again
He will run out of the room
Pile is the cause, true to God

The strategy focus here can be seen in three parts. First, the advertiser at times assumes and announces the presence of some imaginary customers just to attract the real customers as in line 1-3. Second, the announcement of the price as in line 4 and third, jestings about women farting as a result of symptoms of some of the enumerated disease conditions, as in lines 5-9. This is in line with the findings of Rudman and Verdi (1993) who worked on sexual usages of women where references to women in adverts are either derogatory or sexually submissive postures. The drugs are at rock bottom prices compared to the exorbitant prices of modern medicine. Apart from the fact that the jestings have positive effect of drawing the attention of customers to the drugs being advertised, it tends to paint the picture of what some people are actually going through in their homes. Since the advertiser seems to have a solution to such problems, some curious buyers move near to satisfy their curiosity. If after the purchase of the drugs, the quantity relieves the customer of the symptoms of the disease for a while, the buyer is then encouraged to keep on buying at such affordable prices of 5Naira per sachet until the ailment is cured. It is however important to note that it is women that are commonly used as the topic of the fun or jestings used by advertisers to make their advertisement lively, even though men are not free from such behaviours either. At other times, the fun could centre on the relationship between men and women. The advertisers sometimes include the fact that some of these problems occur in the lives of men and women. It is not uncommon to see some men who hear such reference to their ailments or masculine impotence drawn near for help. To assure the buyers and listeners in the neighbourhood of the sincerity of purpose of the advertisement concerning the drugs, the advertiser uses what we refer to as emphatic assurance focus. For example:

Sample 9

Ani bi mo se nsoro yii.....1
A wa o maa ta ayederu egbogi.....2
Oruko mi, o wa lara re.....3
Too ba de igboro Oshogbo.....4
No 10 Owolawi street.....5
O o ba lara oogun temi nta yi.....6
Too ba de igboro Ibadan.....7
N2/20 Adeoye road.....8
Walahi ohun ti won npe ni jedijedi.....9
O gbodo boo ja mo.....10
Tabi kinu o maa kun.....11

I say as I am speaking
We don't sell fake drugs
My name is on it
If you get to Oshogbo township
No 10 Owolawi street
You'll see it on the drug I am selling
If you get to Ibadan township
N2/20 Adeoye road
True to God, what is called pile
Must never trouble you
Or rumbling stomach

In the emphatic assurance focus, the advertiser assures the prospective buyers of the efficacy of the drugs by giving a contact address, meaning that the buyers could call on the advertiser if there is any query on the drugs i.e. lines 5-8 of the text above. It is quite unimaginable to think that anybody would want to spend about 100 Naira (Nigerian money) on transportation for example, going from Ife to Osogbo in Osun state, on a fact finding mission or complaint about the drugs all because of the 5 Naira worth of medicine purchased. Some religious invocation is undertaken to show the sincerity of the advertiser's mission as in line nine of the text above. The audience probably believes that since no evil has befallen the advertiser and since no case of death has been publicly reported as a result of taking the drugs, then the advertiser must be saying the truth. It has also been noticed that some of the advertisers stay and keep on advertising until late at night for the benefit of people who will like to draw near under cover of the night not only to buy drugs but to seek for further help from the drug sellers, especially men who suffered from impotence. During an oral interview with some of the advertisers, the researcher of this paper was informed that it is not all the time that it is the manufacturer who does the advertisement and sales of the drugs. The manufacturer uses apprentices for the sale of the drugs. Some of these apprentices claim not to know the composition of the drugs in terms of what has been used in preparing them. This is probably done to be able to control the market in order to facilitate more sales and reduce the number of competitors.

Conclusion

Based on this study, it is clear that many people patronize these local drug sellers. One of the advertisers interviewed claimed to have been making a reasonable amount of money everyday, although this may not be from one location, as they move from one town to another. They seem to have a lot of customers because of the relatively low prices of the drugs compared to the prices of western medicine. There is the belief that some diseases defy western medicine and that the only way out for such diseases is African medicine. To protect and promote their sales, the advertisers are secretive about the items that have been used in preparing the drugs. This is very much unlike western medicine where the composition is printed on the drugs. The drugs seem to be meeting the needs of the people, which explains why people keep on patronizing them. For decades now, the manufacturers have been serving the people and some of them actually testified that the drugs are efficacious. The manufacturers themselves seem to have become more confident as they now announce their residence and print their identities on the sachets of the drugs. The structure of the monologue of the advertisers in terms of what they say and how they

say it makes it attractive to customers. It is therefore not surprising to see different people from all walks of life buying the drugs from the advertisers.

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