

A critical discourse analysis of the audience's evaluation of telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers

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Abstract

Critical discourse analysts often depend on textual analysis for the interpretation and evaluation of the ideological effects of the text on the audience. This usually undermines the audience's interpretation and role in discourse studies. Thus, this paper reports the audience's evaluation of language use in telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers. The objectives of the study were to investigate and evaluate the readers' awareness of the manipulation of language used in the advertisements. The study adopted Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and Hall's encoding and decoding theory as its theoretical framework. It used a survey method in which questionnaires were used as an instrument for data collection. The questionnaires were administered to 200 respondents selected randomly from two universities in Nigeria which were selected purposefully based on regional representation. The data were analysed quantitatively. The overall results of the audience evaluation of language used in the advertisements show that the majority of the respondents were aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisements and its effects (73%). The overall results of the interpretation of the advertisements as a discursive practice show that more than half of the respondents could interpret the force of the representation (55%). But the overall results of examination of advertisements as social practice show that more than half of the respondents could not evaluate the manipulation of the language used as part of the ideological manipulation of consumers within the capitalists' ideology (53%). Therefore, the paper concludes that the textual analysis is not adequate to determine the ideological effect of the language used in the advertisement texts.

Keywords: Advertisement, audience, critical discourse analysis, discourse, telecommunication service provider & manipulation



Introduction

The nature and role of the audience in discourse studies is sometimes complicated because the term ‘audience’ can be applied to a diverse and complex practice of discourse consumption (Schrøder, 2009; Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 2009). Based on this, Johnstone (2008) points out that the audience’s roles are not imagined in this same way everywhere. For instance, in media discourse, sometimes, they are perceived as imaginary, passive or active members of the society (McQuail, 2009). In advertising discourse, they are defined as consumers of not only advertisements but also goods and services (Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 2009). And in recent times, especially with consideration to feedback mechanism, the audience are now seen as co-participants in discursive event.

Give this basis, some discourse studies have examined the audience of media texts as active participants in message consumption, reception or interpretation (Hall, 1993; Schrøder, 2009; Windahl, Signitzer & Olson, 2009). Nevertheless, in critical discourse studies, the position of the audience is often substituted with that of analysts (Fairclough, 1992). This is perhaps because audience are perceived to be at the mercy of manipulation, who need to be helped or empowered, and whose ability to evaluate meaning according to situation, need or interest is shortchanged by producers of such a message (Fairclough, 1992; van Dijk, 2001; Wodak, 2001). As a result, there is a tendency in CDA to interpret and evaluate the audience’s manipulation purely from textual component in discourse production (Fairclough, 1992). Considering this, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), in their review of critical discourse approaches, observe that many critical discourse analysts do not evaluate audience’s response, and this accounts for the near absence of audience research in CDA approaches. In the light of the foregoing, this study explores a critical discourse analysis of audience’s evaluation of language used in telecommunication service providers’ advertisements in Nigerian newspapers.

Critical discourse analysis

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a multi-dimensional approach to the study of how language is used or manipulated to achieve ideological or persuasive effect, power or influence (Fairclough, 1992; Hart, 2014). As such, for Fairclough (1992), CDA is a way of examining the dialectical and constitutive relationship between language, power and ideology as manifest in discourses. van Dijk (2001, p. 352) sees the approach as “a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies [and exposes] the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts”. According to van Dijk (2001), CDA is not only concerned with dominate ideologies but also with oppositional ideologies where resistance is significant and relevant to change and emancipation, and even evaluation. Meanwhile, Weiss and Wodak (2003, p. 15) explain that CDA is “fundamentally interested in analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationship of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language”. Giving the above, Hart (2014, p. 2) argues that CDA as a “particular form of discourse analysis which, in one guise at least, seeks to disclose the ideological and persuasive properties of text and talk which might not be immediately apparent without the assistance of a systemized descriptive framework such as a grammar or topology”. This makes CDA analysts to view language with questionable character



because it is the site in which ideologies, power relations and resistance are constructed, expressed, exercised and negotiated (Fairclough, 2001; Baker & Ellece, 2011). Thus, to all critical discourse analysts, CDA is concerned with productive, abusive or manipulative power imposed on the passive audience through language use. By this, the analysts see CDA as an approach that aims to help the audience to understand the motive of producers of messages, differentiate between what is fact and opinion and resist instances of manipulation, exploitation and dominance.

However, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) observe that although CDA recognises the role of the audience in the discourse production and reception, it tends to assign passive role to an audience by which text producers are seen as the alpha and omega of discourse production, and thus audience control. Hence, the investigation into discursive manipulation of language use is often limited to the analysts who claim a messianic role. The implication of this, as noted by Schrøder (2000) and Jørgensen and Phillips (2002), is evidenced in the near absence of empirical studies on the audience's evaluation of language use.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis and Hall's encoding and decoding theory as its theoretical framework. Although the two theories are concerned with critical investigation of ideological effect of meaning and value from the stage of production to reproduction, Fairclough's model is much concerned with social and ideological effect of textual properties as produced by the text producer where the receiver is positioned as a passive participant (Fairclough, 1992); and Hall's model with the ideological effect of the interpretation process where the receiver is seen as an active participant (Hall, 1993). As such, the two theories are selected to complement each other in this study. First, Fairclough's theory of critical discourse analysis sees discourse as an important component of social practice that reproduces and changes social representation, social relation and identity and that is also determined by discourse practice as well as social practices and structures (Fairclough, 1992). As a discursive practice, Fairclough considers advertising discourse to shape and to be shaped by the production, circulation and consumption processes where advertisements are generated as a means of communication and a product for consumers' interpretation and consumption. Similarly, as a social practice, it is shaped by context of situation, institution and society or culture where the text can be seen as a means of ideological power. For instance, in advertising discourse, the context of situation is taken as marketing; institution as media and advertising; and society as the ideological, economic and political system that regulates the means of production, distribution and consumption. Its text is said to be constructed with the evaluative expressions such as comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs aimed to create personality or position for products; the use of conversational language or synthetic personalization such as pronouns to involve the audience in the discourse, and the use of imperative structures all to induce patronage (Fairclough, 2014). This is so because the capitalists' ideology which shapes advertising discourse sees its texts as an instrument for creating and maintaining consumption and market competition-hegemonic power through persuasive and comparative use of language.



In his model, Fairclough (1992) recognises the power of a text producer to produce social effects without possible resistance or variations of interpretation from the receiver of the text; which according to some scholars like Hall (1993) and van Dijk (2003) is also ideological. As such, Fairclough's theory is said to be biased towards not only text analysis but also analysis of producer's intended meaning and purpose where the audience is considered as an object of manipulation (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Nevertheless, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework is often used to analyse discourse from critical point of views. These dimensions involve the description of linguistic and textual properties of a text; interpretation of a text as a discursive production, distribution and consumption; and explanation of discourse as a form of social practice.

However, unlike Fairclough's theory, Hall's theory considers the audience as active participants in the process of discourse production, circulation, use and reproduction (Hall, 1993). The theory argues that the audience have power to interpret discourse according to their needs, experiences and situations; be it personal, social, cultural or economic (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001; McQuail, 2009). It formulates this on the assumption that the audience are usually aware of the intended meaning produced in discourse. This is against many discourse theories that give the discourse producers the power to influence the audience' beliefs, values and behaviours according to their interests; and thus investigate discourse effect in that order.

So, in his critical framework, Hall (1993) rejects the notion of meaning being objective and fixed by its producer as well as one way of interpreting it; rather he locates different meanings in the different positions of production and reception. Based on this, he proposes different ideological ways of decoding discourse in terms of understanding, interpretation, evaluation and social effect. Although, he accepts the position that producer's intended meaning can be encoded in a discourse in many ways which may be difficult to resist, he recognises the possibilities of the audience rejecting or re-interpreting it to suit their needs or social positions. He considers this as part of ideological effect of texts. Based on this, he provides a framework for ideological analysis of the audience' ideological interpretation of discourse. Hence, according to Hall (1993), there are three ideological ways of reading meaning to a text. These are classified by some scholars as types of reading or social positioning of readers: preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001).

The preferred reading is realised when the audience read and interpret both the denotive and connotative meanings of a text and accept the values and the effects the way the producers expected. Textually, the preferred meaning and effect are evaluated with expressions of positive responses such as statements of agreement, belief, understanding, satisfaction, affirmation, support, acceptance, legitimacy, etc. In this sense, the text is read and interpreted objectively without the interpreter questioning its values and positions. So, at pragmatic level, the illocutionary or literal meaning and force of the text are deciphered in line with the producers' intended meaning and ideology. For instance, with preferred reading, the advertisement is seen as an objective information to help consumers to make purchase. In this sense, the audience have no input to the meaning being shared because they fellow the dominant position. Thus, the audience is said to become an object of manipulation by the producers who exercises hegemonic power over them.



In the negotiated reading, the audience read and interpret the meaning of the text as expected by its producers but resist the ideological influence of the discourse by acting differently according to their values and needs. In this, the readers understand the literal meaning, but form their own ideological interpretations contrarily to the producer's ideology (Sturken & Cartwright, 2001). This is to say that the readers modify the intended meaning to reflect on their values, beliefs and position. Textually, the negotiated meaning and effect are evaluated with expressions of either positive or negative responses such as statements of doubt, mix feelings, uncertainty, adjustment, compromise, skepticism, reservation, concession, correction, transformation, replacement, etc. Based on this, the readers may accept and reject some of the information and the values represented in the text. In effect, the audience exercise partial roles of resistance.

While by the oppositional reading, the audience understand the meaning of the text and interpret it differently from the producer's perspective or ideology. In this, the readers understand the perlocutionary force of the meaning and reject it because they believe that it is not to their interest or expectation. So, they reject the kind of meaning or influence the producer would expect to achieve. Besides, the audience do not only resist the influence of discourse but they also act according to their needs, beliefs, values, experiences and interest. By this type of reading, the readers belief that the meaning is constructed subjectively with the values and interest of the producer. Textually, the oppositional meaning and effect are evaluated with expressions of negative responses such as statements of disagreement, disbelief, misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, negation, rejection, resistance, criticism, disobedience, reconciliation, etc.

Therefore, Hall (1993) maintains that these three types of reading indicate that discourse have different kinds of interpretations. In line with this, Schröder (2000) and Sturken and Cartwright (2001) posit that advertisements can have multiple layers of meaning that can be interpreted in different ways which can mean something different to different people. Thus, the Hall's encoding and decoding theory is considered appropriate to this study which seeks to explore a critical discourse analysis of the audience's evaluation of language used in telecommunication service providers' newspaper advertisements in Nigeria.

Methodology

This study adopted a survey method of research in which a questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The study sampled 200 members of staff from two universities in Nigeria. The members of staff were selected purposefully because they form part of newspapers' audience target since newspaper readership is associated with educated class of the society. The two universities were selected purposefully to represent the two major regions of the country: Northern region and Southern region. The universities selected were Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State; and University of Lagos, Lagos State. The questionnaires which contain both open and closed ended questions were administered randomly by the researcher and research assistants recruited purposely for this exercise. The data collected were analysed by a quantitative method based a simple percentage statistical analysis.



Data presentation and analysis

The section presents the socio-demographic description of sampled respondents and the analysis of their responses. The analysis of the data is based on the one hundred and ninety-five (195) questionnaires returned and whose respondents were validated as the audience of newspaper advertisements.

Table 1: Percentage distribution of respondents' demographic data

Variables	Category	Frequency			Percentage
		Male	Female	Total	
Gender	Male	108	87	108	55%
	Female	-	-	87	45%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%
Age	21-40 Years	10%	8%	35	18%
	41-60 Years	26%	22%	93	48%
	61-70 Years	19%	15%	67	34%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%
Qualification	First Degree	22%	18%	78	40%
	Master	16%	13%	56	29%
	PhD	17%	14%	61	31%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%
Job Classification	Academic Staff	33%	27%	117	60%
	Non-Academic Staff	22%	18%	78	40%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%
Specialisation	Science	9%	8%	33	17%
	Social Sciences	12%	10%	43	22%
	Arts	16%	13%	57	29%



	Legal	6%	5%	20	10%
	Medical	4%	4%	15	8%
	Engineering	8%	6%	27	14%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%
Religion	Islam	30%	25%	107	55%
	Christian	25%	20%	88	45%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%
Region	Northern	28%	22%	97	50%
	Southern	28%	22%	98	50%
	Total	55%	45%	195	100%

Table 1 above indicates the description of demographic data of the respondents based on gender, age, qualification, job classification, area of specialisation, religion and region. In regard to gender, the table shows that 55% of the respondents were male and 45% were female. This shows that more than half of the respondents were male. In terms of age, the table shows that most of the respondents were within the ages of 41 to 60 (48%), followed by the respondents within the ages of 61 to 70 (34%), and then the respondents between the ages of 21 and 40 (18%). This discloses that the respondents within the ages of 41 to 60 dominated the sampled population, and this is the category of people who patronise newspapers. In relation to qualification, majority of the respondents had first degree (40%), followed by respondents with PhD's (31%) and then the respondents with master degrees (29%). For the job classification, the majority of the respondents were academic staff (60%) and some of them were non-academic staff (40%). In reference to area of specialization, the analysis reveals that most of the respondents specialised in arts (29%), some in social sciences (22%), and few in sciences (17%) and engineering (14%), and a very few in legal (10%) and medical (8%) professions. In respect of religion, the analysis shows that more than half of the respondents were Muslims (55%) and some of them were Christians (45%). In reference to the regional based of the respondents, the table reveals that 50% of the respondents were based in northern part and likewise other 50% were based in southern part of Nigeria. This means that the respondents were equally represented in the sample of the population.

Table 2: Readership analysis

Items	Variables	Frequency	Percentages
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Readership	Yes	195	98%
	No	3	2%
	Total	198	100%
Frequency	Regularly	104	53%
	Not Regularly	91	47%
	Total	195	100%
Newspaper	Daily Trust	55	24%
	Leadership	24	11%
	This Day	24	11%
	The Nation	20	8%
	Punch	27	13%
	The Sun	24	11%
	The Guardian	50	22%
	Total	225	100%
Purpose/	Awareness	95	49%
Motivation	Purchase	60	30%
	knowledge	14	7%
	Entertainment	15	8%
	Research	7	4%
	Other purposes	4	2%
	Total	195	100%

Table 2 above indicates the analysis of the respondents' readership of the advertisements in the newspaper. In relation to the readership, the analysis reveals that 98% of the respondents indicated they read the advertisements in the newspapers and 2% of the respondents indicated



that they did not read the advertisements. This shows that the majority of the respondents were exposed to the telecommunication service providers' advertisements in the newspapers. Meanwhile, in respect of frequency of readership, the analysis shows that 53% of the respondents read the newspapers regularly and 47% of the respondent were not regular readers of the newspapers. In regard to the type of newspapers read, the analysis discloses that some of the readers read the *Daily Trust* (24%) and the *Guardian* (22%) and few of them read the *Punch* (13%), *This Day* (11%), the *Sun* (11%) and *Leadership* (11%). This shows that the advertisements were widely spread in the newspapers. In reference to the purpose or motivation for the reading of the advertisements, the analysis of the responses shows that 49% of the respondents read the advertisements for awareness and 30% of the respondents read the advertisements to make purchase and the other respondents for other purposes. This indicates that most of the respondents read the advertisements to get information and some of them read the advertisements in order to purchase items of the telecommunication service providers.

Table 3: Audiences' evaluation of language used in the advertisements

Questions	Responses	
	Yes	No
1. Are you satisfied with the kind of language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile in the newspapers?	182 (93%)	13 (7%)
2. Do you agree that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile in the newspapers reflects the kind of services they rendered or products advertised?		
3. Do you feel being personally talked or referred to in the way MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile use the words 'you' and 'your' in their advertisements?	30 (15%)	165 (85%)
4. Do the use of comparative and superlative adjectives such as 'best', 'better', 'number one', 'cheaper', etc. and adverbs such as 'more', 'most', 'faster', 'easier', etc. make you think different of the advertisers' products and services?		
5. Do the words such as new, beautiful, richer, smart, free, more, best, etc. used to describe some 9Mobile, MTN, AIRTEL and GLO products and services make you think good of the products and services?	171(88%)	24 (12%)
6. Does the use of expressions such as 'for you', 'for N10 only', 'as low as N25', 'with pride', 'everywhere', 'now', 'just', etc. with some of the advertisements give you the impression or reason to buy the service advertised?		
	170 (87%)	25 (13%)
7. Do you think that the use of Nigerian pidgin in the advertisements		



by MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile adds to your familiarity with the telecommunication services and products?

8. Would you say that the language used by GLO, MTN, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile to describe their products or services is exaggerated?
9. Do you feel that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile is constructed to make you subscribe to the service offered or buy their products? 165 (85%) 29 (15%)
10. Do you believe that the ways MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile use language in their advertisements in newspapers influence your patronage for their products or services?
11. Do you accept that the language used in advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile appeals to your needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing? 165 (85%) 30 (15%)
- 167 (86%) 28 (14%)
- 177 (91%) 18 (9%)
- 187 (96%) 7 (4%)
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	149 (76%)	46 (24%)
	32 (16%)	163 (84%)
Total (Percentage)	1425 (73%)	520 (27%)

In the table 3 above, the respondents expressed high satisfaction (93%) with the language used in the advertisements of telecommunication service providers. They strongly agreed that the language used in the advertisements addressed them (88%) and thus attracted them to the products advertised. They also agreed that the adverbial group gives them good reasons to patronise the telecommunication services (85%); adjectival group makes them think good of the products and services (85%); the use of comparative and superlative adjectives such as ‘best’, ‘better’, ‘number one’, ‘cheaper’, etc. and adverbs such as ‘more’, ‘most’, ‘faster’, ‘easier’, etc. make them think different of the advertisers’ products and services; and the pidgin expressions familiarise them more with the products (86%). But majority of them indicated that the language does not reflect the service rendered by the companies (85%). They also agreed strongly that the language used in advertisement was exaggerated (91%). They further revealed that the service providers do not satisfy their need for effective and efficient communication services (84%). They also indicated that these kinds of expressions were used to motivate them to buy or patronise the telecommunication products and services (96%). Thus, the overall results of the audience evaluation of language used in the advertisements show that the respondents were aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisements and its effect (73%). But they used their experience with the services of the telecommunication companies to evaluate and question the language used for not being the true reflection of some of their claims about their offers (85%). Likewise, the open question responses show that the audience understand the power of language to attract them to patronise the telecommunications services.

Table 4: Audience’s interpretation of the advertisements as a discursive practice

Questions	Responses
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	Yes	No
1. Do the ways MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile describe (advertise) their products or services make you to have interest and desire in their products or services in the market?	170 (87%)	25 (13%)
2. Do you agree that the information presented on advertisements is relevant to the products or services advertised?		
3. Do you think that the advertisements of GLO, AIRTEL, 9Mobile, and MTN in the advertisements provide the objective information their products and services?	94 (48%)	101(52%)
4. Do you believe the words 9Mobile, MTN, AIRTEL and GLO use in their advertisements?		
5. Do you recharge airtime, register package, and dial codes where applicable as advertised AIRTEL, 9Mobile, MTN, and GLO?	82(42%)	113 (58%)
6. Do you consider the advertisements serious while buying airtime or data plan for your calls or browsing?		
7. Do you enjoy the call rates and discounts offered by 9Mobile, MTN, AIRTEL and GLO as advertised?	75 (38%)	120 (62%)
8. Do you feel different for patronizing any of the products or services of AIRTEL, GLO, 9MOBILE and MTN?		
9. Do you accept that the language used in advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile appeals to your needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing?	85(44%)	110 (56%)
10. Do you know that the telecommunication service providers' intention is to sell their products and service?		
		150 (77%)
	45 (23%)	
		105 (54%)
	90 (46%)	



		23 (22%)
	172 (88%)	
	190 (97%)	5(3%)
Total (Percentage)	1081 (55%)	869 (45%)

In the table 4 above, the most of the respondents disclosed that the ways MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile describe their products or services make them to have interest and desire in their products or services in the market (87%). Likewise, some of them expressed that they feel different by patronizing a particular product or service of a telecommunication service provider (54%). This shows that the consumers experience the benefits of the telecommunication differently. But some of the respondents also revealed that the information presented in the advertisements is not relevant to the products or service advertised (52%). They also indicated that the advertisements do not provide objective information about the products and services advertised (58%). Also, a good number of them indicated that they do not believe the words used in their advertisements (62%). They do not response to the advertisement as expected by the advertisers (56%). A good number of them also indicated that they do not consider the advertisements serious while buying airtime or data plan for their calls or browsing service (60%) because they do not enjoy the call rates and discounts offered by the advertisers (77%). However, the majority of the respondents agreed that the language used in the advertisements appeals to their need for efficient and effective telecommunications services (88%). In addition, the vast majority of the respondents expressed that they know that the telecommunication service providers' intention is to sell their products and service with kind of language used in the advertisements (97%). The overall results of the assessment of the audience's interpretation of the advertisements as a discursive practice show that the respondents can interpret the intended force of the representation constructed and the intended effect expected, and the factors that shape the production and interpretation of the advertisements (55%); even though they did not response to the advertisement as expected by the advertisers (56%). In the open ended question responses, the audience further maintained that there were cases of manipulation and deception in the language used in the advertisement.



Table 5: Audience's perception of the advertisements as a social practice

Questions	Response	
	Yes	No
1. Do you accept that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile appeals to your needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing?	172(88%)	23(22%)
2. Are you convinced with the language used in the advertisements that the products or services of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, 9Mobile, etc. are good to buy?		
3. Do you agree that AIRTEL, MTN, GLO, and 9Mobile fulfill the promises made on their advertisements?	71(36%)	124(64%)
4. Would you say that the language used in the advertisements of MTN, GLO, AIRTEL, and 9Mobile is deceptive or manipulative?		
5. Do you consider the language used in the advertisements to be ideological or strategic to achieving the goals of the advertisers for sales and profits?	60 (31%)	135(69%)
6. Do you think that the competition for sales and profits in the telecommunication market affects the ways the telecommunication service providers use language in their advertisements?	151(77%)	44(23%)
7. Do you know the ideology that shapes the language used in the advertisement production and consumption?	35(18%)	160(82%)
8. Do you consider the use of the expression, "Terms and conditions apply" on the advertisements as necessary?		
9. If yes, does it appeal to your sense of reasoning?		
10. Would you like the language use in the advertisements to be regulated?	80(41%)	115(59%)
	27(14%)	168(86%)



	118 (61%)	77 (39%)
	42(22%)	153(78%)
	155(79%)	40 (21%)
Total (Percentage)	911 (47%)	1039 (53%)

In the table 5 above, the result of the audience's perception of the advertisements as a social practice shows that the respondents indicated that the language used in advertisements appeal to their needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing (88%). Some of the respondents indicated that the competition for sales and profits in the telecommunication market affects the ways the telecommunication service providers use language in their advertisements (59%). But some of them indicated that they were not convinced with the language used that the products or services are good to buy (64%). They expressed that the service providers do not fulfill the promises made on their advertisements (69%). They also disclosed that the language used in advertisements is deceptive or manipulative (77%). Some of the respondents showed that the use of precautionary statement, "Terms and conditions apply" in the advertisements is necessary (61%) and it appeals to their sense of reasoning (79%). Majority of the respondents expressed that the language used in the advertisements to be regulated (79%). Therefore, it can be interpreted that the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ways the advertisers manipulated language to make unreliable promises. They can also explain the motive and intention for using such unreliable promises to get them to patronise their services. The majority of the respondents do not know the ideology that shapes the language used in the advertisement production and consumption (89%). Hence, most of the respondents revealed that the language used in the advertisements is not ideological or strategic to achieving the goals of the advertisers for sales and profits (82%).

Discussion of the findings

The aim of this study is to critically explore the audience's evaluation of language used in telecommunication service providers' advertisements in Nigerian newspapers. First, the results



of the demographic data analysis in table 1 reveal that more than half of the respondents were male and the respondents within the ages of 41 to 60 dominated the sampled population and this is the category of people who still patronise newspapers for information. In relation to qualification, majority of the respondents had first degree (40%), followed by respondents with PhD's (31%) and then the respondents with master degrees (29%). For the job classification, the majority of the respondents were academic staff (60%) and some of them were non-academic staff (40%). In reference to area of specialization, the analysis reveals that most of the respondents specialised in arts (29%), some in social sciences (22%), and few in sciences (17%) and engineering (14%), and a very few in legal (10%) and medical (8%) professions. This discloses that the audience were relatively educated to have the ability to interpret and examine the advertisements targeted to them. From the results obtained in the study, there is substantial indication that the audience qualification and area of specialization affect the levels that the way the audience interpret and evaluate the advertisements, as indicated in table 1 and 2.

Table 2 shows that the majority of the respondents were exposed to the telecommunication service providers' advertisements in the newspapers and more than half of the respondents read the students regularly (53%). The readership of the advertisements was widely spread across the newspapers. In reference to the purpose or motivation for the reading of the advertisements, the result shows that 49% of the respondents read the advertisements for awareness and 30% of the respondents read the advertisements to make purchase. This indicates that most of the respondents read the advertisements to get information and some of them to purchase items of the telecommunication service providers. In all this, the results revealed that the audience were conscious of their need for information about the services of telecommunication companies and the possibility of the advertisements satisfying their needs. By implication, the audience read the text to obtain objective and reliable information about the products or services advertised. Thus, this means that some of the audience were active participants in the meaning consumption (Hall, 1993).

In table 3, the overall results of the audience evaluation of language used in the advertisements show that the respondents were aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisements and its effectiveness (73%). In the result, the majority of the respondents indicated that the language used did not reflect the service rendered by the companies (85%) and they also agreed strongly that the language used in advertisement was exaggerated (91%). This constitute evidence of manipulative use of language to create a false representation, personality and position for products in order to draw patronage for it and also compete for market share. This reveals that the audience aware of the manipulation of the language used in the advertisement. But this result is contrary to critical discourse analysts' assumption that the audience are not aware of the manipulation use of language (Fairclough, 2001; van Dijk, 2001; Hart, 2014). However, the findings are in agreement with Fairclough's (1992) argument that the texts of advertisements are always replete with evaluative use of language for the audience's manipulation. But the result of the evaluation of the manipulation of the language used shows that the audience are not passive like perceived by Fairclough (2001). This further affirms Hall's (1993) claim that some audience of discourse are active consumers of texts.



Furthermore, in table 4, the overall results of the assessment of the advertisements as a discursive practice show that the respondents can interpret the intended force of the representation constructed and the intended effect expected, and the factors that shape the production and interpretation of the advertisements (55%). The results of the study indicate that the respondents understand the advertisers' intention and reasons for the advertisements which are to make them to patronise their services. However, some of them do not respond to the advertisement as expected by the advertisers (56%). As such, they do not believe the representation of the advertisers for their products. They respond to the force of the advertisements based on their need, satisfaction, interest and experience with the services of network providers. This also indicates that the meaning and effect of the advertisements are negotiated (Hall, 1993). In this sense, the negative responses constitute expressions of dissatisfaction and criticism about the assessment of the advertisements as a discursive practice. Thus, the respondents show some level of resistance to the influence of the advertisement on their buying behaviour. This further indicates how the audience's knowledge and manipulation of language use, need, perception, and experience affect their interest and belief about the advertisements and services rendered by the advertisers.

In the table 5 above, the result of the audience's perception of the advertisements as a social practice shows that the respondents indicated that the language used in advertisements appeal to their needs for effective and efficient mobile telephone calls and browsing (88%). Some of the respondents indicated that the competition for sales and profits in the telecommunication market affects the ways the telecommunication service providers use language in their advertisements (59%). But some of them indicated that they were not convinced with the language use that the products or services are good to buy (64%). They expressed that the service providers do not fulfill the promises made on their advertisements (69%). They also disclosed that the language used in advertisements is deceptive or manipulative (77%). Majority of the respondents expressed that the language used in the advertisements to be regulated (79%). But the overall results of perception of advertisements as social practice show that more than half of the respondents could not relate the manipulation of the language used to the ideological function of language used within the capitalists' ideology (53%). Therefore, it can be interpreted that the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ways the advertisers want to manipulate the consumers through unreliable promises. They can also explain the motive and intention for using such reliable promises to get them to patronise their services. The majority of the respondents do not know the ideology that shapes the language used in the advertisement production and consumption (89%). Hence, most of the respondents revealed that the language used in the advertisements is not ideological or strategic to achieving the goals of the advertisers for sales and profits (82%). Thus, these results can be interpreted that the audience could explain the marketing and economic contexts in which they consume and interpret the telecommunication advertisements in Nigeria but could not attribute this to the capitalist ideology for manipulative use of language as part of its mechanism for achieving its goals for sales and profits.

Furthermore, three different reading types in Hall's (1993) theory of decoding and encoding are identified in the text. The preferred reading, negotiated reading and oppositional reading. In the table 3, the respondents expressed satisfaction with the language used in the



telecommunication service providers' advertisements because it appeals to their need for effective and efficient telecommunication mobile services but they expressed dissatisfaction that it does not reflect the kinds of service rendered and enjoyed by the companies. This indicates that the meaning and effect of the advertisements are negotiated. Thus, the meaning of the text is negotiated because the readers understand the meaning of language used as expected by the producers of the text but compare it with their need and desire for effect and efficient telecommunication; based on which they recognised the language used to be deceptive because it does not reflect the real nature of services rendered to the consumers. Even though the text producers create false representation and positioning for their products, the respondent resist the temptation to be lured into making impulsive purchase. This also indicates that the meaning and effect of the advertisements are negotiated. Therefore, it can be interpreted that the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the ways the advertisers want to manipulate them through unreliable promises. These responses constitute expressions of dissatisfaction and criticism. Thus, the respondents show resistance to the influence of the advertisement on their buying behavior, even though they do not understand that this is part of the ideological or strategic use of language which is the concerned of critical discourse analysis as an approach.

Conclusion

This study has shown that some of the audience of the telecommunication service providers' advertisements are active interpreters and consumers of the text because of the levels of their awareness of the manipulation of language used in the advertisements. It further disclosed that the audience can interpret the effect and force of the language used but react to it according to their need, interest, experience and satisfaction with the service of the network service providers. This is made possible due to the level of education of the readers which provides them with the required knowledge to be able to understand and interpret the intention of the advertisers. Nevertheless, the study reveals that the audience could not evaluate the manipulation of the language used as part of the ideological manipulation for self-interest within the capitalist ideology. Therefore, the paper concludes that the textual analysis is not adequate to determine the ideological effect of the language used in the advertisement texts. On this account, the study recommends the application of audience analysis in CDA in order to have a balanced and fair interpretation of the social effects of the text.

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