Explicating Choice of MTN® Advertising Frameworks in Nigerian Print Media

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Abstract

The meaning that a communicator intends to make determines the choice of the lexemes that the individual employs. Thus, this study explored the textual choices of MTN advertisements; as such entities were utilised to generate meaning potential. Seven advertisements of MTN functioned as the objects of analysis. The application of Halliday's Theme-Rheme theoretical lens permitted the processing of the MTN advertisements into various semiotic slots. Such conceptual procedure informed the calibration of the textual components into different frequencies, using the table and graph to demonstrate clearer pictures of the outcomes. Observations showed the kinds of MTN advertising textual choices in two distinct sequences. The first was the thematic choices in the form of marked (*As Nigerians, we can weave...*), unmarked (*Friends are the reason...*) and conjunctive logical (*so, and, that*) constructs. The second aspect was the clause choices available in the texts. These clause choices emanated as declarative (*Love is a feeling...*), imperative (*So reach out*) with predicated themes (*Share the priceless gift of love*), and interrogative (*Are you in love?*) elements. One could also acknowledge disjunctive grammar (*A year of new challenges...*) and minor clauses (*Happy Valentine's Day*), operating in the communications. Contextually, the study might influence the MTN telecommunications operator to review the nature of textual choices of persuasion, having understood the structures available in the current analysis.

Keywords

advertising
choice
rheme
textual metafunction
theme

Ethical Lingua

Vol. 7, No. 2, 2020

ISSN 2355-3448 (Print)

ISSN 2540-9190 (Online)

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Article's History

Submitted 8 March 2020

Revised 7 May 2020

Accepted 7 May 2020

DOI

[10.30605/25409190.163](https://doi.org/10.30605/25409190.163)

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The issue of meaning in language use can neither be over-emphasised, contradicted, nor jettisoned in linguistic movements. This is because meaning is absolutely the thrust of using language. In [Halliday's](#) (1995) sense, everyone deploys language to make meaning so that the goal of language deployment is achievable. Thus, meaning-making is not only consistent in language; rather meaning creation is the drive and destination of language use in its entirety. Meaning making in language, one could attest, is the basic tenet of its employment. Considering the above edict as being sacrosanct could stimulate the authors to further remark that meaning, as the core element (competence) of language use, prevents the haphazard organisation of its grammatical devices. Language users arrange language components in the order acceptable to receivers and the owners of such a language, which [Chomsky](#) (1972) labels as the L1.

By implication, phrasal and clausal constructs of a language follow a particular order to produce meaning potential. The avoidance of chaos has informed a careful consideration of the structural elements that can be in partnership with another in a syntagm to yield the required meaning. The appropriateness of this string of words, in [Halliday & Matthiessen's](#) (2014) approach, is grammar. A reference to grammar, as enabled by suitability of the right combination of lexemes compellingly connects us to the concept of Choice. Choice, in [Fontaine, Bartlett, & O'Grady's](#) (2013) points of view, is an axiomatic terminology in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). This is a platform where scholars ([Fawcett](#), 2013; [Halliday](#), 2013) suggest that choice is meaning; and meaning is choice.

Fundamentally, Choice is systemic because the notion functions as a crux of variegated patterning stencils of analyses. Interactants, as [Kress](#) (2010) particularly articulates, frame different relevant elements to make meaning. To iterate, choice is the atom of language, playing a key role in meaningful communications. At this juncture, one could seemingly create a relationship between grammar and choice. The cogent reason is that grammar is the systematic wordings of a language, as communication through language is realisable through a system of choice ([Dalamu](#), 2019b). Choice is the father of grammar for choice gives grammatical decorations to constructions in different configurations to manifest meaning potential.

However, the advertising industry, as represented by MTN® in this work, operates within the orbital ambient of choice in order to reveal meaning to readers. One thing certain in advertising is that texts are created and organised to convince readers to the consumption of goods and services ([Fairclough](#), 2003). MTN, a telecommunications firm, makes several textual systemic texts to inspire recipients of the propagated messages. The interpretation of these choices does not only justify this study; the evaluation is the focus of this paper.

The writers cannot claim that there are droughts of scholarly elucidations of advertising structures in Nigeria. The authors are aware of [Ogbodoh's](#) (1990) perspective on the development of advertising-cum-public relations, and Awonusi's (1996) and (1998) manifestations on the commodification of political players. Awonusi considers politicians as sellable products in telemarketing, using Nigerian English (NE). As [Adedun](#) (2006) explores literary instruments, so also [Ijewere & Ghandi](#) (2012) explain the degree of

telecommunications reform in Nigeria. Moreover, [Isabona](#) (2013) addresses the revolution of telecommunications advertisements (henceforth: ads). [Mensah & Ndimele](#) (2013) analyse linguistic creativity, while [Osoba's](#) (2014) concern elucidates Anglo-Nigerian Pidgin. The Anglo-Nigerian Pidgin, in Osoba's elucidation, is a tool of persuading viewers of advertising phenomena.

As influential as these studies are, none of the articles focuses on MTN advertising let alone considering Halliday's systemic insights as the kit of analysis. Therefore, this study distinguishes itself from earlier research efforts, orchestrating Halliday's Textual Metafunction ([Halliday & Matthiessen](#), 2004; [Dalamu](#), 2017a) as the instrument of interpreting the textual choices of MTN ads in the print media. The goal is to reveal the textual organisation of MTN ads, as engaged to inspire readers

Choice, a Kernel of Language

It is imperative to state that all activities of human beings involve the notion of choice ([Halliday](#), 2013; [Lamb](#), 2013). This is because human beings operate in the universe and population of natural and physical resources to get going in life. For instance, the way that an individual chooses the dresses to wear to an occasion and the kind of food to eat is the same vein that such a person makes a choice of elements of language as a displayed output to produce meaning. In other words, the way one determines a type of car to purchase in a season and a kind of house to live in a place is the same way that an interactant chooses words to make a desired meaning. Choosing, in the writers' opinion, appears innate; the behavior is a subconscious task, projecting choice a natural phenomenon.

Choice is omnipresent and prevalent in Halliday's linguistics to an extent that the concept has dominated SFL ([Halliday](#), 2013; [Hasan](#), 2013) right from the time of the theoretical strands' evolution. The development has been blossoming and mutual with other disciplines, incubating a framework of SFL. Since about 1976, Halliday has maintained that choice is an essential nutrient of language in relation to structures and contextual hemispheres. This submission positions choice as a major antidote of meaning conceptualisation. Thus the argument:

The speaker of a language like a person engages in a kind of culturally determined behaviour, can be regarded as conveying simultaneously successfully, a number of distinct choices... in the environment of the selection... a certain range of further choices is available. It is the system that formalises the notion of choice in language ([Halliday](#), 1976, p. 3).

Following [Halliday](#) (1976), as the remark is still much relevant today; systemic linguistics regards choice as an intrinsic content of the clause and the context of its setting. It means that a language user makes choices to construct grammar out of similar available linguistic elements in the universe, as supported with socio-cultural norms of receivers ([Zhang & Shavitt](#), 2003; [Zhang](#), 2014; [Dalamu](#), 2018c). In respect to that, the idea of the paradigmatic order has come to play, as a framework that creates a thin line between the items chosen and the items that are not chosen. Furthermore, paradigmatic order thus brings about the contrast of vertical linguistic structures generating several paradigms. [Bloor & Bloor](#) (2013) emphasise that the elements that are not chosen have the tendency to be chosen some other time of communication events. The chosen elements that produce the grammar, in [Halliday's](#) (2013) perspective, produce quantitative patterns that characterise language as a probabilistic system. This quality seems to make probability a natural quality of language ([Thompson](#),

2004). Any act of choosing creates values ([Halliday](#), 2013, p. 35). Anyone who intends to make meaning chooses relevant linguistic items to do so.

In that regard, one might recapitulate that:

- Choice is a process, as the term relates to tenses (e.g. present-in-present act) of selecting linguistic devices to mean.
- Choice is culturally-oriented, as the notion fraternises with the social context of the interactants.
- Choice is an option selected out of the population of words accessible to a language user.
- Choice functions with complex recursion, as the terminology connects taxis in the form of parataxis and hypotaxis ([Halliday & Matthiessen](#), 2004, p. 383).
- Choice is a product, as the concept generates lexicogrammar and grammar as strings of linguistic components.
- Choice is meaning, as the framework transmits speaker's thoughts and ideas to receivers, creating appropriate knowledge and understanding.
- Choice is theoretical, as a mapping naturally-emanated from Saussurean paradigmatic and syntagmatic testimonies, to Firthian prosodic and polystemic insights, and developed as a core value of Halliday's SFL.
- Choice produces a system network, distributing linguistic delicacy in different suitable fractions and strata.
- Choice is analysable through the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual) – the conceptual heartbeat of SFL.
- Choice, by extension, has become inter-disciplinary, entwining, for instance, SFT with cognitive/neurolinguistics ([Lamb](#), 2010), SFL with the theory of codes ([Bernstein](#), 1990), SFL with displayed arts ([O'Toole](#), 1994), and SFL with reigning-cum-evolving multimodality ([Kress](#), 2010).

It is on these bases that MTN ads are strongly connected to choice, a fascinating instrument of coaxing subscribers and the other target audience to loyalty and patronisation. The choices could manifest in the form of grammatical ranks.

Theoretical Scaling

The researchers consider SFL suitable for this study based on its resourcefulness in textual analysis ([Wodak & Meyer](#), 2001; [Dalamu](#), 2020). One also observes the relevance of SFL in its concentration on the concept of choice, regarding language ([Fontaine, Bartlett & O'Grady](#), 2013). Such a focal strength motivates [Eggins](#) (2004) to claim that various theories of grammar appreciate text from a syntagmatic perspective, whereas SFL describes text from a paradigmatic stronghold, positioning choice as its ultimate treasure. In addition to that, SFL performs the analysis in respect to the three Metafunctions ([Fontaine](#), 2013) in which textual Metafunction is a part, as employed in this work.

Textual Metafunctions, to recap, is an arrowhead of the three Metafunction (ideational, interpersonal and textual). As a structural segment, SFL realises the concept as Theme and Rheme ([Bloor & Bloor](#), 2004). These concepts relate to analysts the modus operandi of language organisation, transporting a particular structural meaning to the audience.

A discourse that has a frail organisation, in [Ravelli's](#) (2000) argument, could surely lack suitable meanings because of its incoherence. Ordinarily, if one takes a closer look at a language, say English, for example, the investigators might acknowledge that the language organs are not haphazardly organised. English has a particular order in which the functional structures are 'foregrounded' and arranged ([Halliday & Matthiessen](#), 2014). There are inevitable rules that associate one lexeme with another to produce 'lexicogrammatical' structures.

This orderliness is necessary so that all the meaning potential in a text could be realised without a doubt in the message circulated to listeners. Different meanings could be decoded from a text owing to its organisational structure. [Ravelli](#) (2000, p. 52) mentions that "in text, the choice of first position is highly significant." The first position of a clause is what the investigation is highly interested in, that is, Theme. The study gives some values to Theme so that we could coherently and meaningfully understand, as observers, the information that MTN conveys to the audience. [Halliday & Matthiessen](#) (2004) elucidate that Theme expresses the element which serves as the point of departure of the message, locating and orienting the clause within its context remainder of the message.

Consequently, Theme depicts how MTN organises its linguistic communicative dynamisms, and connects its mandated textual structures with meaning. Given that context, [De Beaugrande](#) (1991) clarifies that Theme comes first and Rheme second in a clause. [Rashidi](#) (1992) certifies that Theme is the textual constituent that the encoder uses as the starting point of the communication. The component, [Rashidi](#) adds, begins to move the decoder towards the mainstream of the message. On that backdrop, the crucial ideational jumping-off influences the decoder's attention to the definitive thrust of the interaction. In [Butler's](#) (1985) thought, as Theme is a distinct element, operating as the signpost that gives the clause a focus, so also is Rheme functioning as the kernel of the message.

Theme, as [Thompson](#) (2014) asserts, is the foundation of a clause, and everything built on this foundation is Rheme. In other words, Theme only begins a clause but it is not the whole clause in totality except in a situation where a clause is elliptical, the remaining structure is Rheme ([Berry](#), 1996). Themes of individual clauses contribute to the textual meaning of the text ([Gee](#), 2011). However, a comprehension of Theme in text requires more than just understanding the cumulative effect of Themes in individual clauses. It is important to also explore how Themes flow from one linguistic realm to another. On that ground, [Ravelli](#) (2000) considers thematic development as unfolded in the form of Unmarked Theme, Marked Theme, Topical Theme and Thematic Theme. Unmarked Theme occurs when Topical Theme operates at the same time as a subject of the clause ([Butler](#), 2003). Marked Theme, [Martin & Rose](#) (2013) reveal, occurs when the Theme of the clause is not the subject. Topical Theme occurs whenever Theme is realised by a Participant, Process or Circumstance, whereas Thematic Theme occurs before Topical Theme.

Research Questions

The nature of this endeavour, critically, demands statistical explanations. That is the cogent reason for the following questions to be in affinity with graphical representations, deducible from tabulated textual components ([Dalamu](#), 2018d). Consequently, the following questions serve as guides for generating the kind of choices in the MTN ads.

- How are the componential textual choices of the MTN ads organised to influence subscribers?
- What is the nature of the cumulative of the textual components, as deployed to motivate readers?
- What kinds of clauses are utilised to stimulate readers to consumption?
- Are the cumulative structures of the clauses accountable, as deployed to promote the MTN goods and services?

As stated earlier, the authors have employed tables and graphs, following Dalamu (2018b) as viable mechanisms to generate the textual facts of the MTN ads.

Method

Participants

The collection of the MTN ads involved three individuals. These were Mrs. Bonke and the analysts. The major responsibility of Mrs. Bonke, 36 years, was to drive the authors around Lagos nooks and crannies, locating the signposts of MTN ads in strategic domains. Lagos was a site for data (MTN ads) collection for a reason that numerous industries propagate their ads in the Nigerian commercial nerve centre.

Instrument and Design

The electronic gadgets, assisting in gathering the MTN ads were *hp*® laptop and a Samsung *W50F*® camera. The camera was used to capture the MTN ads from the advertising plates on the signpost and the Punch newspaper. The Punch newspaper became relevantly-resourceful owing to its readership strengths in Nigeria. 21 ads of MTN were collected altogether, representing the population of the analysable resources. After the frames were downloaded into the laptop, the analysts used the *Microsoft Picture Manager*® to regulate the advertising frameworks into the appropriate shapes. The authors utilised a sampling procedure to choose the appropriate MTN ads, meant for analysis.

Procedure

The population of the MTN ads, amounting to 21 plates was stratified into seven segments. The authors selected one ad from each segment, making up seven ads. Thus, the analysts selected one ad from one segment. The choice of ads in this respect depended on: the structures of the textual nuances; the organisation of the textual choices; and the discourse patterns of the textual components, as represented in the plates.

It is worth stressing that the authors paid ₦15, 000.00 (₦ = the symbol of the Nigerian currency) to Mrs. Bonke for personal maintenance. This compensation was not the actual charges for her responsibility in this course; she was aware of the motive for the collection of the MTN ads, as being for a research purpose.

The theoretical balance sheet of this study rested on Halliday's Theme/Rheme terminology (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). This theoretical dais has assisted in revealing the semiotic choices of the MTN ads. Besides, Theme/Rheme, as a conceptual underpinning, permitted the analysis of different textual components, functioning in their appropriate positions to be

observed (Dalamu, 2017b), as demonstrated in Figures 1, 2 to 7. Such an observation informs easy textual accessibility, as represented in Figures 8, 9 to 11 latter in the study. The symbol “®” points readers to a registered entity. The slashes “//” and “///” are indicators of a simple clause and complex clause respectively. A combination of qualitative and quantitative procedures has assisted the study in discussing the meaning potential of the MTN ads.

Data Presentation

The texts below are the structures of the MTN ads

Table 1. Clauses of the explored MTN Ads

Advertisement	Clauses
AD 1	//Friends are the reason we smile//
	//Friends have a way of making every day seem special.//
	///So reach out //and life will always bring you reasons to smile.///
	///with MTN, life is fun...// life is beautiful///
	//Visit us online www.mtnonline.com //
AD 2	//Are you in love?//
	///Love is a feeling that brightens your day, //brings a smile to your face/// and lifts your heart forever.///
	//So make someone feel beautiful. Share the priceless gift of love//
	//Happy Valentine's Day//
AD 3	///Seasons come //and seasons go///
	//But y'ello days are forever.//
	///It's a new dawn,// it's a new year./// A year of new challenges and possibilities; of new friendships and relationships.
	///Reach out// and extend your boundaries./// Rest assured// that as sure as the sun would rise, //MTN is with you all the way.// //Look on the y'ello side of life because life beautiful.//
	//Happy New Year, Nigeria.// //The future is y'ello!//
AD 4	///MTN crashes rates at 10 //calls now as low as 17/sec. //A celebration is complete.///

Advertisement	Clauses
AD 5	//Fame strikes again//
	//Monica Ogah has emerged winner of winner of MTN Project Fame Season 4.//
	///Watch out for her// as she takes the entertainment world by storm...///
	//Get ready!//
	//Visit www.mtnonline.com //
AD 6	//MTN & Oando//
	//Refuel.// //Reconnect.// //Recharge.//
	//Bringing world class customer service closer to you.//
	//With MTN and Oando, the best of world class customers is always within reach.//
AD 7	///So just refuel //and recharge for a richer life///
	//From today, we can weave a beautiful tomorrow.//
	//As Nigerians, we only need to look within,// inspired by the thread of your green white green// and make things happen.///
	///Our Nation is in our hands // and we can dream a reality.///
	//Happy Independence Day, Nigeria.//

The following Figures 1, 2 to 7, represent the analyses of the clauses as demonstrated in Table 1, above.

1a	Friends	are the reasons we smile	
	Theme	Rheme	
1b	Friends	have a way of making everyday seem special	
	Theme	Rheme	
1c	so	reach out	
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	
1d	and	life	will always bring you reasons to smile
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
1e	with MTN,	life	is fun
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
1f	life	is beautiful	
	Theme	Rheme	
1g	visit	us on line www.mtnonline.com	
	Theme	Rheme	

Figure 1. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 1

2a	Are	you	in love?
	Theme [1]	Theme [2]	Rheme
2b	Love	is a feeling that brightens your day	
	Theme	Rheme	
2c		brings a smile to your face	
		Rheme	
2d	and	lifts your heart forever	
	Theme[2]	Rheme	
2e	So	make	someone fell beautiful
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
2f	Share	the priceless gift of love	
	Theme	Rheme	
2g		Happy Valentine Day	
		Zero -Theme Element	

Figure 2. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 2

3a	Seasons	come	
	Theme	Rheme	
3b	and	seasons	go
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
3c	But	y'ello days	are forever
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
3d	It	's a new dawn	
	Theme	Rheme	
3e	It	's a new year	
	Theme	Rheme	
3f	A year of new challenges and possibilities, of friendships and relations		
	Rheme		
3g	Reach out		
	Theme		
3h	and	extend	your boundaries
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
3i	Rest assured		
	Theme		
3j	that	as sure as the sun would rise	MTN
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Theme[3]
			Rheme
3k	Look on	the y'ello side of life	
	Theme	Rheme	
3l	because	life	is beautiful
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme
3m	Happy New Year, Nigeria		
	zero-Theme Element		
3n	The future	is y'ello	
	Theme	Rheme	

Figure 3. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 3

4a	MTN	crashes rates at 10
	Theme	Rheme

4b	calls	now as low as 17k/sec
	Theme	Rheme

4c	A celebration	so complete
	Theme	Rheme

Figure 4. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 4

5a	Fame	strikes again
	Theme	Rheme

5b	Monica Ogah	has emerged winner of MTN Project Fame Season 4
	Theme	Rheme

5c	Watch out	for her
	Theme	Rheme

5d	as	she	takes the entertainment world by storm...
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme

5e	Get	ready
	Theme	Rheme

5f	visit	www.mtnonline.com
	Theme	Rheme

Figure 5. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 5

6a	MTN & Oando
	Theme

6b	Refuel
	Theme

6c	Reconnect
	Theme

6d	Recharge
	Theme

6e	Bringing world class customer service closer to you
	Rheme

6f	With MTN and Oando	the best of world class customers	is always within reach
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme

6g	So	just	refuel
	Theme[1]	Theme [2]	Theme [3]

6h	and	recharge	for a richer life
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme

Figure 6. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 6

7a	From today	we	can weave a beautiful tomorrow.
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme

7b	As Nigerians,	we	only	need to look within
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Theme[3]	Rheme

7c	inspired by the thread of our green white green
	Rheme

7d	and	make things happen
	Theme[1]	Rheme

7e	Our Nation	is	in our hands
	Theme	Rheme	

7f	and	we	can make our dream a reality.
	Theme[1]	Theme[2]	Rheme

7g	Happy Independent Day, Nigeria
	Zero-Theme element

Figure 7. Thematic Analysis of MTN Ad 7

The study has generated some outcomes from Figures 1, 2 to 7, indicating the resourcefulness of the Halliday's (1995) Theme-Rheme conceptual gradient to the texts of MTN communications.

Results

Figures 8, 9, 10, and 11, below, represent the outcomes of the analyses shown in Figures 1, 2 to 7, above, as demonstrated in the Discussion Section. Thus, the study has divided the results into two parts.

Thematic Choices of MTN Ads

Figures 8 and 9, below, are statistical explanations on the thematic choices of the MTN ads.

Choices	Ad 1	Ad 2	Ad 3	Ad 4	Ad 5	Ad 6	Ad 7
Unmarked	3	1	5	3	2	1	1
Marked	4	5	8	0	4	6	3
Thematic	2	2	5	0	1	3	2
Topical	5	4	7	3	5	5	3
Conjunction	2	2	5	0	1	2	2
Conj. Adjunct	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Continuative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Modal Adjunct	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vocative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Zero-Theme	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
Elliptical Theme	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

Figure 8. Thematic Choices of MTN Ads

Two devices are obvious in Figure 8, above; that is, a table and a graph. The table and graph illustrate the nature of the thematic choices operational in the MTN ads, served as the data of this investigation. Given that remark, the authors have utilised Figure 9, below, to expound the cumulative structures of the thematic choices for prompt accessibility.

Choices	Total
Unmarked	16
Marked	30
Thematic	15
Topical	32
Conjunction	14
Conj. Adjunct	0
Continuative	0
Modal Adjunct	0
Vocative	0
Zero-Theme	3
Elliptical Theme	1

Figure 9. Cumulative Thematic Choices of MTN Ads

It is crystal clear that the linguistic components of Conjunctive Adjunct, Continuative, Modal Adjunct, and Vocative are of no value in Figure 9. Nonetheless, Topical Theme and Marked Theme are the first prominent choices in the MTN ads. This is because these two components score 32 and 30 points respectively.

In sequence, one might consider Unmarked Theme of 16 points, Thematic of 15 points and Conjunction of 14 points, as the second grade of choices, deployed to persuade the target audience. Figure 9 reveals Zero-Theme and Elliptical Theme as the third and least components, employed to coax the readers. The reason is that the table of Figure 9 records three points and one point respectively for these communicative devices.

By implication, the clause choices in the MTN ads are realised functionally within the purview of Participants, Processes and Circumstances. In other words, the clause choices accommodate their themes in the form of Subject, accompanied with background detailed information. The analysts might also add that the clause choices operate within the complex structures entwined in hypotactic and paratactic logical devices.

Clause Choices of MTN Ads

Figures 10 and 11, below, offer statistical details to the choices of the clause that MTN deploys in the ads to stimulate consumers.

Clause Choices	Ad1	Ad2	Ad3	Ad4	Ad5	Ad6	Ad7
Declarative	5	3	8	2	3	1	4
Interrogative	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Imperative	2	2	4	0	3	5	1
Disjunctive	0	0	1	1	0	2	1
Minor Clause	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

Figure 10. Thematic Choices of MTN Ads

Figure 10 consists of a table and graph, displaying the characteristics of the clauses in the MTN ads. The graph translates the calibrated choices into a much clearer picture easily readable. These clauses, as demonstrated in Figure 10, above, are declarative, interrogative and imperative clauses. Besides, the writers could also observe both the disjunctive structures and minor clauses in the statistical map. As shown further, below, Figure 11 explicates the cumulative structures of the clauses of the MTN ads, as utilised to convince readers.

Figure 11. Cumulative of Clause Choices of MTN Ads

There are five distinct clauses functional, as demonstrated in Figure 11, above. These are: declarative, interrogative, and imperative clauses. Other clause structures are disjunctive grammar and minor clauses. Figure 11 pinpoints the declarative clause, accounting for 26 points in the communicative exercises. The next in rank is the imperative clause, which records about 17 points. Having had about 43 clauses, operating as declarative and imperative clauses, out of 51 clauses; it is deducible that the statements and commands are the communicative strategies of the MTN ads. As the advertising practitioner employs the interrogative clause once, the minor clause occupies only two positions. This view points to the fact that the MTN advertising manager has no business in querying readers. The publicist is interested in linguistic elements that can wheedle the audience to consumption. Moreover, there are five disjunctive clauses in the ads. As a result, the MTN advertising professional does not limit meaning-making to full clauses’ potential alone. The ads still make meaning through punctuated-fragmented constructions.

Discussion

For the purpose of pictorial accessibility and explanatory clarity, the researchers place the MTN ads in this section. Moreover, the explanations of each ad follows beneath the ad, as the linguistic components are seemingly in details, as displayed above in Figures 1, 2 to 7. The discussions are reflections of Halliday & Matthiessen’s (2014) manifestations on the concept of Theme and Rheme. As Halliday & Matthiessen pinpoint, Theme operates as the start-up element, leading readers to Rheme, being the custodian of the core meaning of the clause

AD 1

There are seven clauses in AD 1, as analysed in Figure 1 earlier. Among the clauses, 1c and 1g are imperatives whereas the other ones are declaratives. In that regard, 1c and 1g are functionally predicated themes. That means the clauses have no subject. Clauses 1a and 1b have *Friends* as their different themes. This is because the components orient the clauses, *Friends are the reasons we smile* and *Friends have a way of making every day seem special*. The nominal group (NG), in this respect, points to individuals other than a member of one's family, in which someone is seriously acquainted by enjoying his/her company. However, the lexeme, *Friends*, has not given readers the meaning of the clause; the structure only begins the clause. The rhematic elements *are the reasons we smile* and *have a way of making every day seem special* accommodate the expected meaning potential.

Clauses 1c and 1d have two themes each unlike what is obtainable in clauses 1a and 1b with only one theme each. By implication, clauses 1c and 1d have multiple thematic structures (Thompson, 2004). So is the first theme of clause 1c as followed by *reach out*, the second theme, *and life* are first and second themes in 1d, shown in Figure 1. So, in clause 1c and *and* in clause 1d are conjunctions, connecting preceding structures to themselves (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). *Reach out*, as in clause 1c is a phrasal verb, predicating the clause; whereas *life*, as in clause 1d is a NG. The position of these structures indicates that either verb group (VG) or NG can function to orient the message of the clause. *Will always bring you reasons to smile* as the rheme of 1d and 1c does not have a rheme. This means that it is not all clauses that have rhematic elements, making a single verbal device to function as a clause (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). One experiences familiar multiple themes in clause 1c, nevertheless, from a different dimension. Theme 1, *with MTN*, is a circumstantial element of accompaniment. *Life*, operating as Theme 2, is a NG in the same functional resource as in 1d. The theme in 1f is *life*. Having observed *life* recurring three times in AD1, such recurrence demonstrates to readers that the NG, *life*, is the most operational lexemic choice of persuasion of MTN in AD1, seconded by *Friends*. The last clause, *Visit us online*, has a characteristic of

1c, as a predicated clause but without multiple themes. 1g has *Visit* as the only theme commanding subscribers to patronise MTN through *www.mtnonline.com*.

AD 2

AD 2 deploys two clauses to sensitise recipients in the sequences of one interrogative, three declaratives, two imperatives, and one minor clause. Clause 2a is interrogative, where the publicist deploys the multiple themes *Are* – Theme 1, and *you* – Theme 2 to start up the information. The theme is marked because of the finite, *Are*, that precedes the experiential theme, *you*. The arrangement of these mood structures assists in asking a question of *love* relationships from the target audience, as the rheme shows.

The statement, *Love is a feeling that brightens our day brings smile to your face and lifts our heart forever*, is a cluster of three declarative clauses. 2b, 2c, and 2d illuminate the division as publicised in Figure 2. The nature of the constructs permits the three clauses to share one theme, signified as *Love*. Nevertheless, clause 2d possesses a conjunction, *and*, qualifying 2d to have an additional theme that we could label as a textual theme. 2c has only the rheme because its theme is firm with clause 2b. For expression's sake, the theme, *Love*, would have recurred as: *Love is...*; *Love brings...*; and *Love lifts....* The application of cohesion exemplified in the form of ellipsis, serves as a constraint (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Although punctuated, *Love* represents the most frequent choice of AD 2.

2e and 2f, as stated earlier, are the imperative clauses with *so make* and *share* functioning in the thematic semiotic slots of Figure 2. 2e exhibits multiple themes of *So*, Theme 1, and *make*, Theme 2, whereas 2f has only *Share* as the theme. 2f is topical and unmarked theme. 2e falls into the domains of the marked topical theme. 2g is a minor clause, propelling the researchers to label the choice as Zero-theme element. In addition, the minor clause, as Halliday & Matthiessen (2014) elucidate, is not analyzable (also in Dalamu, 2019a).

AD 3

The advertising professional publicises the MTN AD 3, using 14 clauses. Eight among the clauses in Figure 3 are declaratives (3a, 3b, 3c, 3e, 3j, 3l, and 3n), while four of the clauses are imperative (3g, 3h, 3i, and 3k). The remaining two constructions function as being disjunctive (3f) (Leech, 1963) and minor clause (3m) respectively. The themes of the declarative clauses operate in the sphere of marked (as in 3b, 3c, 3j, and 3f) and unmarked (3a, 3d, 3e, and 3n). This is because the former has some components before the subject; and the latter does not have any component before the subject. Thus, the formal has multiple themes whereas the latter has a single theme profile. For instance, *Seasons go* and *it's a new year* have *Seasons* and *it* as their single themes. As *seasons come* as in 3b and *because life is beautiful* as in 3l project multiple themes of *and*, *seasons* and *because life* as dual systemic choices that function as the points of departure. Significantly, clause 3j has Theme 1, Theme 2 and Theme 3, making the structure to be distinct from the others of a similar category.

The imperative clauses are also of two kinds in the form of marked (as in 3h) and unmarked (as in 3g and 3j). Because the imperative clauses are without subject, their predicators such as *Reach out*, *Rest assured*, and *Look on* represent the themes of their clauses. Being processes, these choices are functionally different from other themes, exemplifying the content of the clauses, which are processes. *Reach out* illuminates readers to extend a resource to others in order to obtain or grasp a blessing. *Rest assured* institutes confidence on readers, not for any other thing, but for the quality of services that MTN renders during the emerging year. That stability appears the reason for the ad to command the target audience to *Look on the y'ello side of life*. *The y'ello side of life*, in MTN's point of view, offers, perhaps, unbeatable benefits to subscribers. *A year of new challenges...* in 3f is a punctuated structure (Myers, 1994), which we cannot classify as the theme, consequently, the structure

is a rheme. Also, the minor clause, *Happy New Year, Nigeria* is a Zero-Theme element for its structural characteristics. All in all, *seasons*, *y'ello*, *New Year*, and *life* are the commonest lexemic choices in AD 3.

AD 4

The splintered structures in AD 4 have three clauses. These clauses are declaratives. These are: *MTN crashes rates at 10*; *Calls now as low as 17k/sec*; and *A celebration so complete*. Going by their structural mechanisms, all the clauses have themes and rhemes. The first clause in Figure 4 deploys *MTN* as the theme and *crashes rates at 10* as the rheme. The theme is unmarked because MTN is the subject of the clause, as referring to the telecommunications firm that sponsors the ad. The heart of the message to consumers is *crashes rates*, a member of the rhematic structures. The process, *crash*, has some connections to vehicular events in relation to transportation. However, the crashing portent that the advertising stylist points to is the sudden drop in the charges of MTN calls per one second. The zero digit mode in the ad reflects the crashes, manifesting some torn portions to reveal human punctuated figures. The season of *crashes* displays some admirations to subscribers.

Moreover, it is the 10th year anniversary that informs the sudden reduction of the *calls' rates*, as fully exemplified in clause 4b as *Calls now as low as 17k/sec*. *Calls* is the thematic element while the structure *as low as 17k/sec* represents the rhematic scheme. It is worth stressing that clause 4b is a fragmented statement because the finite, which could be suggested as *are*, has been deleted. The motive might purposely be economical (Cook, 2001), leaving the entire clause with the adjunct and adverbial marker – *now as low as 17k/sec*. The communicator utilises the crashing event of *MTN call rates* to promote the telecommunications operator.

Clause 4c has a similar textual function with clause 4b. This is owing to the fact that *A celebration* is the theme whereas the disjunctive components, *so complete*, are the rheme. The missing element is *is*, which appears as the finite of the clause. *A celebration* could reference phenomena in the clause. First, *A celebration* – a solemn ceremony to appreciate a joyful event – refers to 10 years of MTN's existence. Second, the crash in rate is another context of festivity. The former connects the company, MTN, and the latter focuses on the

subscribers of MTN that benefit from the new charges. In summary, clauses 4a, 4b, and 4c employ unmarked topical themes to encourage readers.

AD 5

There are six clauses in AD 5, as demonstrated in Figure 5. The distribution of the clauses are equivalents of three declarative messages in 5a, 5b, and 5d; and three commands of imperative in 5c, 5e, and 5f. *Fame*, as in 5a, is the theme of the clause, unmarked indeed, orienting readers to the core of the communication, *strikes again*. In the rhematic domain, the component, *strike*, positions *Fame* as a personified entity (Brierley, 1995; Hermerén, 2001). *Fame*, though, a quality of human beings, is an abstract artifact (Dalamu, 2019c). Unarguably, popularity of anyone cannot be considered as a living article. On that ground, clause 5b displays *Monica Ogah* as the referent of *Fame* (Williamson, 2002).

Monica Ogah is the theme of 5b, an unmarked topical theme, jump starting the clause. In that respect, *Monica Ogah* is a celebrity, who has eventually become a champion of *MTN Project Fame Season 4*, the rheme of the clause. The analysts might also consider *Fame*, as being ambiguous in AD 5 to portray: (i) *Monica Ogah*; and (ii) *MTN Project Fame Season 4*. Deploying *Fame* to conceptualise *MTN Project Fame Season 4* pinpoints *Fame* as a sole representative of the MTN glamorous musical tour.

The third declarative clause, *as she takes the entertainment world by storm*, in 5c, possesses Theme 1, as *and* Theme 2, *she*. These componential arrangements place the clause as marked but topical and thematic themes. The rhematic content remains focusing on *Monica Ogah*, the pivot of the message, *who*, in the standpoint of the advertiser, has prepared to *take the entertainment world by storm*. As a result of this ambitious view, the advertising professional commands readers to *Watch out for her*. *Watch out*, a phrase, is the theme, exhibiting *for her*, a circumstance, as the rhematic part (Bloor & Bloor, 2013). By implication, the publicist enjoins subscribers to be sensitive to *Monica Ogah's* emergence in the musical world.

Clauses 5a, 5b, and 5e seem to focus on *Monica Ogah*. Nonetheless, the analysts might argue that the celebrity is a tool in the workshop of the advertising practitioner to promote MTN. The publicist uses clause 5e, *Get ready*, as a communicative device to pursue two visions of celebrating *Monica Ogah* and employing such a pedigree to motivate recipients to patronise MTN. Thus, clause 5e is a yoke that bonds *Monica Ogah* and MTN together. The clause blends the *Fame* of *Monica Ogah* with marketing MTN goods and services. *Get*, the theme, is an unmarked topical construct, orienting *ready*, the rheme. Subjecting *Get ready* to a brief discourse appreciation appears to point readers backward to *Monica Ogah's Fame* (cataphoric) and to also point the target audience forward to the MTN address (anaphoric) (Thompson, 2014; Dalamu, 2018a), as shown in clause 5f, *Visit www.mtnonline.com*. *Visit*, the theme, is an impulse, creating a point of departure for readers to pay attention to MTN products, as advertised to people. The process, *Visit*, charges viewers to prompt consumption.

AD 6

AD 6 contains fragmented structures of about five clauses, and three full clauses that do not require any augmentation for adequate meaning potential. Clause 6a, *MTN & Oando*, contains two NGs, as the theme, referable as a group complex (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Upon that backdrop, the analysts might connect clause 6a to 6e, *Bringing world class customer service closer to you* in order to generate a complete statement. As 6a is a theme, so is 6e a rheme. Joining the two statements together will yield *MTN & Oando ... bringing world class customer service closer to you*. The omitted linguistic finite is suggestible as *are*. On that linguistic chemistry, we can have *MTN & Oando are bringing world class customer service closer to you*. The declarative clause positions *MTN* (a telecommunications firm) and *Oando* (an oil and gas company) as pursuing a similar credible course. The writers observe the collaborative business 'racecourse', explained in Figure 6, in 6b (as *Refuel*), in 6c (as *Reconnect*), in 6d (as *Recharge*), and repeated in 6g and 6g with supplementary components.

Refuel, *Reconnect*, and *Recharge* are thematic constructs because these structures are processes that operate as individual clauses devoid of systemic transitive elements. In that

wise, *Refuel*, *Reconnect*, and *Recharge* are independent clauses (Eggins, 2004). MTN and Oando services are not independent products, so to say. As MTN provides services, supporting telephoning; so also Oando provides services for vehicular objects, making MTN and Oando's products joint demands with telephones and vehicles. That is probable the *raison d'être* for the publicist to utilise *Refuel*, *Reconnect*, and *Recharge* as lexemes of persuading the target audience. The kinds of MTN and Oando services also inform their partnership, regarding the world class customer service campaign sphere.

Unlike the nature of the theme in clauses 6a, 6b, 6c, and 6d, 6f (*With MTN and Oando the best of world class customers is always within reach*), 6g (*So just refuel*), and 6h (*and recharge for a richer life*) have multiple themes. *With MTN and Oando* and *the best of world class customers* are Theme 1 and Theme 2 of 6f. *So, just* and *refuel* are Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 3 of 6g. *And* and *recharge* are Theme 1 and Theme 2 of 6h. Nevertheless, Theme 1 and Theme 2 of 6f are adjunct and NG. Theme 1, Theme 2, and Theme 3 of 6g are hypotactic conjunction, modal adjunct and predicator; Theme 1 and Theme 2 of 6h are paratactic conjunction and predicator. Two sets of choices emerged in AD 6. These are: *MTN and Oando*; and *Refuel* and *Recharge*. Clause 6f, 6g and 6h are expositions of unmarked topical themes.

AD 7

Among the seven clauses available in AD 7, there are two punctuated ones, as in 7c and 7d, and one minor clause, as in 7g. The other four clauses are declarative, as in 7a, 7b, 7e, and 7f. Apart from clauses 7c, 7e, and 7g that are unmarked, all the other clauses utilise marked topical themes as potential to motivate readers.

Beginning from 7c, the investigators observe that *inspired by the thread of our green white green* is a rhematic element without a theme. 7c has an affiliation with 7b because the structure's theme, *we only need to look*, is embedded in 7b, with an unseen copula verb, *be*. Combining these elements together, the analysts might arrive at a resourceful, but fascinating statement of *[we only need to (be)] inspired by the thread of our green white green*. Contextually, *the green white green* is connotative (Gieszinger, 2001), referring to the colour of the Nigerian national flag. The white colour represents purity of heart, while the green

colour is the greener pastures and fertile land of Nigeria, good for agricultural mechanisation and production.

7d is structurally similar to 7e because 7c and 7d share the same theme, [*we only need to*] *make things happen*. The poetic licence (Vestergaard & Schroder, 1985; Arroyo, 1995; Lagerwerf, 2002) of the advertiser influences the communicator to deploy the conjunction, *and*, at a personal pleasure. *And* is supposed to be the theme in the normal situation if 7d has not been fragmented. As a result, the statement might read *and we only need to make things happen*. The analyst could attempt to support this claim by expounding the structures of 7b, 7c, and 7d as a complex entity. That is: *As Nigerian, we only need to look within; we only need to be inspired by the thread of our green white green; and we only need to make things happen*. The elimination of themes from 7c and 7d is a matter of cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976), as a means of avoiding repetition-cum-redundancy (Leech, 1966). Unlike 7c and 7d, 7b has Theme 1, *As Nigerians*, Theme 2, *we*, and Theme 3, *only*, the rhematic constituent, *need to look within*, counsels every Nigerian to examine himself or herself, considering and channeling a means of contributing to promote the Nigerian nation.

Moreover, clause 7a, *From today, we can weave a beautiful tomorrow*, contains two themes of *From today*, Theme 1, and *we*, Theme 2. *From today* is a circumstantial device asking the question, *when*? By implication, the publicist is not pleased with the current status of Nigeria and Nigerians' behaviours towards the country. Such a thought attracts the rhematic counsel, *can weave a beautiful tomorrow*, for today has many challenges. On that ground, *Our nation is in our hands* becomes an object of appeal so that everyone can realise the need to rescue Nigeria by Nigerians from being economically comatose.

Consequently, 7e has *Our nation* as the theme, associating all Nigerians as a unified entity, who own Nigeria. The partnership, in the form of a team spirit, is observable in 7f, employed as *and we can make our dream a reality*. 7f has *and* and *we* as Theme 1 and Theme 2 respectively, where the rhematic structure acknowledges that Nigeria has an unrealised vision, perhaps, since the commencement of its existence. However, now is the time to achieve a substantial goal for Nigeria. The culmination of AD 7 is *Happy Independence Day, Nigeria*, classified as Zero-Theme element, as analysed in Figure 7. The linguistic choices of AD 7 anchor on *we*, *make*, *can*, and *our*.

Conclusion

This study has explicated the kinds of choices that the MTN advertiser employs to influence subscribers to consumption-cum-products-loyalty. As discussed above, the choices of textual components are of two distinctions. The first is the nature of the thematic variegated choices, as analysed in Figures 1, 2 to 7. The second exposes readers to the clausal constructs exploit to sensitise readers. The authors observe marked themes (*and life, so reach*) in the form of multiple themes (*with MTN, life; so make*), orienting the messages of some clauses. Within these thematic climes, predicated themes (*Get; Visit*) also operate successfully. Some communicative devices of the multiple themes are basically conjunctions of hypotactic (*that; as*) and paratactic (*and, but, so*) components. These conjunctions connect clauses together, producing them in complex entities.

The thematic choices also demonstrate unmarked themes, which are markers dependent on 'self.' That is, these sets of themes are not multiple in jumping-off of clauses. Such structures

are observable in *Get ready*, *Refuel* and *Reconnect*. Some commence with NG, while some begin with NG.

It is also noteworthy that MTN ads constitute some patterns of clause structures. Some of these connect the marked themes as in *so just* and *From today, we*. Some of them also are linkable to unmarked themes, as in *Reach out* and *Recharge*. Either as marked or unmarked, the clauses are in the form of declarative (*The future is y'ello; Our nation is in our hands; we can weave a beautiful tomorrow*) and imperative (*Visit www.mtnonline.com*) as there is only one interrogative clause (*Are you in love?*) in the analysed ads, minor clauses (*Happy Valentine's Day*) are a bit functional in the advertising communications. Of significance is the deployment of disjunctive structures (*MTN & Oando*), which are real characteristics of advertising. Some of these structures are splintered by omitting either the NG (*Bringing world class customer service closer to you; make thing happen*) or the Finite (*A year of possibilities; inspired by the thread of by our green white green*), yet the structures still generate meaning potential.

Among other components, this study pinpoints commonest linguistic devices utilised to sensitise readers. Such lexemes are *life, friends, y'ello, love* and *seasons*. In addition, the minor clauses operate as greetings. Thus, one could have *Happy Independence Day, Nigeria*. Communicative choices such as personification (*Fame strikes again*) and ambiguity (*Fame*) also play some parts in the MTN ads. Having said all that, this study might reveal to the MTN operator the position of the ads textual choices. In retrospect, the MTN operator, having realised this, might decide to change the gear of the language of the ads in order to gain more subscribers. Perhaps, earlier lexemic choices of the ads are becoming monotonous. As such familiarisation of textual choices to readers might shrink sales of goods and services. Researchers in the sphere of advertising in relation to linguistics could advance this study, comparing MTN ads with other telecommunications operators in Nigeria. The results of such endeavour might enlighten advertisers' language applications in communications.

Acknowledgment

It is our pleasure to appreciate Mrs. Bonke Adeyeni for her support during this work, and particularly her contributions towards the harvesting of the MTN ads. The researchers also acknowledge Bashy Motors' Chairman Managing Director for raising us some funds for the smooth conduct of this research.

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