

Yoruba Indigenous Advertising: A Preliminary Report¹

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Abstract

Traditionally, the Yoruba do not use stalls, shops, or malls for carrying out buying and selling activities. Instead, they operate open market systems that come up at specific intervals of days when people converge at a designated place, usually a market square, where all forms of trading activities take place. There is also street hawking where individual traders go about with their wares and advertise them for patronage. However, this Yoruba indigenous advertising and marketing has not been thoroughly studied. Very few research works on indigenous advertising are found only in a few literary texts. Over the years, indigenous dynamics of market transactions between sellers and buyers have been eroded by new advertising strategies, and this has continued to throw the traditional method into oblivion, which has created a gap in the indigenous knowledge production. On the foreign scene, many scholars have largely explained the relationship that exists between language and advertising, especially in the Western world. This paper, therefore, focuses on the indigenous nature of advertising across Yorubaland² where diverse traditional formats and strategies are utilized to entice potential buyers to purchase advertised goods. These advertising dynamics are carefully presented in ways that easily appeal to buyers. The study presents different types of

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goods/products and services that are advertised vis-à-vis the sociological and linguistic features of such advertised products. The classification of the advertising mechanisms is based on the various (descriptive, beckoning, deceptive, etc.) ways through which goods and services are advertised. Data collection points were divided into seven Yoruba zones based on their proximity and dialect delineation using Mixed Research Methodology. Interviews and observations were also carried out to obtain data for the analysis. The paper demonstrates that there is a high degree of interdependence between sellers and buyers in Yoruba indigenous advertising as advertisers rely on their language-use dexterity and communicative competence to attract buyers. Findings also show that trade advertising using the speech form of a language of the people is key to successful business transactions.

Keywords: *Advertising, Indigenous system, Sociolinguistics, Deception, Beckoning*

Introduction

The history of Yoruba Indigenous Advertising (YIA) can be traced back to the emergence of the Yoruba people as a race. This indicates the significant socioeconomic interaction that existed among the people in different parts of Yoruba society from ancient times. Yoruba settlements have always been cosmopolitan in nature, regardless of their size, and buying and selling activities are prevalent in such settlements. This observation suggests a socio-economic interdependence among the Yoruba people in their cultural life and existence.

However, despite the significance of Yoruba indigenous advertising, there has been minimal research on the subject. Only a few research works on indigenous advertising are available in literary texts, such as Ogundele (1982) and Akinjogbin (1969). Other source material is found in O-Y-O radio advertisements in the 1980s. On the foreign scene, scholars have mostly focused on the relationship between language and advertising, especially in the Western world (Vestaargard & Schroder 1985 and Dattamajumdar 2006). Nonetheless, their perspective on language use and advertising differs significantly from what is obtained in the African scene, particularly

among the Yoruba people. For instance, hawking usually accompanies a mode of advertising, and this method of marketing still exists among the Yoruba people. Among the Yoruba, sellers that adopt the hawking strategy to market their goods know that they must take advertising very seriously. The primary justification for this is to attract the attention of potential buyers to the goods they are selling. Advertising also describes the qualities, quantities, features, and appearance of the goods, apart from calling the attention of possible buyers.

This paper examines the various types of Yoruba Indigenous Advertising in the medium of Yoruba language and its dialects. The study follows works cited above to establish the different types of products that are advertised in consonance with the way they are advertised, looking at the sociological and linguistic features of such advertisements. Specifically, the paper looks at the various ways by which goods and services are advertised, which include description, beckoning, deception, etc. Furthermore, it aims at establishing that just as there are linguistic differences among Yoruba dialects, there are also differences in the ways advertising is made in the dialects. The study also examines the sociolinguistic contents of indigenous advertising in different parts of Yorubaland.

Background to the Study

The Yoruba people have a unique approach to buying and selling activities, which does not involve the use of stalls, shops, or malls. Instead, they rely on open market systems that operate at specific intervals of the day, where people gather at designated places, usually market squares, to engage in trading activities. Furthermore, street hawking is also a common practice where individual traders move around with their merchandise and advertise to attract patrons. Hence, it is safe to say that Yoruba indigenous advertisements and sales occur on market days and streets on ordinary days. While the mode of some of the adverts, goods advertised, and language of advertising may not be very clear across the length and breadth of Yorubaland, certain products are localized within specific areas, while others have their adverts across the length and breadth of such areas. Additionally, dialects of those areas are commonly used in advertising products outside urban areas. Our tasks in this paper include identifying the types of products, such as farm products, processed and non-processed products, edible non-processed, and processed food items, analyzing

how the products are advertised from one locality to another, and highlighting the similarities and differences. We also aim to determine how advertisers use language, including the variety of Yoruba language, to attract customers, even when certain products are not directly mentioned, and the advertiser does not state that the products advertised are for sale.

Justification of the Study

Advertising is a vital aspect of selling products to potential customers. This research aims to shed light on the diverse methods employed in promoting trade and trading activities in Yorubaland, spanning from ancient times to the present day. It will also uncover the linguistic features and patterns of advertising, including how language rules are sometimes breached to capture the buyer's attention. This study primarily concentrates on indigenous products and the various techniques used to advertise them.

Scope of the Study

Although this work is designed to cover the length and breadth of Yorubaland, it was virtually impossible to touch all the towns and villages. Nevertheless, there are two things that we aim at achieving in this research which is to determine the kind of variation that may hold in advertising between urban and rural areas within the same dialectal continuum. We believe that these two converge as they will lead us to a generalization that Yoruba indigenous advertising is locally based in terms of the medium of expression. In all, we have twelve zones of coverage for our data collection. For each zone, there is at least one city or town. We check for the effect of urbanization on the mode and medium of advertising. The language of advertising across the globe is of interest to at least two categories of researchers. One category is the researcher in core Linguistics and the second is the researcher in Mass Communication and the Advertising Industry. In this research, as linguists, we limit our discussion to the Yoruba Indigenous Advertising within the context of (socio)linguistics.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to ascertain the effect of locality on variation recorded in indigenous advertising.

Literature Review

Preliminary research on the structure and style of advertising in the Yoruba language has been conducted. It should be noted, however, that such research was conducted with limited data on advertisements in literary works (Akinjogbin, 1969; Faleti, 1974). An example of Yoruba advertising is the promotion of *Işin* in the *Oriki* of the *Olókùn Eşin* lineage (Babalola, 2000). Several Yoruba proverbs have also highlighted the importance of native advertising within the Yoruba community. Of particular note is the proverb *ipolówó ojà ni àgúnmu òwò*, which translates to ‘Advertising is the medicine for success in trading.’ Despite the limited data in literary works, this does not impact the quality of the analysis, as our research assistants were able to collect ample data from primary sources.

The study of advertising in various parts of the world has yielded works that are directly relevant to our present research. In this work, we intend to undertake a detailed examination of the form and pattern of indigenous advertising among the Yoruba people, utilizing diverse linguistic apparatus. Related works in the fields of advertising and linguistics are also considered, with a particular focus on the relevance of linguistics to advertising. The importance of language as a vehicle for conveying sellers' intentions about their products to potential buyers cannot be overstated. It is therefore critical to consider how language and its various tools impact the communication patterns and behaviors between buyers and sellers, both positively and negatively. The following is a selection of related literature that explores these themes in detail.

The study of Dattamajumdar (2006) is on Linguistic Patterns of Advertising Text with a classification and analysis of various texts of advertising to evaluate how effective a given advertising is, based on how such attracts the consumer's response. This paper also has a direct relevance on our work as we intend to examine the effectiveness of Yoruba language in advertising various products.

Kitis (1997) defines advertising as a discourse that epitomizes the power of language use in its social function. He further argues that language is a dynamic weapon that creates interplay with social systems in various discourse types among which advertising is considered as one. According to Kitis, language is a powerful tool of persuasion which draws the attention of consumers to the advertised product. He establishes through the theory of Pragmatic Stylistic

features of the foregrounding that advertising has the liberty to deviate from the conventional rules of normal language. The paper provides a robust data set that covers both written and pictorial text, showing their interaction in advertising. It offers a wide coverage of domains, with proposals made to account for what appear deviant to rules of language, but which are licensed in advertisement. The paper provides insights into different approaches to the analysis of language use in powerful advertising, and a replicate of Kitis' account is inevitable in further analysis.

Korčák's (2012) 'Word Play in Advertising: A Linguistic Analysis' examines the theoretical and practical aspects of humor in puns from both linguistic and advertising perspectives. The study establishes that 'puns in advertising' share many common aspects with puns designed solely for creating humor in human language use. The work sheds light on the presence of puns in advertising from a linguistic point of view, specifically in the areas of paradigmatic puns and syntagmatic puns. Our analysis of Yoruba Indigenous Advertising will explore the presence or absence of nonsense puns, contextual puns, sexual innuendos, and other linguistic features identified in the work.

Samaru-Charles (2001) analyzes the content and structure of language in advertising. The study examines the grammaticality of language and the rule-breaking phenomenon in advertising language. The author highlights the important role played by texts in Advertising and examines the interplay between texts and images. The study identifies several anomalies associated with the language of Advertising, including semantic, syntactic, and morphological rule-breaking, and issues involving pragmatics. Samaru-Charles concludes that certain levels of rule-breaking exist in the language of Advertising, and although advertisers aim to convincingly pass a clear message to potential buyers, the language does not completely disregard grammatical conventions. The paper following Kitis (1997) provides an in-depth discussion of how advertising can break language rules without leading to ungrammaticality. It covers domains of linguistics such as syntax, semantics, and pragmatics to achieve its aim. We consider this paper an asset that will be useful for our proposed analysis.

Vasiloaia (2009) highlights the linguistic features of the language of advertising. The study argues that advertising permits

breaking the rules of language. Vasiloaia demonstrates that while the tendency to create new words exists, other basic features such as 'syntactic structure, the direct appeal to the recipients, the high rate of repetition' remain largely unaffected by creative variation. Any violation of grammatical rules is an attempt to attract the attention of consumers or customers. This study, which discusses how advertising can go against the rules of language to achieve its objective of attracting customers to sellers, will help shape our analysis of Yoruba data on advertising.

The language of advertising has been a subject of academic interest for some time. Lapšanská (2006) conducted a comprehensive linguistic analysis of advertising slogans and the means used in print advertising. The study focused on various linguistic domains such as phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. The author formulated eight hypotheses and confirmed six of them using statistical data. The study concludes that a successful analysis of advertising requires an investigation into these domains of linguistics. The work provides a deep discussion and copious coverage and will serve as a template for future analyses. As experts in the field of language, these works provide valuable insights that will inform our analysis of advertising language.

In a similar vein, Korčák's (2012) "Word Play in Advertising: A Linguistic Analysis" examines the theoretical aspects of humour and the basic division of puns from linguistic and advertising perspectives. The study establishes that puns used in advertising share many common aspects with puns designed solely for creating humour.

The focus of this study is Yoruba Indigenous Advertisement, with specific reference to the work of Ògúndélé (1982) titled 'Àgbéyèwò Oríṣiríṣi Ìpolówó Ojà ní Agbègbè Ọyọ' (An Examination of Different Advertising in Ọyọ and its Environs). Ògúndélé's work is a BA Long Essay that explores Yoruba Advertising in two areas of Yorubaland, namely Ọyọ and Ìbàdàn, focusing on types, themes, and forms of language use. The study begins with a historical background of Advertising and its division into traditional and modern advertising. Regarding the three locations of marketing, Ògúndélé identifies market squares, hawking, and shops or stalls. The author gives substantial attention to the use of language, taking a cursory look at different language uses such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, repetition, etc. The author concludes that despite modernization,

ìpolówó ojà kò lè paré, 'advertising in Yoruba cannot go into extinction. However, Ògúndélé's work has limitations. It lacks structured analytical tools as it is not based on any theory. The scope of the study is also limited to two areas of Yorubaland. Additionally, Ògúndélé makes the erroneous claim that Yoruba traditional market is also carried out in shops or stalls. Our study will show to the contrary that hawking is an integral aspect of marketing goods among the Yoruba people. Traditionally, only heavy goods like palm oil, corn, etc., are kept in stalls for safety purposes.

Agbede (2016) is an investigation of language use in effective communication in bank advertisement as well as the stylistics mechanism in selected bank advertisements in South African and Nigerian newspaper. It identifies graphology, phonology, lexis, syntax, and cohesion among others as stylistic elements in the stylistic analysis to establish the effectiveness of those devices in bank advertisement. The work concludes with the assertion that the stylistic devices are very crucial in advertisement because of the way they attract clients to the services being advertised. Though the work is not relevant in terms of the language of use in bank advertisement, its relevance lies in its theoretical framework, especially in the domain of its application.

The 2020 study by Eleshin delves into the correlation between gender and language usage in Yoruba Indigenous Advertising. The primary objective of the study was to determine the prevalence of female advertisers compared to their male counterparts in Lagos and analyze the impact of gender on language use in indigenous advertising. The author examined examples of indigenous advertising in both open markets and designated areas, including those with gender-specific content. The study concludes that "the female is more susceptible to indigenous advertising through the use of language" than male advertisers. While the study's focus on language use in indigenous advertising is commendable and the use of Standard Yoruba examples is beneficial, the choice of Lagos as a research location may not be entirely appropriate due to the cosmopolitan city's cultural and linguistic diversity. Furthermore, the conclusion that women use language better than men lacks empirical statistical data and may be premature based on just seven examples from one location in the Yoruba region. Overall, the study highlights the importance of gender in language usage in indigenous advertising and provides

valuable insights into the potential impact of language on target audiences. However, it is essential to exercise caution when generalizing the findings beyond Lagos or the Yoruba region, and further research is needed to validate the study's conclusions.

In their study, Oyesomi & Salawu (2019) conducted an assessment of the unique characteristics of indigenous languages in advertising, with a particular focus on the figurative language employed in selected telecommunication Yoruba advertisements in Nigeria. The researchers selected two major communication providers, namely Airtel and MTN, who had a higher number of active subscribers and examined the figurative language in their advertisements through random sampling. The study identified 12 figurative languages in the two selected advertisements, and the authors recommended that advertisers and telecommunication companies must pay close attention to the use of figurative language to attract clients to their services. While this paper differs from the aforementioned study in a significant way, which is the focus on Yoruba advertisement in selected telecommunication, the convergence is the involvement of indigenous language, which, in their case, involved the Yoruba language, which is our main language of focus.

The literary works reviewed above provide a solid foundation upon which our research shall rest its relevance. Our study endeavours to examine the content and structure of advertising language and elucidate how advertising data can be expounded using pertinent theories of grammar and advertising.

Methodology

This research study utilizes ethnographic research methodology and adopts a qualitative approach towards data collection and elucidation management. Seven Yoruba-speaking states were selected as research locations and were further categorized into uniform dialect communities. The table below presents the states and dialect areas that were covered in this study:

Table 1: List of Data Collection Area

S/N	States	Dialect	Dialect Area
1.	Lagos	Èkó	Ìdúmòtà, Mile 12, Ilé-Epo Market, Òyìngbò and Mushin
2	Ògùn	Ègbà	Láfénwá, Ilúgùn, Odédá
		Ìjèbù	Ìbèfun, Sagamu, Òsòsà, Àgò-ìwòyè
3	Òyó	Òyó	Ibadan, Èrùnmu, Lálúpon, Ogbomoṣo, Fídítì, Iresa
4	Èkìtì	Èkìtì	Adó-Èkìtì, Igèdè, Ààré,
		Mòbà	Òtùn
5	Kwara	Mòbà	Ìlálè, Ilòfà, Erímòpé
		Ìgbómìnà	Àrándùn, Òmù-àrán
6	Òṣun	Ìgbómìnà	Ìlá Orangun, Òra
		Ìbòlò	Òfà, Ipècè, Igòsùn, Irá, Òṣogbo, Ìkirun, Òkukù
		Òyó	Èjìgbò
		Ìjèṣà	Iléṣà, Òtan-Ilé, Èsà-Òkè, Ìjèbù-jèṣà
		Ifè	Ilé- Ifè, Oke-Igbo, Ifetèdo
7	Òndó	Òndó	Òndó, Ilè-Olújì, Òdìgbó

Our research team conducted both key informant and in-depth interviews with respondents to gain insight into market dynamics. The consultants we engaged included selected indigenous marketers and natives who are involved in other market activities. To ensure comprehensive coverage, we conducted interviews along dialect lines in each state. For instance, in Ògùn State where there are Ègbà, Ìjèbù, Àwòrì and Yewa, a Research Assistant was assigned to each dialectal area. In addition to interviews, we also conducted participant observation by researcher assistants in various market settings.

The interviews were recorded by audio and video devices. Each advertised product was recorded at least twice to ensure that all possible variations were captured. Recent studies in communicative studies reveal that multimodal contribution (body parts such as eye contact, body gesture e.g., beckoning) is a better way of understanding speech perception; therefore, we used video recording. We also adopted non-invasive techniques for accessing communicative expressions using measures of visible motion derived from videos, which enabled us to require the same quality data in the field as in the lab (cf. Vatikiotis-Batson <https://linguistics.ubc.ca>).

Analysis

It is worth noting that, within the Yoruba culture, traditional forms of advertising are predominantly achieved through oral communication. Since advertising is deemed a form of communication amongst language users, various linguistic features are also considered when utilizing language within advertising. Such features include the type of product being advertised, the location of the product's advertisement, the diversity of advertisers, the duration of advertising, and climatic conditions. For instance, locust beans, known as *irú*, are widely advertised within most Yoruba communities through the following means:

Irú ọkọ ọbẹ E firú ròfọ	Locust beans, husband of soup Use locust beans to cook vegetables.
In ha yurú o E rarú ẹ sebẹ, Àjẹbọkọrẹrin-ín òfófó,	Come and pick locust beans Buy locust beans and cook soup. One that is eaten to produce romantic gist with husband,
Àjẹdìgbòlọkọ wii,	One that is eaten to suddenly fall on the husband.
Àjẹpàntètè ètè	One that is eaten with the lips hanging.

All these expressions can be used to advertise the locust beans in different locations in Yorùbá land. However, all these advertisements of *irú* cannot be heard in a place like Òkè-Ìmèsí. This is because the locust bean is not used for cooking in the town. The following proverb attests to this assertion:

*Irú ní òun ò tẹ rí àfí ìgbà tí òun dé Òkè-Ìmèsí tí wón n fí òun
wé eégbon³*

Locust Beans said it had never been humiliated until he got to Òkè-Ìmèsí and was compared to a stick insect.

In Òkè-Ìmèsí, locust beans are not considered a significant ingredient in cooking, which explains why it is not commonly consumed or

³ Eégbon is a parasite insect called a tick. This parasite is found in animals like dogs and cattle.

advertised in the town. This highlights the importance of product advertising in areas where the product is readily available and commonly used.

Èkáàró	Good morning.
Ológi dé o,	The ògi seller has arrived
Ìyá Aáyì,	Aáyí's mother
Ológi dé o	The ògi seller has arrived
Ìyá eléwédú ti dé o.	The Ewédú seller has arrived.

The two advertisements above serve as illustrations of the practice of door-to-door marketing. In the following discussion, we delve into a more detailed examination of specific advertising methods and mechanisms.

Opacity and Deception in Yoruba Indigenous Advertising

One of the salient features of the YIA is the adeptness of street vendors to employ opacity devices to entice customers into purchasing their wares. Opacity, in this context, refers to a method of promoting a product without explicitly stating its name. Interestingly, Yoruba advertisers have a unique ability to manipulate the language in such a way that the name of the product need not be mentioned. This phenomenon was observed in various marketplaces during our research expeditions. Consider the way èbìrípò 'a traditional lẹ̀bù-Rẹ̀mọ̀ delicacy' is advertised.

Ó jẹ̀nà ó kì bó o	It is ready to eat,
Ó tí jẹ̀nà,	It is cooked already
È máa bọ̀	You (plural), start coming.
Ó n gbóná fẹ̀lifẹ̀lẹ̀ o,	It is very hot.
Ó n yó gèndé	It feeds a well-built person.

The advertisement under consideration does not provide any specific information regarding the product being sold, as there is no mention of èbìrípò within the advertisement. Instead, the seller emphasizes that the product has been fully prepared and is ready for consumption. Furthermore, the seller indicates that the product is very hot and that a single wrap of it is sufficient to satiate a large individual. Unless the buyer is a regular customer, it may prove difficult for them to identify

the product being advertised. Thus, the advertisement's opacity necessitates that a buyer must physically visit the seller to determine the product's identity.

Another opaque way of advertising goods is the one shown below where the seller of an unnamed article code mixes English and Yorubá in the advertisement.⁴

Sé white ⁵ ni àbí black?	Is it white or black?
Ó wà níbí o	It is available here.
Kékeré ni àbí òlá?	Is it big or small?
È máa bọ	You (pl) start coming here.

The vendor in question failed to specify the nature of the merchandise in question. Instead, they chose to emphasize the salient attributes of the product. Another instance of this phenomenon can be observed as follows:

Gbogbo igbá mi, wàsó	All my entire wares, fifty naira
Ó ñ jówó	It burns the hand.
Ó ñ jónu	It burns the mouth.
Gbogbo ọpón mi wàsó	Everything on my tray, fifty naira!

The phenomenon of opacity and deception in advertising is a pervasive issue in the business world. A prime example of this can be observed

⁴ In the Yoruba traditional setting, there is evidence of code-mixing. This is what we witness in the above advert. This exception case is due to the location of the seller who dwells in an urban place. However, such an advert does not obliterate the purview of this paper.

⁵ Yoruba like any natural language loans words from other languages that its speakers have contact with. The introduction of English words such as *black*, *white*, *promo*, etc., is an indication that both sellers and potential buyers understand the English language.

when a seller calls out to potential buyers, offering all items on their tray for the price of fifty naira. It is well-known that it is practically impossible to have all items in a tray or stall for such a low price. However, by making this announcement, the seller forces buyers to examine the products to determine their value. This form of advertising is unique in that the product is not directly advertised. Rather, the premise or background is set, and buyers are expected to speculate about what the trader could be advertising. For instance, in the first example, the phrase *ó ñ jówó* indicates that a cooked item is being advertised.

Consider yet another advertised item, which exemplifies this phenomenon further.

A ñ ɕe promo o	We are doing a promo.
È yè mí wò	Check me out!
È yè mí wò ribò ribo là là là, là là là.	Check me out very well.

The advertisement in question employs a promotional tactic that not only highlights the presence of a sale but also encourages prospective customers to evaluate the seller's appearance. The advertisement's focus on the seller's appearance, without displaying the product, may lead customers to infer that the product is clothing, jewellery, or footwear, as the seller instructs potential buyers to scrutinize her appearance to gain insight into the product being advertised.

Another form of opaque advertising involves price announcements. Sellers often announce the price of goods without specifying which items are being advertised, with the implicit assumption that the price reduction is significant. Consider the following:

Mẹta hundred	Three for hundred naira
Two, two hundred naira	Two Hundred naira
Eléyíí tún ní cover	This one even has a cover.

Non-opaque Advertising

The next item does not reflect opacity, instead, both the item being advertised as well as the price for it are directly mentioned in the advertisement.

Two, two hundred naira ni pònmó.
'This pònmó is two hundred naira only.'

Note that the price of goods in the examples above is first announced before mentioning the name of the good that is being advertised. What this means is that the seller assumes that the price of her good is more important to the buyers than the good itself. The same mechanism is adopted in the following example.

<i>Sweet Apple</i>	Sweet apple
Ìyá káàbò, ọmọ kúulé	Welcome mother, hello children ⁶
Méta <i>two hundred naira</i>	Three for two hundred naira

Three sweet apples are being sold for two hundred naira instead of one apple for a hundred naira which is the original price. Note the use of loan words in that advert and what it reveals about the location and the people concerned as previously mentioned.

Furthermore, some marketers will even announce the name of the goods or their usefulness first, before mentioning the price. Consider the advert for okra in the next example:

È kólá Ìwó, wàsó	Come and get okra from Iwo, just fifty-naira.
Ìwó ọbè, wàsó	This one is from Iwo, just fifty naira.
Ilá to <i>fresh</i>	Fresh Okro
<i>Fifty-fifty naira</i>	Fifty naira each

The first example of a trader's advertisement highlights the Ìwó town variety of okra as a superior product, presumably of higher quality than other available variants. In contrast, the second advertisement focuses on the freshness of the produce, with the term *fresh* being used in its description before the mention of the price. It is important to note that although the same price is attached to both advertised products, the okra being sold may differ in terms of freshness or variety,

⁶ It is the culture of the Yoruba, especially women, that whenever they go to the market to sell or buy, on their way back home, they endeavour to buy snacks for their children. As they are being welcomed by the children, the children receive such items.

necessitating careful consideration by potential buyers before making a purchase decision. The information provided in the two advertisements merely serves as a guide to assist buyers in making their final purchase decision.

Kókò olóko Ìlé kan wàsó	Farmer's cocoyam A portion for fifty naira
Ègúsí kòṣòbù, <i>two hundred</i>	A cup of melon, two hundred naira

The traders in the last two examples also find it important to announce the features of their goods to the buyers before announcing the price. It implies that each seller knows that price affordability is key to any business transaction. This is clear because no matter the quality of a good if the price is not affordable to the buyer, her business may not thrive. The advertising strategy of announcing a ridiculously low price of a commodity can be described as a necessary deception. For example, it is practically impossible for the entire article in question not to be more than fifty naira. Apart from that, the source of cocoyam and the quantity of the melon are advertised before their price is announced. While the seller describes the cocoyam as one that comes directly from the farmer without any middleman, it is the unit of measurement of the melon that is made salient before the amount was announced in the latter. We now turn to another strategy of advertising.

Descriptive Advertising

One very popular advertising strategy that sellers use to advertise their goods among the Yoruba people is descriptive. This is one of the most used strategies of advertising. This is because the seller mainly needs to describe what she is selling, even before the issue of pricing comes in. Mentioning the price of a product while advertising is overly stated for extra enticement.

Below, we present some of the descriptive advertising that we gathered in the research field:

Ó kan	It has a soured taste.
Ó gbẹ	It is fried dry.
Ẹ téèsì ẹ	You, taste it.

Yoruba Indigenous Advertising ...

Ó kan o	It is extremely soured taste.
Ó kan, ó dùn ⁷ ẹ má an wá o	It is sour and sweet, you come.
Àpòmu ẹkọ o	The ẹkọ that is stirred and drank.
Ẹ jẹ ráìsì ọfadáá gbóná o	You, eat hot ofada rice.
Búrédì gbóná dé	Hot bread is here.
Ẹfọ olóko ò	Vegetable from the farmer
Ẹ ẹ ra sọkọ ibílẹ̀	Come and buy, the native
sọkọ variety.	

The four sets of adverts vividly describe the products that are being advertised. The first two examples show the kind of gari and ẹkọ that is being sold which is not just sour but also very dry as in the case of gàrí and at the same time sweet as in the case of ẹkọ, portraying them to be delicious. The situation is the same in the next two examples; ọfadá rice and the bread are advertised leveraging on the freshness and hotness of the products. The advertiser understands that buyers are more likely to buy fresh loaves of bread than stale ones.

Advertising Involving Hyperboles

Another important strategy of advertising is the one that involves the use of hyperbole. Hyperbole has been described as an exaggeration of a person, events, or scenes beyond their normal attributes. Traders, especially among the Yorùbá, are poised to find all possible means to sell their products. As such, they employ diverse means to entice buyers to themselves. These may include the use of sonorous voice for advertising; production of poetic and rhythmic lines for advertising; songs and near-song literary genre etc. All this could be very inviting to potential buyers. For some others, the use of hyperbolic expressions is what entice buyers to purchase their wares. Consider the following:

⁷ It may sound contradictory to find *kan* and *dùn* cooccurring in this advert. However, the *kan* here is a taste coming out of a well-fermented corn meal which is usually very friendly to taste.

È jànamó tètèpo tètèpo	Eat potato together with the peels.
Wón sí bódà	They have opened the border.
Múrí kan	Twenty-naira
Ewédú oko	<i>Ewédú</i> from the farm
Àsékúnkòkò	One that is cooked to fill the pot.
Èlẹ̀kọ adán rẹ̀	This is a fresh shining ẹ̀kọ seller.
Èkọ mi bí ẹ̀ran ò	My ẹ̀kọ, fine like meat
Èkọ yí mà ń fẹ̀èbó ò	This ẹ̀kọ speaks English.
È ẹ̀ jẹ̀ran ẹ̀kọ	Won't you eat the meat
inside ẹ̀kọ?	

The first advertising is that of potato. It describes the potato's sweetness to the extent that it can be eaten with its coat. For the second example, the seller expresses the quantity of a twenty-naira *ewédú* as being able to fill a pot! The cheap price of the vegetable has been attributed to the opening of the National border! It is obvious that there is no relationship between border opening and *ewédú* that is locally produced. The second Advertisement is much more hyperbolic than the first advert. Borders do not need to be opened before *ewédú* can be sold cheaply. Similarly, there is no way, a twenty-naira *ewédú* can fill a pot in this modern-day Nigeria. In the next example, the advertiser exaggerates that the ẹ̀kọ she sells is as sweet as meat⁸, and that it speaks the English language! Still funny and surprising is that ẹ̀kọ is not prepared with pieces of meat. So, beckoning customers to come and eat the meat inside the ẹ̀kọ is an exaggeration aimed at attracting buyers. This is because no matter how many wraps of ẹ̀kọ one buys, one will never find a piece of meat inside any.

Personification in Advertising

Another method that sellers use to advertise their wares is to personify their products and put them in a position where they can almost

⁸ There is nothing to compare in terms of the taste of an ẹ̀kọ which is very flat and a piece of meat which is always sweet.

convince the buyers themselves. Funny as such an expression could be, buyers are attracted to purchase them because of this strategy. Below is one example of such:

Mùnìmùní wọlé tòmú-tòmú	Mùnìmùní entered the house with breast,
Mùnìmùní wọlẹ̀ lọ	Mùnìmùní enters the ground completely,
Ó kónú ata kóró	It enters inside the soup swiftly.

Surprisingly, *pònmó* is the article being advertised here! The advertiser makes the item to appear as if she is a female person called Mùnìmùní. As contained in the advert, this item enters a house with her breast and suddenly she enters the ground only to be told that she entered inside the pepper i.e., a pot of soup again! This mechanism is for sellers to attract more customers to buy their goods which has been so satirical.

Instructional System of Advertising

The category of items being advertised here consists of two parts; one which reveals an instruction to the buyers on the item she intends to sell and the other which shows the usefulness of the item. In what follows are examples for illustration.

È rògùsò, ẹ̀ dáná o	Buy oguso and make fire.
È rata, e sebẹ̀	Buy pepper and cook soup
È ra ilá, ẹ̀ sebẹ̀	Buy okra and cook soup.
È reja, ẹ̀ mu gàrí ọsán	Buy fish and drink afternoon gaari
Òrí o, òrí ẹ̀rò	Shea butter, shea butter that kills pain.
È ra wàrà, ẹ̀ panu o	Buy cheese and make it a snack.
È ra mọ́jú, ẹ̀ sọmọ yín lóge	Buy powder and beautify your child.
È ra karosín, ẹ̀ tanná alé o	Buy kerosene and put on light at night.

In the various objects being advertised, the traders go further to explain the type of item being advertised and how one can make use of them after purchase. The seller adds an extension in the second part either to remind buyers of what they could do with the goods or to introduce the goods and their usefulness to potential buyers who do not know about the product before. For example, the goal of buying *ògùsò* is to use it to make fire.

Narrative Advertising

There are other types of advertising that traders use to invite more buyers to patronize their goods. This largely depends on how much the sellers can manipulate their language use during advertising. While some sellers resort to singing, albeit with a sonorous voice, some could become very dramatic in their approach. The nature of this advert is expressive as the trader tries to create a short story in the form of a scene that is capable of convincing and inviting buyers to purchase her goods.

Wón ní á máa pín tî lófèé o	They said we should be giving out tea for free.
È mu tî o	Come and drink tea.
Ìbàlẹ ọkàn	It calms the soul.

The impression in the advertising is that the tea that is being advertised is to be distributed free of charge. However, buyers themselves know that this is not the case, they are aware that this is only an advertising gimmick. In the next advert below, the trader adopts a narration dynamic in advertising:

À ñ lọ ilé ọlómọ ò	We are going for a naming ceremony.
È máa bímọ jọ	I implore you all to have lots of children.
Tòmátì tì dọpọ	Tomato is now very cheap.

This advertising is also a little deceptive as it presents a narration that tries to show that the person advertising is in the company of others going to a naming ceremony and seems to be imploring her listeners to continue to give birth to more children only to land with her target which is that tomato is now very cheap. What makes this

advertisement interesting is that, even though tomato is not the only ingredient to prepare a pot of soup, it considers it as an ingredient that is essential for cooking. It is also important to point out the kind of difference this type of advertising could make when compared to advertising like *È ra tòmati, ẹ sebẹ* 'Buy tomato and cook soup' which is very direct.

Another example of advertising that creates narrative context is the following:

Àgbon yíi dẹ̀ dùn o.	This coconut is sweet.
Àgbon tó gbẹ̀ dáadáa ni o.	The coconut is very dry.
Tí ẹ̀ bá fẹ̀ fí se à dí àgbon,	If you want to make coconut oil out of it,
Ó ma yọ̀ òróró dáadáa,	It will produce enough oil.
Tí ó bá jẹ̀ àgbon tútù ⁹ ni,	If it is a fresh coconut,
Ìyẹn ò ní yọ̀ òróró dáadáa,	That won't produce enough oil.
Kò ní pèè yín,	It will not profit you.
È wá bá wa rà á o.	Come and buy from us.

This Advertising is very expressive. The seller takes her time to give a detailed description of not just what the coconut can be used for, but also a vivid explanation of the type of coconut that she is selling which is the ripe one. It is important to note the claim of the advertiser that unripe coconuts which contain a lot of water are not desirable. The latter will not produce much oil.

Other advertisements are not very expressive, as such, they do not give a full narration or a vivid description of the goods that are being advertised, yet they usually catch the attention of buyers. Consider this advert from a man selling pest killers and insecticides in a dialogue form:

Ta lolè?	Who is a thief?
Eku lolè.	It is a rat that is a thief.
Ta lolè?	Who is a thief?
Aáyán lolè.	It is a cockroach that is a thief.

⁹ The word *tútù* means an unripe coconut.

In this type of advertising, the trader uses a 'call-and-response approach' to establish the reason why the good should be purchased. The advertiser is indirectly beckoning people to come and buy a rat killer after a rat has been introduced as a thief that they must get rid of. Other Advertisements include:

È wá ra oúnjẹ ẹran o	Come and buy goat feed.
Sé ẹ ẹ rounjẹ ẹran ni?	Won't you buy goat feed?
Wíítí wà,	There is wheat.
Sóyà wà	There is soya.
È wá ra oúnjẹ ẹran o	Come and buy animal feed.

The trader in the above advert is very intentional in his approach. After announcing what she sells, she went ahead to ask buyers if they were going to buy animal feed or not. Unlike the advertisement in which the advertiser gives a response to the question by himself, the question in the next advert awaits the response from buyers.

Dádi wa, ẹ wo ata níbí o.	Our daddy, come and check pepper here.
Mòmì wa,	Our mummy,
Màá báa yín tà á dáadáa	I will sell it very well for you.
Ọ̀ndrẹ̀nd, Ọ̀ndrẹ̀nd nairà	It's hundred naira per pack.
È má fowó yín ẹ̀fò	Do not waste your money.
È má rẹ̀e rata ẹ̀sà	Do not go and buy rotten pepper.

In the given instance, the vendor not only publicizes her products but also provides reasons why potential customers should avoid other sources. This illustrates that an advertisement can take various forms, including discrediting competitors, to attain maximum sales.

Advertising Serial but Complementary Goods

This advertising campaign can be characterized as a dual-target approach. The approach involves the introduction of two distinct yet complementary products within a single advertisement. This strategy aims to create a pairing effect, with the first product paving the way

for the second. This advertising technique is primarily employed in the promotion of edible products. The following example serves to illustrate this approach.

E rèkuu, e jẹkọ	Buy èkuru and eat èkọ.
Burẹ̀dì rẹ̀e, bọ̀tà rẹ̀e	This is bread, this is butter.
Ọ̀jọ̀jọ̀ rẹ̀e, èkọ̀ rẹ̀e	This is ojojo, this is pap.
E fòlẹ̀lẹ̀ túkọ̀ wò	Use òlẹ̀lẹ̀ to eat èkọ̀.
Gúgúrú àti èpà rẹ̀e	This is popcorn and groundnut.
E fi kókó jàkàrà o	Use kókó to eat akara

One interesting thing here is that the person advertising the products in this category may have the two products at her disposal. For example, it is possible for someone who sells *èkuru* to also be the one selling *èkọ*¹⁰. The same goes for *gúgúrú* and *èpà*. However, it may not be the case for someone selling bread to also have butter side by side with the bread.

Conclusion

Marketing is a crucial element of economic industry development, and advertising plays a significant role in promoting it. The phrase *ìpolówó ọ̀jà ní àgúnmu òwò fún àwọn òntajà* 'advertising is the medicine for marketers' accurately reflects the importance of advertising in marketing. This paper has presented extensive data on Yoruba Indigenous Advertising mechanisms, including the various techniques used by sellers to attract buyers, such as deceptive, descriptive, and hyperbolic techniques. The research findings revealed that traders depend on their language skills and communicative competence to appeal to their audience. It is hoped that this preliminary report on Yoruba Indigenous Advertising will inspire other scholars, both nationally and internationally, to delve deeper into the linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of indigenous advertising within other ethnic groups in Nigeria and Africa. This research can also be extended to other ethnic groups and cultures to establish parallels in this aspect of business transactions before the modern era.

¹⁰ In most of Yorubaland, *èkuru* is the best option for eating *èkọ*. However, some people will prefer *àkàrà* or vegetable to *èkuru*.

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