A Linguistic Exploration of Indigenous Languages Adverts: A Critical Discourse Approach

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ABSTRACT

This article analyses the language of two SABC 1 isiNdebele TV Adverts with English translations. The indigenous languages adverts are analysed using a critical discourse approach (hereafter CDA). Adverts the world over, it has been observed, are best understood in the major languages of commerce, usually English. This article proffers an analysis of the advert as any text that has permeated unequal power relations, ideological inclinations and manipulative aspects. Thus, the analysis of the target adverts looks at how the structure and substance of adverts have been translated and transmuted to be understood in the language of the advert but achieving the major drive of adverts in general. This article argues that text can be realised linguistically as well as visually and analysis is instituted to bring to the fore the form, structure, and effect of the text.

KEYWORDS

Ideological Inclination, Manipulative Aspects, Transmutation and Translation, Unequal Power Relations

INTRODUCTION

This paper makes a linguistic analysis of selected SABC 1 TV adverts. SABC 1 broadcasts in indigenous languages. The resolution is a move to capture the multicultural nature of the nation. (Martin, 2013, p. 269) points out that, in South Africa, the SABC has three channels devoted to explicit linguistic clusters in harmony with the country’s overt language policy. The motive why SABC 1 adverts are not virtuous in home-grown South African clicks is pronounced by Cawood and (Du Toit, 2006, p. 1) by saying, the pledge to multilingualism in the South African structure is not reproduced in the prescribed guideline of linguistic usage in the marketing business. This paper thus, examines adverts regarding the use of language and power, use of vocatives, use of commands and special use of nouns to highlighting the dominant linguistic elements inherent in each of the adverts. The discussion starts with the McDonald’s TV Seat advert. This is followed by KFC Advert: Mamazala.

THE LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISING

Since this paper deals with the language used in the two adverts, it is imperative that language in advertising be presented. (Johannessen et al., 2010, p. 6) assert that:
the process of advertising communication is complicated, and its language can have a powerful influence over people and their behaviour. Specific language choices are vitally important to convey particular messages which aim to influence people... In today’s competitive society, this stimulating media, with its shorter print texts, innovative slogans and headlines, have the purpose of catching the reader’s attention.

Power is viewed differently by different people working in various disciplines. The social science view of power seems to be influence or authority; it focuses on the social aspect of the concept. By looking at the social power that exists between interlocutors in speech, one can distinguish the type of power relations that hold between the participants in a speech event. (Gee, 2000), notes that language does not occur in isolation but in specific social contexts. It happens between people, in particular places, in one particular set of circumstances, at specific times, accompanied by appropriate semiotic signs such as gesture, dress and symbols and is influenced by a range of values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and ideologies.

In making explicit the nature of adverts in general, the paper uses (CDA) to uncover linguistic aspects that have been used to fashion the two adverts. According to (van Dijk, 1998) Language connects with the social through being the primary domain of ideology, and through being both a site of, and a stake in, struggles for power (Fairclough, 2016). Ideology has been called the basis of the social representations of groups. While, van Dijk and Wodak, see CDA as assuming the existence of a socio-cognitive interface between social structures and discourse structures (van Dijk, 1998).

(van Dijk, 1998) further, insists that, (CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse, or talk and text, with the view that language is a form of social practice. Scholars working in the tradition of CDA generally argue that (non-linguistic) social practice and linguistic practice constitute one another and focus on investigating how societal power relations are established and reinforced through language use (Fairclough, 1995). In this sense, it differs from discourse analysis in that it highlights issues of power asymmetries, manipulation, exploitation, and structural inequities in any form of text be it written, spoken or visually. Thus, CDA is used in the following adverts to unpack the linguistic and non-linguistic elements of the adverts and their effects.

**McDonalds TV Seat Advert**

*Ngiyabonga gogo: ‘Thank you grandma’--- (receiving the bus fare.) (Grandma turns the right hand of the boy which she has put some coins so that the coins are in the safety of the hand of the young boy. She then touches the shoulder of the boy affectionately and turns her back as the boy waves for the coming taxi to stop. The boy waves for the taxi to stop, about to enter the taxi he asks for the free seat.) (The taxi in this context is a form of public transport – a twelve or more seater which plies urban routes especially linking residential areas with other parts of the urban area)*

*Baba ngicela ukuhlala* TV seat: ‘Sir may I sit on the free seat?’

*(The taxi driver looks at the young boy accepts the request and explains to the boy the nature of the free seat.)*

*Kulungile mfana, avufunaukukhokha? Kodwa kuyashisa: ‘You want the free seat? Fine but it is hot’. (The taxi driver accepts the request of the boy and offers him the hot seat. The boy enters the taxi sits facing the other passengers. As soon as he sits, he puts some coins in his shirt pocket for which he was supposed to have paid the ride. As soon as he sits, the other boys who are part of the passengers in the taxi start gesturing at him mocking him for occupying the hot seat. The boy starts to fidget showing visibly that the seat is hot, but he is determined to continue to occupy the seat.)*

*Uyi TV namhlane mfana: ‘You are our TV today’ (They look at him as they laugh and mock him)*

*Dhoba Dhoba ye-e-e-e (loosely translated as, you seem not to have any choice you just have to pick what is on offer as the otherboys laughs at the vulnerable boy)*
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