



THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE LANGUAGE USE IN THE OUTDOOR ADVERTISEMENTS: EVIDENCE FROM SMES IN DAR ES SALAAM

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study focused on the contribution of language use in outdoor advertisements through analysis of both linguistics and paralinguistics features.

Design/Methodology/Approach: An explanatory research design was employed to enable the researcher to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data to explain the contribution of language use for effective outdoor advertisements. Data were collected through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The sampling technique was stratified where forty outdoor advertisements were identified from four clusters of SMEs: macro, micro, medium, and large enterprises, and 12 respondents for both interviews and 108 respondents for questionnaires.

Findings: The findings prove that both small and micro enterprises place their outdoor advertisements along the road and near their working place (bus stands), while medium and large enterprises go for billboards and wall painting. Linguistic features found are adjectives, exaggeration, repetition, assonance, slogans, commands, and catchy phrases. While paralinguistics founds were colour, images, names, size, and numbers. The appropriate use of language attract, influence, assure, and encourage customers to act by purchasing, seeking clarity, concentrating, or others. Finally, the study established that language uses contribute to the effectiveness of outdoor advertisements by enabling a message to be well sent to the customers.

Research Limitation: The researcher found some problems such as unwillingness to respond to the questions which reduced the number of respondents.

Practical Implication: The findings will encourage SMEs to use appropriate language for better output and customers will have the assurance of the product.

Social Implication: This study will add new knowledge to producers, suppliers, and customers.

Originality/Value: This study assessed the contribution of language use in an outdoor advertisement by focusing on both linguistics and paralinguistic features. The finding provides evidence of the influence of language use on attracting customers to purchase or ignore the product or service.

Keywords: *Customer. linguistics, outdoor advertisements. paralinguistics. purchasing.*

INTRODUCTION

In modern business, customers are oriented and the power of influence is vital in informing, attracting, and affecting decisions through appropriate language use in business advertisements. Language as the medium of communication plays a great role to inform both producers & customers (Ojwang', 2018). Business enterprises have the complex decision on



the language choice to deliver the intended message for customers' influence (Johannessen al., 2010). As for public communication, both enterprises and organizations use different tools such as televisions, radio, outdoor advertisements, magazines, and the internet to deliver the intended message to the customers (Gulmez, Karaca, Kitapci, & Karaca, 2010b). Outdoor advertisement is a kind of public communication used to display the intended message to the audience in a physical context such as at a bus stop and on building walls (Tsuji, 2017). Several reasons make the outdoors paramount compared to other types of advertisements not being limited by time, cheap, flexible to reach a huge number of customers at a time, and easy to develop (Gulmez et al., 2010b; Tsuji, 2017). The effectiveness of the outdoor effectiveness depends on the appropriate use of language (linguistics and paralinguistic features).

Linguistics is a language field that focuses on the scientific investigation of language in all aspects such as phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics (Harris & Dinneen, 1968). The concept of paralinguistic is conflictual as experts differ, for example, paralinguistic is viewed as the language field that deals with everything beyond four branches of linguistics (phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics) such as mood, states, and idiosyncrasies (Schuller et al., 2013). While others view paralinguistics as nonverbal such as voice power, variations, and quality of voice (Sikorski, 2012). Therefore, this study took paralinguistics as the other means of delivering additional messages such as images, colours, and numbers in outdoor advertisements.

Effective language uses both purposes and perceptions for persuasion and the influence is well-identified and demonstrated in the advisements (El-Dali, 2019). Language in outdoor advertisement enables the producers and suppliers to communicate their products or services to the public at a low cost, without a limited timeline, geographical flexibility, and the majority of the audience at the same time (Gulmez et al., 2010b; Tsuji, 2017). Through these advantages, outdoor advertisements are the most used tool to communicate to the public from producers to suppliers, especially for SMEs. This group has been categorized into four: micro enterprises, small enterprises, medium enterprises, and large enterprises, and hence contribute to the country's GDP by 27% (Lyimo, 2020). Apart from being a fast-growing sector in the country, still, several problems are facing SMEs such as lack of information, poor marketing strategies, failure to access loans, high-interest rates, and poor communication (Gamba, 2019; Lyimo, 2020; Republic & Industry, 2002; Ojwang', 2018). SMEs ought to use outdoor advertisements to advertise their products or services to the public, however, they lack marketing strategies and poor communication including both linguistic and paralinguistic uses.

SMEs' contribution to Tanzania's economy is paramount as it is about 27% of the GDP (CEED, 2020). Apart from this vivid contribution to the economy of the country, this sector is still affected by numerous challenges such as limited information, poor marketing strategies, failure to access loans, high-interest rates, poor government support, and poor communication (Gamba, 2019; Lyimo, 2020; Republic & Industry, 2002). The presence of poor marketing strategies such as poor promotion techniques and advertisements accompanied by poor communication because of inappropriate language uses (linguistics and paralinguistics) leads to poor outdoor advertisement used by SMEs. Therefore, this study examined the language used in the outdoor advertisements of SMEs in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. To attain its general goal, the following specific objectives were used: to identify linguistic features of the outdoor advertisements, to assess paralinguistic features of the outdoor advertisements, and to analyze

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the contribution of language uses (linguistic and paralinguistic features) on the effectiveness of the outdoor advertisement.

THE LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISEMENT

Language plays a great role in advertainments such as a means of conveying thoughts, influence, and calling for an action to be taken by the target audience.

“...Advertising language is simply a combination of linguistic and paralinguistic administered by the laws of mass communication and general literary rules, and a special language structure that enables the addressee to perceive specific information taking into account the cultural, sociological, and psycholinguistic features of the language...” (Shirinboyevna, 2020).

The combination of both linguistics and paralinguistics contributes to the comprehensive information which expected to capture all angles of human interest and knowledge. Linguistics provides a balance on four aspects: phonology, syntax, morphology, and semantics while paralinguistics gives supplements to the untold through the use of signs, colour, and pictures in the respect of the culture, psychology, and society of the targeted audience. The language used should be both innovative and powerful to affect consumers' decisions such that the call to action is effective through words or images that bring hope, joy, and life (Johannessen, Meldere, Torvik, Aas, Krasnovs, Balteiro, Cardoso & Kraze, 2010).

Techniques used in advertising products or services mainly adopt the mnemonic such as rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, and assonance (Schlepppegrell, 2001). Consumers are pursued to take the act of buying products or services through appropriate uses of adjectives, puns, alliteration, assonance, exaggeration, repetition, rhetorical questions, commands, slogans, and catchy phrases. To make complete the delivery of the message, physical properties (paralinguistics feature) such as colour, size, people, names, images, shapes, and organization are used in advertisements (Johannessen et al., 2010; Tsuji, 2017).

As the need of reaching many customers increases, innovation also increases. Outdoor advertisement is among the well-innovated area of business communication and promotion. It is the kind of advertisement that is received by consumers when they are outside, especially for mass messages, branding, and support campaigns. Outdoor advertisements are ads used to make products or services well-known to clients in a particular area (WENDMU, 2014). There is importance of outdoor advertisements as their effectiveness in economic aspects by lowering production costs, exposure, geographical flexibility, and attractiveness to new customers (Tsuji, 2017). Normally, outdoor advertisements are found in six places such as bus-stop, along the road, on billboards, on building walls, crossroads, and others (Gulmez et al., 2010).

There are four main functions of effective advertisement: attention value; where attention and interest are raised to the customers and hence varieties of language styles may be employed such as wrong spelling, neologism, puns, semantic deviations, or incorrect context. Secondly is readability where the advert has to present simple and short information by using language styles such as public colloquialism, elliptic sentence structures, idioms, and contractions. Thirdly is memorability by making a repletion of some sounds, spelling, grammatical structure, rhyme, syntactical and semantical. Fourthly is a selling power where the consumer will be

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directed to take an action by the use of positive words and phrases such as adjectives “nice, free, delicious” (Schleppegrell, 2001). Therefore, if SMEs seek to grow then their outdoor advertisements should possess these features.

SMEs in Tanzania have been defined based on the number of employees and the capital invested i.e macro enterprises, small enterprises, medium enterprises, and large enterprises. The structure of SMEs is not universal however, the key features match from one country to another. In Tanzania, SMEs contribute about 27% of the GDP and hence make a great impact on the economy (Lyimo, 2020).

Table 1: Categorization of SMEs in Tanzania

Category	Employees	Capital Investment
Micro-Enterprise	1-4	Up to 5 million
Small Enterprise	5-49	Above 5 million to 200 million
Medium Enterprise	50-99 above	200 million to 800 million
Large Enterprise	100+ above	800 million

Note: Adopted from URT. (2003). Small and Medium Enterprise Development Policy, Dar es Salaam.

Conceptual Framework

This study follows a conceptual framework that demonstrates the whole concept of language in advertisement.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

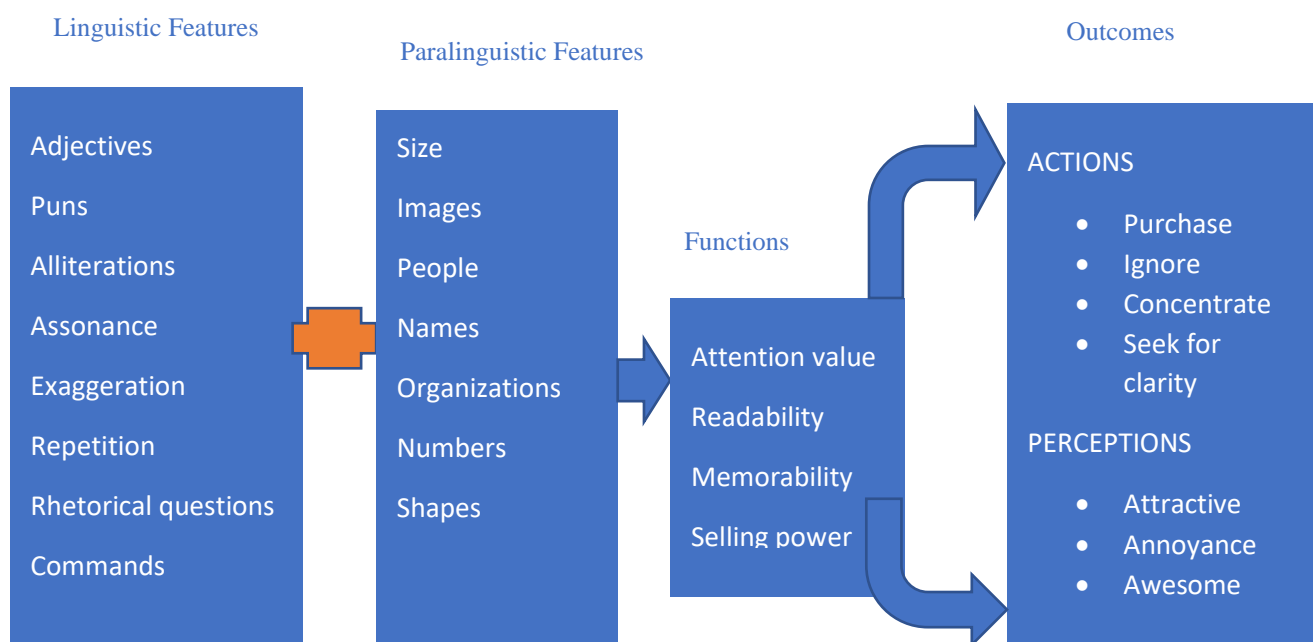


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



METHODOLOGY

This study employed an explanatory research design because of its advantages in the integration of both quantitative and qualitative data to enable researchers to capture all aspects (Design, 2006). Under quantitative, the discourse analysis was done to identify and quantify adjectives, puns, alliteration, assonance, exaggeration, repetition, rhetorical questions, commands, slogans, and catchy phrases used in selected outdoor advertisements from SMEs in Dar es Salaam Tanzania. While under qualitative research interviews and observation were used for obtaining the perceptions of consumers on the physical features of the outdoor advertisement such as colour, size, people’s images, names, organization, inhuman images, signs, and numbers. Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative data on the effectiveness or outcomes of both linguistics and paralinguistic features through a critical approach to investigate language features in the contemporary environment (situation & social) (El-Dali, 2019).

A stratified sampling technique was employed to identify outdoor ads from four clusters of SMEs with the data needed from every stratum (Gall, 2015). A sample of forty (40) outdoor ads were selected, where ten (10) were from micro-enterprises, ten (10) were from small enterprises, ten (10) were from medium, and the other ten (10) were from large enterprises. Thereafter, a stratified sampling technique was used to pick one hundred twenty (120) customers for the interview and fill in the questionnaire. Content analysis technique was used for all qualitative data together through interviews then themes were created. The quantitative data collected by questionnaires and quantification made from a linguistic analysis of the language used were analyzed using statistical tables to show the frequencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part utilized data from 120 respondents, where 73 (60.8%) were women and 47 (39.2%) were men. Regarding education background, 58 (48.3%) finished secondary education, 23 (19.2%) finished college education, and 39 (32.5%) finished primary education. Age background 98 (81.7%) were below 40, and 22 (18.3%) were above 40 years. Outdoor advertisements were 40: 10 micro-enterprises, 10 small enterprises, 10 medium enterprises, and 10 large enterprises from all four categories of SMEs as follows:

Table 2: Identified Outdoor Ads Based on the SMEs Classification

Places	Microenterpris e	Small Enterprise	Medium enterprise	Large enterprise
Bus-stop	3	4	2	3
Along the road	4	3	2	1
Billboards	0	0	1	4
Building walls	1	1	3	1
Crossroads	0	1	2	1
Others	2	1	0	0
Total	10	10	10	10

Note: From Researcher, Along the Road Outdoor Advertisements (2022)



Both table 2 and plate 1 show that both micro and small enterprises place their advertisements mostly along the road and bus stops 30% and do not place their advertisements on billboards. Financial shortage limits both micro and small enterprises to advertising in prime areas and far from their places, which matches the findings of (Gulmez et al., 2010). Moreover, most of their advertisements were poorly prepared, placed, and even some fails to provide appropriate information to the clients and hence fails to access the market. This reflects the findings from the previous study which indicated that SMMs in Tanzania fail to grow because of poor market accessibility and financial constraints (Nkwabi & Mboya, 2019). The following is an example of outdoor advertisements placed along the road.



Plate 1: Outdoor Advertisements Along the Road (2022)

Table 2 indicates that both medium and large enterprises place their outdoor advertisements in different places even on billboards because they have the capital to publicize their services or goods as described in the SME policy in Tanzania (Republic & Industry, 2002). The collected outdoor advertisements from both medium and large enterprises were more advanced compared to the small enterprise. The advertisements were well prepared, positioned, and use modern technologies such as graphics and 3D pictures to capture and arise the attention, desire, and actions of the clients. In addition, outdoor advertisements are more effective in business promotion because of being well-prepared and positioned in the right places which play a great role to attract and persuade customers to act (WENDMU, 2014; ZULU, 2019). To have effective outdoor advertisements both technical know-how and capital have to be well utilized as some of the places such as billboards and house walls are highly charged (Gulmez et al., 2010).

Linguistic Features of the Outdoor Advertisements

The data collected from the outdoor advertisements on linguistic features are presented in figure 2.

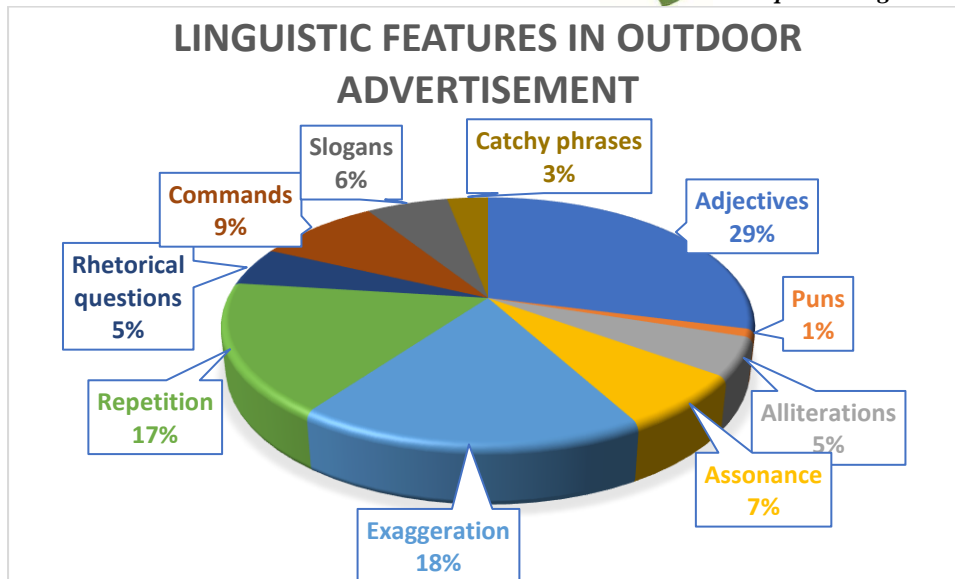


Figure 2: Linguistic Features on Outdoor Advertisements

According to figure three, the adjectives are mostly used in outdoor advertisements as they scored 29%. The use of adjectives in outdoor advertisements enables the producer to persuade the customers by increasing the intention and desire to acquire the products or services as the role of an adjective is to quantify the message. For example, the advertisement's adjective such as "best" indicates that the product or service has outstanding quality. This observation is in line with the findings that the use of adjectives in the outdoor advertisement is to convince and communicate attractively to capture the attention and arouse customers' desires (Ke & Wang, 2013).

Exaggeration is also highly used in outdoor advertisements by 18% mainly to rise the intention and desire of the customers by using both words or pictures which shows how the advertised product or service is extremely effective. The use of exaggeration makes the advertisements attractive and more persuasive. Furthermore, the exaggeration made by images or pictures is more attractive than words in the promotion of products as suggested (HUAT, 2017).

Repetition has been observed as the second used feature in outdoor advertisements as it has 17%. It has been observed that repetition of words or sound makes the customer's mind concentrate on the intended message for example the repetition of the word "new new new" emphasizes the presence of the new thing and hence capture the attention of the readers or customers to seek to know exactly what is that "new". Also, it simplifies recall because of the emphasis made on particular words. The use of repetition has been extremely used and explained in most of the linguistic features of the advertisements with an emphasis on capturing the attention of the customers (El-Dali, 2019).

Command has 9%, the phrases such as "buy here, go right, buy now, hurry up the chance are few, and urgent" need customers to act immediately after reading the advertisement. When the customer reads the advertisement with the command words, they act accordingly because it brings a feeling of a shortage of services or goods and limited options click the customer's



mind. It has been observed that the role played by words denoting commands in outdoor advertisements makes the consumer's mind act or decide quickly (Tsuji, 2017).

The other linguistic features observed are assonance 7%, slogan 6%, rhetorical questions, and alliteration 5%, catchy phrases 3%, and puns 1%. The purposes of these linguistic features are to attract and remind customers by denoting a particular message in their minds. For example, slogans are used to send a reflective message or connect the meaning of the slogan to the outcomes of the goods or services. As linguistic features are well observed, the intended information is well delivered to the customers (Johannessen et al., 2010).

Paralinguistic Feature of the Outdoor Advertisements

Paralinguistics found were inhuman images, colour, people's image, numbers, organizations, names, and size. Then respondents were interviewed on their opinions and perceptions created as followings:

The image of people (celebrities, beautiful or handsome) was mostly used in all outdoor advertisements collected. Most advertisements use the image of famous people to attract, create confidence in customers, and accredit their businesses. The images of famous people make a product or service more appreciated, and accepted, assurance of credible business, and influence the customers, especially followers to act according. These findings relate to the observation that the use of celebrities plays a great role in attracting and influencing customers because they are trusted, updated, experts, and valuable in society (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013). Furthermore, the presence of trustworthiness and expertise of the people or celebrities placed in the outdoor advertisement influences purchasing behaviour (Mbura & Kagoya 2020).

The use of different colours is the second most used in the outdoor advertisement. Respondents explained that colours on the bright and well-designed picture capture and invite the seer to concentrate, seek more information, create long-term memory, and give the assurance of credibility in the mind of customers. This finding is in line with the observation that customers are more attracted to and easy to recognize the advertisement because of the colour used (Akören, 2015; Tsuji, 2017).

The images of goods or services have been observed to be attractive and influence customers to act. Most respondents denote that the images of services or goods such as delicious food arise the interest, desire, and assurance of having the same. This has been observed that outdoor advertisements especially billboards are more attractive (Johannessen et al., 2010; ZULU, 2019).

The size and names that appeared in the outdoor advertisements play a great role to attract and assure the customers of the service or goods advertised. The size of the advertisement makes it easier to read and be seen by the majority of customers and hence accomplishes two purposes of the advertisement which are readability and memorability. A huge and well-painted outdoor advertisement attracts the eyes of customers and hence makes it valuable over other media (Shimizu, 2020). Also, the use of names (famous, professional, and celebrities) increases assurance, power, and influence (Kutthakaphan & Chokesamritpol, 2013).



The use of organization names and logos have been observed to be used in outdoor advertisements. Organization names and logo signifies the brand, so if the brand is appreciated and accredited by the community then the same value will be placed on the product or service advertised. Taking into consideration the brand awareness created, the possibility of attracting and influencing customers to act is higher compared to unknown names and logos. This supports the findings made that an organizational image is a powerful tool in business promotion (Tsuji, 2017).

The Contribution of Language Uses in Outdoor Advertisements

This part presents the findings on the contribution of language use to the effectiveness of outdoor advertisement as figure four shows.

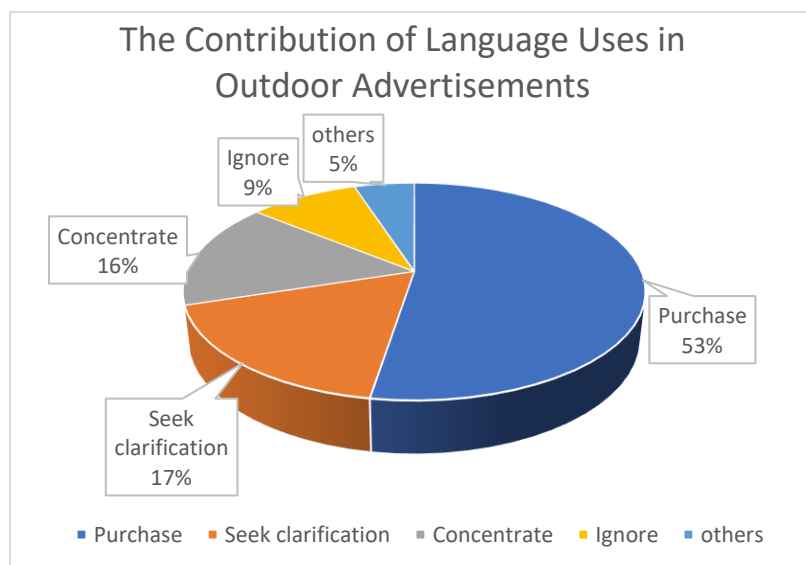


Figure 3: The Contribution of Language Uses in Outdoor Advertisements

Figure 3 shows that 53% of respondents agree that the language used makes them purchase the advertised goods or services. Respondents explained that when the language used is correct (free from ambiguity, complexity, and grammar) simplifies understanding, acting, and remembering. Furthermore, the advertisement with a complete thought, use of attractive language, and reputation features such as images, names, or organizational logos give customers the confidence to purchase a product. These findings support the previous observation that customers' actions regarding the advertisement depend on the credibility and quality assured (Borisova, Martynova, & Kujala, 2017).

The respondents asserted that some outdoors do not disclose complete information either intentionally or accidentally. The reason some outdoor advertisements contain contacts or directions is but some lack valid contacts or directions, quantity available, and price. The missing key information subject customers to a search for more details or ignore the advertisement. The study done by Ojwang' and Shau (2021) explained the same thing that some SMEs disclose little information purposely to limit the customer's choices however it decreases access to the market.



Respondents declared to concentrate on the advertisement which is well designed, painted, decorated, and uses modern graphics. Good pictures provide actual messages simply because of appropriate art or pictures used with impressiveness, attractiveness, and astonishing such as beautiful ladies, wild animals, or pictures. Therefore, the intention of creating awareness of the goods or services to the audience is attained and leads to business growth (Becker et al., 2015; Zulu, 2019)

Figure four shows that 9% of respondents ignore the outdoor advertisement if the language used is inappropriate. The use of poor language, poor choice of colour, positioning, and lack of attractiveness make the advertisement boring and hence ignored. It has been observed that some outdoor advertisements are poorly prepared (poor choice of colour, words, and place), and they lack key information (cannot be reliable) and credibility (names, quality assurance). The lack of credibility in outdoor advertisement lowers the business's reliability to its potential customers (Borisova et al., 2017; Zulu, 2019).

Finally, the respondents declared that some outdoor advertisements use abusive language and taboo words and pictures that embarrasses, humiliates, discriminates, and annoy. It goes far to create a wrong perception of outdoor advertainments and hence make them unproductive. Poor language uses have a significant effect on the attainment of marketing needs such as persuasion, attraction, and influencing. The use of appropriate language which observes culture, nation, history, and trending issues is more attractive, persuasive, and influencing (Johannessen et al., 2010).

CONCLUSION

This study aimed at examining the contribution of language uses in outdoor advertisements specifically by identifying the types of outdoor advertisements used by SMEs, examining both linguistic and paralinguistic features used in outdoor advertainments, and assessing the contribution of language uses in outdoor advertisements' effectiveness.

The findings suggest that the use of outdoor advertisement is a key component of the marketing strategy used by SMEs in Tanzania. However, the use of advertainments depends on the size of a particular SME for example large enterprises mostly use billboards and wall paintings which require capital and skilled labour, while micro and small enterprises mostly place their advertisement along the road. These practices denote that financial macules determine marketing strategies.

Both linguistic and paralinguistic features are used in outdoor advertisements to capture, attract and influence customers by being informed, assured, and persuaded to act through appropriate and skillful use of language. The use of adjectives, repetition, assonance, alliteration, command, and slogan plays a great role to express and give more details on the advertised goods or services to influence and attract customers. Paralinguistic features such as colour, names, images, people, and others provide an additional and impressive message to the customers such as validation, assurance, and desire to act accordingly. But poor usage of paralinguistic features makes difficulties for the customers such as complexity to grasp a message, humiliation, and stigmatization.

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The study suggests that the proper usage of language links and coordinates SMEs and customers by enabling the information to be well delivered. Language acts as a medium of information sharing and hence influence, conviction, affection, and attraction are possible.

From the digestion made in this article, SMEs are advised to invest in outdoor advertisements in their varieties to improve and expand the market, make appropriate use of both linguistic and paralinguistic features to accomplish the purpose of communication, and lastly, the government should commercialize outdoor advertisement to expand revenues. A researcher suggests further studies be done on the power of persuasive language in outdoor advertisements.

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