

Language and Ideologies in Selected Advertising Posters of MTN and Orange from Dschang and Bafussam (Cameroon), 2024-2025



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Abstract

This study investigates the interplay of language and ideology in advertising posters produced by MTN and Orange in the towns of Dschang and Bafoussam, Cameroon, during the period 2024–2025, and how the advertising strategies found on the posters influence customers' behavior. As two leading telecommunication companies, MTN and Orange saturate the Cameroonian public sphere with multilingual and multimodal posters that not only promote services but also embed cultural meanings and ideological positions. Situated within Cameroon's complex sociolinguistic environment, marked by official bilingualism, the prominence of Camfranglais, and persistent identity tensions, these advertising practices constitute more than commercial communication; they shape perceptions of modernity, connectivity, and belonging. Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough), multimodal discourse analysis (Kress and van Leeuwen), and linguistic landscape studies. The analyses hint on the critical discourse analyses (CDA) to examine how language choices encode power and ideology, multimodal discourse analyses (MDA) to analyse the integration of text, image and layout in the posters, and symbolic interactionism to interpret the meanings audiences attach to visual and communication interpretation and linguistic landscape to understand the linguistic composition of the public sphere, reveal power dynamic, identify target audience and marketing strategies as well as studying the dynamics of language and identity in relation to the Cameroon society. To carry out this research, a sample population of posters from MTN and Orange telecommunication companies was carefully considered. The research analyzes posters collected from central locations in Dschang and Bafoussam. The analysis focuses on language choices (English, French, Pidgin English, Camfranglais), lexical and visual strategies, and their discursive construction of gender, youth, class, and national identity. Comparative attention is given to the two towns: Dschang, with its strong academic and youth-driven character, and Bafoussam, a major commercial hub. The analyses demonstrate that the two networks use a persuasive form of advertising and dominant ideologies to influence public perception. The dominant

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ideological dispositions were modernity, class, gender, and nationalism. Their difference vary from many angles of language forms, ideologies, advertising strategies, names, images, colors, and discourses. The different linguistic negotiations in these telecommunication ads sustained in the two networks challenged the multi-dimensional approach to solve public perception in gender roles, consumerism, and globalization in Cameroon. Consumers should be aware of these patterns because all that sets the differences is already intended by the commercial agents. This work concludes by proposing possible ways through which ads can easily be understood by the public. The research suggests that MTN and Orange strategically deploy bilingual and hybrid codes to appeal to youth and urban consumers, reinforce brand hegemony through dominant color palettes and slogans, and reproduce ideologies of progress, empowerment, and digital citizenship. By revealing how corporate advertising intersects with local linguistic practices and social imaginaries, the study contributes to critical debates on language, power, and ideology in Cameroon media landscapes. It also provides insights into how global corporations localize discourse to align with Cameroonian cultural politics, thereby shaping consumer identities and everyday communicative practices.

Keywords: *Language Use, Ideology, Posters, Advertisement, Customers' Interest*

Introduction

The English language arrived in Cameroon through the British colonial influence in the 16th century, particularly in the southern Cameroons. This language became the official language at the reunification of 1961, where English and French were voted as the official languages of Cameroon under the policy of Bilingualism. The language was introduced through British missionaries during colonial administrations and as a medium of instruction in schools. The language further developed with the emergence of Cameroon Pidgin English, a lingua franca that incorporates elements of English and indigenous languages of the country. This came about due to the need for a common language among diverse ethnic groups, for example, those who were working in the German plantations. This led to the emergence of Cameroon Pidgin English as a creole language with English as its base. While English is an official language alongside French in Cameroon, it is primarily spoken in the Anglophone regions. Cameroon English (CamE) has developed its own unique features, distinct from other varieties of English, due to the influence of indigenous languages and the specific context of its use. Bilingualism in the sector of ads in Cameroon presents a situation where the country officially recognizes English and French as official languages, while advertising often favors one language over the other. This creates a divide, which often reflects a bias and potentially excludes segments of the population. This linguistic inequality can hinder effective communication and limit the reach of advertising campaigns.

There have been several forms of advertising for thousands of years till now. We have the history of the Egyptians who used papyrus to advertise goods and services while in other parts of the world and ancient Rome, mosaics, pictures on signs or walls were used by businesses to advertise their goods. The Athenians also came in with the town criers, which is very similar to that of the television and radio ads of today. That took advertising to a new level as they moved around the streets advertising products and services. At the beginning of the 17th century, printed advertising was very common and was written by the merchant himself. La Gazette, the first French newspaper

established by Theophraste Renaudot in 1631, contained personal ads for those seeking and offering employment, buying and selling goods and services, and announcements of all kinds. In the 18th century, illustrations began to appear in advertisements, and advertising agents, as they became known, started writing and illustrating the ads. After a while, store owners realized that it's more efficient to be quiet and nail down carved signs or flags that tell much more than any shouts and words. And things got rolling.

No one knows exactly when businesses began using advertising strategies to distinguish themselves. What we know for sure is that early forms of advertising were verbal. In ancient markets, sellers shouted in order to advertise their products and services. The history of advertising can be traced to ancient civilizations. It became a major force in capitalist economies in the mid-19th century, based primarily on newspapers and magazines. In the 20th century, advertising grew rapidly with new technologies such as direct mail, radio, television, the internet, and mobile devices. Advertisement, being a form of communication, which is a notice or announcement in a public medium promoting a product or service, remains incomplete if all the aims of communication are not taken into consideration. For the interest of the customers to be taken into consideration, the advertisement has to follow certain standards like quality products and services, low prices, value for money, and distance apart in terms of meaning. Consumer interest is therefore those things in which the mass (market and average consumers) are interested in. Most consumers remember adverts that are humorous and from brands they know and trust. Advertisements have become one of the important parts of human life as they help to link people of different contexts and cultures into a single advert. Advertisement therefore has the ability to persuade customers' interest in a product being advertised through images that are ideologically associated and the use of a sign system or language. This makes up some of the customers' interests that most adverts put aside and put so much focus into their main aim, which is profit-making.

Language is a code of communication used by everyone in their daily life as a means to convey information to others; which when not well handled, the message being passed poses a problem of comprehension, therefore incomplete. The language used in advertisements is transactional language, which prioritizes the content of communication, segmented into verbal (written) and nonverbal (signs and images) to convey the message they intend to pass to their customers. Most of these messages are put out in the form of posters, being a visual communication tool. An effective poster will get the main ideas across to many and will assist in engaging others' interest to the poster. A well-designed poster will serve as a source of information, a conversation starter, and a summary of a work. This work uses a poster as a source of information and a conversation starter. Language carries ideologies and might seem easy for us to understand, but advertisers also make use of figurative language to build imagery in adverts and give more meaning to words. Therefore, a deconstructive analysis will be applied to these posters to ease the understanding of the message being passed.

A poster is a representation of an ideology. It is usually a large picture or photograph, or a notice that you stick or pin to a wall or board, usually for advertisement or decoration. Some elements must be found in a well-designed poster, like the title, the graphics, text, and white space; the layout, flow, and color often affect the order and style of the aforementioned four key elements. A good poster has to have a good composition, that is, it is important to have a good visual balance, so that the image is not

overcrowded (resulting in none of the information being understood), given that the text and the images are 'fighting each other'. The topography and text take into consideration that it has to be limited to a text. Think about how much someone can remember. Therefore, the details have to be limited for the poster to be memorable. A poster also has to take into consideration some white space; these are negative spaces, not filled up with text or images. This sums up some of the characteristics of a great design. The fact that we have a whole piece of paper does not mean that we have to file everything up. This makes a poster aesthetic, readable, and comprehensive. The images also work well on posters and can have a great impact if they are perfectly in sync with the message at hand. Designing a poster is something to be really creative with imagery, so it is best to have a photo shoot or get photos for this specific purpose. The color is another specific characteristic that has to be taken into consideration when designing a poster. Use strong colors, for example, if it is going to be printed. And also in the case that the given poster will be surrounded by all other sought of posters and you want it to stand out. The color is a great way to do this. Apart from the above-listed characteristics, we also have the audience. It might be the last, but rather the most important, given that while designing a poster, it may look good, but not the best possible communicator to your audience. The design and tone will look very different if communicating to business people and to teen gig-goers or children. Keep the tone of posters, which includes text language, font, colors, and image style, relevant to the audience. This is the aspect that this article is out to cover; that is, all the forms of language used by MTN and Orage in this specific case to entice and sustain their customers' interest.

Literature Review

Language use is the act of employing language in different forms in a discourse (Upen, 2018; Banaatao, 2018). He discourses that, at times, language is used semantically, contextually (pragmatically), which is usually understood by a particular class or group of people. In his work, he also shows the difference between semantics and pragmatics; that is, semantics studies the meaning within sentences, while pragmatics studies the meaning of language in relation to context. Put in other words is the study of linguistic words, signs, and sentences within a situation. Wibowo (2019,p.101) says "language is a system of symbols that are meaningful and articulate sounds which are arbitrary and conventional, and is used as a means of communicating by a group of people that gives birth to feelings and thoughts". That is to say that language holds a particular meaning in particular groups and contexts. For instance, the meaning of a word in Cameroon is different from its meaning in Nigeria due to context, people, setting, and language differences.

The difference between two language understandings, which are, firstly, stated as a means of communication between members of the public in the form of the symbol of the sound provided by means of said humans. And secondly, language as a communication system that uses symbols, vocal (speech sound) that are arbitrary". Language use is divided into verbal and non-verbal communication. As information or a message is communicated through words, it is referred to as verbal communication. Verbal communication has to do with face-to-face, group discussion, text, and notes. There are two types of verbal communication: written and oral. Therefore, it is the exchange of information between two or more individuals in written or oral form. Non-verbal communication is the exchange of information or a message without the use of spoken or

written words. It is a powerful tool of face-to-face communication as it expresses either consciously or unconsciously. This is done in the presence of others or also conceived either consciously or unconsciously. Many times, non-verbal communication is unintentional, and the employer is not even aware that they are sending a message. This involves the use of gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, the use of pictures in discourses, and the use of space or lack of space in human interaction.

Ideology is a set of beliefs or philosophies attributed to a person or group of persons. An ideology is a set of beliefs or philosophies attributed to a person or group of persons, especially as held for reasons that are not purely epistemic, in which "practical elements are as prominent as theoretical ones." Formerly applied primarily to economic, political, or religious theories and policies, in a tradition, the term was coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy, a French Enlightenment aristocrat and philosopher, who conceived it in 1796 as the "science of ideas" to develop a rational system of ideas to oppose the irrational impulses of the mob.

There are several definitions of advertisement by different authors to which will be listed below.

Kotler (2001) sees advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of goods, services, or ideas by an identified sponsor. Presbrey (1929)-Advertising is a printed, written, oral, and illustrated art of selling. According to Wheeler (2019, p. 2010) "advertising is any form of paid non-personal presentation of ideas, goods or services for the purpose of inducing people to buy. Advertising is a paid form of non-personal presentation of ideas, goods or services by an identified sponsor, and to Stanton (2020), advertising consists of all the activities involved in presenting to a group, a non-personal, oral or visual, openly sponsored message regarding disseminated through one or more media and is paid for by an identified sponsor."

According to Amy (2017), verbal language encompasses any form of communication involving words, spoken and written. Non-verbal communication is the use of images to send across messages. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, an advertisement is a notice, picture, or film telling people about a product, job, or service. It is also an example of something that shows its good qualities. In advertising, a primary aim is to reach the largest number of people possible and then to persuade this audience to purchase a product or service. The above definitions clearly reveal the nature of advertisement. This is a powerful element of the promotion mix. Essentially, advertising means the spreading of information about the characteristics of the product to the prospective customers with a view to selling the product or increasing the sales volume. The review of marketing communication strategies that attempts to persuade the consumer on the grounds of emancipation from the stereotype is informed by (Schroeder & Borgerson, 2005; Schroeder, 2005) and Petrilli's (2010). In their research, they attempt a representation of ideologies of language, to show that the notion of presentation of ideologies on an equal participant in the tradition of the stereotype that already succumbs to a "means-end rationality" (Bürger, 1984). This work defines advertisement as a form of communication that valorizes context and customer interest.

Research Problem

In Cameroon, advertising by telecommunication companies such as MTN and Orange plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of connectivity, modernity, and social belonging. These companies invest heavily in multilingual and multimodal posters that

combine English, French, Camfranglais, pidgin, and visual imagery to appeal to diverse audiences. However, while these advertising materials saturate urban centers like Dschang and Bafoussam, little systematic research has been done on how the language choices and visual strategies they deploy construct and circulate ideologies about identity, consumerism, youth culture, gender roles, and national unity. Given Cameroon's complex sociolinguistic environment, which is characterized by official bilingualism (French and English), widespread use of Pidgin English and Camfranglais, and persistent tensions between regional, ethnic, and linguistic identities. Corporate advertising does not simply market products; it also reproduces or contests broader cultural ideologies. Yet, studies on the linguistic landscape in Cameroon have often focused on public signage, political posters, or grassroots communication, leaving the discourse of multinational telecom companies relatively underexplored.

This gap is particularly significant in Dschang and Bafoussam, two towns that illustrate Cameroon's urban and academic dynamism while also reflecting contrasting linguistic profiles: Dschang as a largely university-driven environment with strong youth presence, and Bafoussam as a major commercial hub. Understanding how MTN and Orange position themselves in these contexts through language can reveal the ideological underpinnings of their communication strategies and their role in shaping consumer identities and cultural narratives. Thus, the problem lies in the lack of critical inquiry into how telecom advertising posters in Cameroon deploy language and semiotic resources to naturalize ideologies of modernity, connectivity, and social belonging. Without such inquiry, the subtle ways in which global corporate discourse intersects with local linguistic practices and cultural politics remain obscured.

Research Questions

1. What languages and registers (English, French, Pidgin, Camfranglais, indigenous lexical items) are used and their combinations?
2. How do lexical choices, slogans, and visual grammar index ideologies of development, connectivity, and belonging?
3. Do patterns differ between Dschang and Bafoussam (placement, code choice, imagery, price salience)?
4. How are gender, age, and social class semiotically constructed?
5. What interdiscursive ties (nationhood, sports, education, and entrepreneurship) circulate across campaigns?

Methodology

Using the qualitative method of data analysis, the theory of semiotics of message is used in analyzing the data collected in the adverts using the CDA (critical discourse analysis) and MDA (multimodal discourse analysis) methods of data analysis. The research is an exploratory, speculative, and interdisciplinary review carried out on two firms, using their posters (fliers) as the corpus. The review focuses on representational dimensions, deconstructing social concerns and ideologies, to provide a broader context for recognizing and understanding polemical issues in advertising posters.

Theoretical Frame

Using the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of Fairclough, this article analyzes the text, discursive practice, and social practice in the posters of MTN and Orange networks that construct and reinforce social meanings and power relations. CDA, as outlined by

Fairclough, operates in three interconnected levels; that is, the textual, which will be used to examine the linguistic and visual features of the poster. Next, we have the discursive practice on its part that will be used to analyse how the poster was produced, distributed, and consumed, and how it draws on existing discourses. Lastly, the social practice will be used to understand the broader social and ideological context in which the poster operates and its potential impact on power relations. Given that meaning is made through multiple mode, the Multimodal Discourse analysis and Social Semiotics of Kress and van Leeuwen on its part are used to study the colors, gaze, composition, salience; Barthes: denotation and connotation, myth; these theories will be used to bring out the core idea, key concepts applied to the posters like color, gaze, composition and silence; given that what is not shown is also as important as what is shown. Also, the theory of Ideology and Hegemony of Gramsci and van Dijk is used to analyse the ideology in posters by identifying the dominant discourses, mostly using the hegemony through Gramsci's analysis lens of "common sense" beliefs that are being promoted. And lastly, we have the Linguistic Landscape, backed by local bilingualism and Camfranglais dynamics.

Results and findings

In this section of this article, we deconstruct the images in the poster, bring out the different forms of language, and show how they appeal to the needs and thoughts of the customers. These include verbal (written language) and non-verbal (the use of picture) signs, as means of communication. And how signs of communication act as a means to inform and guide users of these networks on how to better use these products for their personal benefit.

Language use by MTN and ORANGE to Entice and Sustain Customers Interest

The language used to entice and sustain customer interest is often referred to as persuasive language, marketing language, or brand voice. It's a careful blend of different techniques aimed at capturing attention, building trust, and ultimately driving action (like making a purchase or becoming a loyal customer). Language is a powerful tool that allows us to communicate ideas, express emotions, and create meaning. We can use language in two main ways: directly or figuratively. Understanding the differences between direct and figurative language allows us to choose the most effective way to communicate our ideas and express ourselves. Bringing this to these advertising networks, we will start by examining the direct language in the various posters of MTN and ORANGE.

The Use of Verbal Elements to Construct Ideologies as Strategies of Advertisement

The verbal element of language advertisement in posters has to do with the use of written words, since we do not study the said verbal forms of language. That is oral; our interest will be based on those elements that make up the written forms of verbal language. The use of verbal elements to construct ideologies as strategies of advertisement is a powerful technique that goes beyond simply listing product features. It involves carefully selecting words and phrases to evoke mental meanings, tap into cultural values, and ultimately persuade consumers to adopt a particular viewpoint or desire a specific product. Advertisements use words and phrases that appeal to the senses, creating vivid mental images. This can involve descriptions of taste, smell, sight, sound, and touch; that is, evocative language. Advertisements often align their products

with specific cultural values, such as freedom, independence, family, success, beauty, or health, which are specific to ideological aspects in advertising that appeal to values. Adverts also use strategic verbal elements, slogans, and taglines like Catchy phrases that encapsulate the brand's message and are easy to remember. It's important to note that the use of verbal elements to construct ideologies can be manipulative if it's not done ethically. Advertisers should be transparent about their goals and avoid making false or misleading claims. They should also be aware of the potential impact of their advertising on society and avoid promoting harmful stereotypes or values, which will be an ethical thing to remember. By carefully crafting verbal elements, advertisers can create powerful ideologies that resonate with consumers on an emotional and psychological level. This can be a highly effective way to influence consumer behavior and promote products, but it's important to use these techniques responsibly and ethically. The key is to create a genuine connection with the audience by understanding their needs, values, and aspirations.

Use of Colloquial Language in Adverts

Colloquialism or colloquial language is the linguistic style used for casual communication. It is the most common functional style of speech and or idioms, usually employed in conversation and other informal contexts. The use of colloquial language in advertisements is a strategic choice often employed to connect with a specific target audience, create a sense of authenticity, and break down barriers of formality. However, it's a double-edged sword, and its effectiveness depends heavily on the brand, product, target demographic, and overall marketing strategy. Colloquialisms, slang, and informal speech patterns make the advertisement feel more relatable and approachable. It signals to the target audience that the brand understands them and speaks their language. In advertising, some specific words are sometimes used to promote the adverts. We have words like "wanda" in the advert for MTN, as seen below.

Picture 1: MTN Wanda advert Massanda

Source: MTN Bafoussam office

Time taken: November6, 2024:4pm



From the advert above, the first thing that captures one's attention is the word "MTN wanda" because of its distinctive color from the other words on the advert. On this very advert, MTN has clipped the word "wonderful" to have "wander". Wanda is a colloquial word mostly heard amongst the youths in their discussions which is not a formal English word. MTN has therefore clipped the word "wonderful", which means surprise, to get "wanda". MTN uses the ideology of wonderful to tell the customers about the surprise they have for them, and beyond their expectations, as it is so amazing. That is why they call it a super bonus. MTN has therefore used the adjectives wonderful clipped to form the word "wanda", which is a colloquialism because it is not standard and super to describe the type of services they have for their customers. This is to tell the customers that there is no other bonus that is more than this or more than that of MTN. MTN uses all these as strategies to lure the customers' attention to buy their products and services. These surprises can only be obtained through the code below.

This is therefore a form of persuasive advertisement that MTN Cameroon puts up to get the attention of its customers. MTN is, with no doubt, telling everyone the come to MTRN and you will be surprised. By deconstructing the meaning of this word in relation to the text, the ideology of wonderful services and surprise is been used to capture the attention of the customers.

Further, there is also the use of colloquial language in the adverts of MTN below:

In these adverts, MTN uses the word "YaMo" to pass on their message or sell their product and services. The word "Yamo is a colloquial word that began with a pejorative meaning in Cameroon. It is a word that was first used by prostitutes like "kolo Yamo" to mean pay one thousand and sleep with a prostitute. This word has gained ground in the Cameroon context to mean enjoy. On the left, MTN also uses code switching from English to a specific language (pidgin) to still sell the ideology of enjoyment. On the left side of this advert, MTN writes "Me na Me, Me na We, We di YaMo"; meaning "me" for MTN and every other person out there, and "we" for everybody, so everyone together with MTN, we are enjoying. As seen on the faces of the people in this picture who are smiling, so will the enjoyment with MTN be with everybody, like in "we di Yamo". The producer of this advert ends up saying at the bottom of the advert that "what a comeback!!" Just as the word "Yamo" has come back into usage, but this time on a general notion of feeling good or enjoying, so is MTN bringing enjoyment to its customers. MTN therefore uses this ideology to paint the image of enjoyment in the mind or thoughts of its customers, thereby employing the cajoling strategy to attract, persuade, and lure the customers to buy its services. MTN, in this advert, is indirectly saying to their clients that come to MTN and you shall have joy, according to their adverts as seen above.

Picture 2: MTN YAMO advert



Source: roadside poster Dschang
Time taken: February 5, 2025, 9 AM

The MTN YaMo advertisement primarily seeks to attract a youthful audience by creating a sense of excitement and belonging through mobile services. The visual design contains several components for visual stimulation, with a Black male showing happiness while using the product, and putting on the clothes that show the local pride of Cameroonian. This creates the image that using this product will create a sense of happiness and help connect you back to your roots. The yellow also helps to provide emphasis, and the blue in the background. Just like the color yellow symbolizes happiness, optimism, and energy, and as well often associated with the sun, while blue symbolizes calmness, stability, and trustworthiness, and is often associated with the sky, MTN in the above poster uses these two colors to pass a message of harmony to their customers. Putting the two colors together, if the client is happy, they will obviously be calm, as well as if they have an optimistic energy, stability, and trustworthiness flows automatically. So, just like the sky is always in harmony with the sun, like the circle around the man's shoulders, does MTN expect its clients to use the "Yamo" (enjoy) bundle and stay in harmony with it? These all have a single purpose to bring together potential consumers. The language, characterized by youthful slang "tu dors ta vie dort" (you sleep your life will sleep), and emphasis of YaMo can create a sense of confusion if unfamiliar with the terms. The advertisement also highlights unlimited access, with 300F at the end, which gives a sense of affordability to pull the reader in, and feel they can have access. In general, all the

advertisement seems to do is get the consumer to want the product by enticing them with an image. They might also lure and play on emotions and excitement, and not properly educate the consumers on all the information. From a certain perspective, the advertisement can potentially implement elements of the technique, Bait and Switch. Here is what the business showcases as to get you to subscribe to a plan: they emphasize "300F"; however, there is more, as it can be a lure. There is also the fact that it says "unlimited," which the advertisement tries to say that everything is unlimited; there are no clear and precise actions taken. It preys on the youth and potential disconnect from family roots as a way to subscribe to what they are selling. It can compromise goals as well because they may spend so much money, rather than invest. The ad might also make it seem like the offer will solve problems that do not exist.

Linguistic analysis shows more on how it preys on emotions rather than facts and concrete goals. First, it makes use of catch phrases and "slang", creating the effect of building that connection. It uses the power of Alliteration to make it memorable to potential users. They also add "dial" as a form of Command, so the user immediately knows what to do if they need the services. Therefore, the MTN YaMo advertisement makes efforts to connect with the African demographic and entice them to get their product. But this can be seen as a harmful technique because the advertisement relies mostly on emotion, than factual information. Also, it might bait and switch people to get sales from the younger generations. This creates a product that prioritizes profits and success over being trustworthy and reliable.

The use of figurative language by Orange to grabs customers' attention

Picture 3: ORANGE bundle advert



Source: Dschang-Foreke

Time taken: February 6, 2025, 4 pm

On the advert of Orange, on the other hand, there is the use of the adjectival word “double” on the first line that goes “everything na double double”. The word double is an adjective, used by Orange here to describe the nature of their services to their customers. “Adjectives are words that describe nouns or pronouns”. In other words, adjectives describe a person or things. Most of the adjectives used here, as far as the advertising ideologies are concerned, are attributive adjectives, which give value to the services of these networks. This word is used twice to emphasize the nature of their services, which is why they repeat the word “double double”; repetition for emphasis. Orange is indirectly saying here that everything at Orange is double gain, advantages or twice as good as what customers can imagine or get elsewhere, as illustrated by the extra double portion of what the man in the picture is eating.

We also find the aspect of repetition for emphasis, which is in words and pictorial form. The words “double double” and the extra two portions of what the man is eating. This promotes customers' interest in that, as every customer will want a benefit from using a service, Orange network in Cameroon has made it their objective to give its customers twice as much of what they consume, just like the man is consuming in the picture above. Literally meaning that with any consumption made at this network, the customers should be guaranteed of the extra profit and happiness they stand to gain, as demonstrated by the man's facial expression. We also have the action of the man widening out his hands, which can signify (what are you waiting for) so go ahead and dial the code to benefit double.

Picture 4: orange money poster



Source: Orange calendar Bafoussam

Time taken: November 7, 2024, 2:21 PM

On this advert, we can see the woman's hands placed on her chest and her mouth wide open, and all her concentration directed to her phone, an indication of the visual imagery. Her facial expression is that of surprise; this surprise is what the network keeps or holds for every one of its customers. Just like the verbal communication by the side of this picture already says, opening an Orange money account, the customer stands to gain credit for communication, a 50% reduction on charges, and 500 FCFA after every first deposit. And like this woman who has gained such opportunities after opening her Orange account, to her greatest surprise, she has reaped the benefits advertised. Who are we then as customers to doubt these services? What we have to do is just to dial the code advertised on the advert and benefit from such services. The Orange Money poster attempts to entice potential customers to open an account by promoting bonuses and offers. It utilizes language, imagery, and ideology to create a sense of excitement and benefit, but raises questions about a potential bait-and-switch approach. The imagery centers on a Black woman expressing joy and surprise while holding a phone. This creates the image of being "happy" while utilizing their services and the joy that comes with the service. Orange and white are the main colors, which is used to create a sense of clarity and the branding for the product. The language is designed to be direct and focus on benefits. Like the headline, "Prendre un super départ" (Get a super beginning). This is used to help get potential customers to know they should be interested in this promotion. It's straightforward. Value Proposition, « Des bonus à l'ouverture de votre compte Orange Money" (Bonuses upon opening your Orange Money account). They are promoting what they have to offer to their users and how opening an account with them can benefit them. Specific Offers, 1000 FCFA of communication credit, 50% off transaction fees, and 500 FCFA of communication credit for the first deposit are mentioned. This is used as an enticement to get clients to invest in them. There are also slogans, like "Plus simple, plus proche, plus sûr" (More simple, more close, more secure), on the poster that reinforce the product's benefits.

The advertisement promotes an ideology of financial ease, reward, and security. Some of the ideologies in this poster include: Target audience, likely targets individuals interested in mobile financial services, Appeals to values, Convenience, value, security, and the desire for financial empowerment, Creation of Desires as the poster attempts to create a desire for financial ease and the chance to save money. The poster, while promising certain benefits, does have the potential for bait-and-switch tactics or compromised customer goals. Limited time/terms, the ad could lack details regarding any terms and conditions or hidden fees associated with the use of the bonuses or the Orange Money account. The lack of detail might get consumers to trust it, not knowing what might happen. Actual value vs. perceived value of the service or bonuses might have limited value, for example, a few fees or the cost of a few calls. The poster also makes use of alliteration; the slogan "Plus simple, plus proche, plus sûr" uses alliteration to increase memorability. Buzzwords like the use of terms such as "super" make it enticing to consumers. In conclusion, the Orange Money advertisement leverages strong visual elements and direct language to promote its service. The advertisement is enticing; however, by not providing the information of the possible drawbacks or hidden fees, it has a high chance of using bait and switch tactics, which might lead to a loss of trust.

III- Similarities and differences between the MTN and Orange networks in Cameroon

From the above posters and analyses, we can identify several similarities and differences between the MTN and Orange forms of advertising, ranging from their services, languages, colors, and images, just to name but a few.

1- Similarities

A- Services

Both networks focus on Bundles and Promotions: Both networks heavily promote bundled offers (voice, data) and special promotions as a key way to attract and retain customers. This is evident from "Renew your bundle before it expires and receive double" (Orange) and "avec YAMO profite de 7 jours d'appels illimités + 500MO a 300f" (MTN).

We also have the Mobile Money promotion: both services strongly promote their mobile money services. Mobile money is the money transfer service that their customers use in Cameroon to send and receive money. MTN has the MOMO, which is the origin of Yamo (picture 2), while Orange has the OM, which stands for mobile money, as seen in picture 4. They also make use of the Value Proposition. Both attempt to convey a sense of value and benefit for the customer, whether it's through bonus airtime, lower fees, or "double" rewards.

B- Languages

The use of Local Appeal: Both seem to tailor their messaging to resonate with the local Cameroonian market. MTN makes use of pidgin words like YAMO, WANDA (wonderful), given that with such words, the Cameroonians can easily identify themselves with them. Orange, on its part, makes use of words like double, plus, and bonus. These words lure, assure, and give the confidence to their customers through these words that their services come with plus, double, enjoyable, and wonderful bonuses.

C- Cultural ideology

MTN and Orange use cultural elements to resonate with their target audience. They employ various strategies, including pidgin, incorporating cultural symbols like the dress in picture 2 and the food in picture 3. This all helps to build brand loyalty and foster a sense of connection with their customers.

2- Differences

Language messaging Tone and Style: with Orange, the "Everything na double double" slogan is more colloquial and uses local Pidgin English, which is more relatable to a broader audience. The imagery of local food (likely koki) further emphasizes this localization. The use of pidgin English and the local dish, which most Cameroonians can easily identify themselves with, makes the posters more familiar and luring, making their ads more direct. While MTN tends to have campaigns with a broader reach due to the cheap services like in picture 2, this makes their posters more serious in nature.

These networks also have differences at the level of Customer Target in Advertisements. On the part of Orange, the image with local food and pidgin suggests targeting a wider demographic, possibly including a more rural or less affluent

population, using everyday life scenarios (food). While MTN on its part tends to use mostly the words "wanda and yamo", that resonates mostly with the youthful population.

Another difference can be seen at the level of Brand Positioning. Orange seems to emphasize simplicity, closeness, and security ("Plus simple, plus proche, plus sûr"), as well as value (double double). They also use very local imagery, like image 4. MTN, on the other hand, focuses on technology in color combination (picture 2). This makes the brand seem more modern and more expensive than its competitors. Their differences also lie at the level of the colors they use. MTN makes use of the colors yellow and blue, while Orange makes use of the colors black and orange. While the colors of MTN symbolize happiness and harmony, the colors of Orange symbolize sophistication, power, and formality, which are mostly culturally oriented.

Purpose and Contribution

From picture 2 above, the Overall Impression is that the poster aims to create a youthful, connected, and culturally relevant image, associating MTN with positive attributes and experiences. Modernity is constructed in the central image of the young man using a smartphone immediately signals modernity. Technology as a pathway for a "modern" life. And the way the phone is seamlessly integrated into the scene normalizes mobile technology as an everyday part of life, particularly for this demographic. Also, the use of a young male model is a deliberate choice to appeal to a youth demographic of the town of Dschang given that its youthful population is very high due to the presence of the university in the said setting. The informal language "YaMo," suggests slang or a youthful term. This language also serves to promote that youth need to keep up with technology or else their life will pass them by. This normalizes youthful energy as in the model's smiling face and engaged posture create a sense of youthful energy and enthusiasm, further associating the product with this demographic. The ad appears gender neutral due to there being a man only, but its offer of helping individuals connect with peers might imply that it is trying to combat the idea that only men are technologically savvy. This normalizes male as tech user, by featuring a male model, it subtly reinforces the idea that men are the primary consumers and users of technology and telecommunications services. While women have come a long way in tech, they tend to be underrepresented in technology advertising. Traditional Attire with Tech; He is wearing something that can be defined as somewhat traditional attire, but also the fit and design is more modern and associates mostly with youthful designs of choice. This helps create a brand that the younger generation can see themselves using and also connect everyone that comes across this poster to the culture and tradition of the people of this zone (the west region of Cameroon). Also, the class constructs affordability. The promotional text "7 jours d'appels illimités + 500Mo à 300F" (7 days of unlimited calls + 500MB for 300F) suggests an affordable price point. This conveys a message that all classes can use MTN services. By highlighting the affordability of the service, the poster normalizes the idea that mobile technology is accessible to a broad range of socioeconomic backgrounds. By offering unlimited calls and data, the poster conveys the fact that they care about keeping you online to be informed about what is going on in the modern world. And by encouraging the young man to participate in the digital world, this service constructs an idea that he is an active citizen within his community. From the visual cues, he also has jewelry and nice clothes, which are indicative of class. We will

end on this poster with the multicultural identity ideology. The poster reinforces that you do not have to abandon your current traditions, but stay current and modern with technology. This advertisement, therefore, aims to normalize modern, tech-centric life, which constructs the image that those who are not online are living the wrong way. The MTN poster uses a variety of visual and linguistic strategies to construct and normalize certain ideologies related to modernity, youth, gender, class, digital citizenship, and national and linguistic identity. By portraying a young, modern, and connected individual, it subtly promotes these values as desirable and accessible through MTN's services. However, it also subtly reinforces certain stereotypes, such as the idea that men are the primary adopters of technology, and it does not acknowledge the potential negative impacts of digital technologies. It also provides an illusion that anyone can have the tech world in their hands, because someone may be unable to afford it.

In picture 4 above, the poster aims to connect Orange with everyday Cameroonian life, emphasizing value and community through local language and imagery. The ideology of modernity is constructed through the USSD code #111*0#. Although it is a simple command, the act of using technology and understanding how to enter a complex code is indicative of modernity. This is in contrast with the inclusion of food, which indicates tradition and contests the concept of modern foods. The poster also features an older gentleman, which implies that youth is not its main focus, and contests their influence. This normalizes the use of the USSD code, which might be enticing to a younger audience this then normalizes that even an older man can perform modern tasks. Featuring a male figure in isolation does imply that he is the primary user. The class in this poster has been constructed using local imagery. Food bundled up in leaves and wood suggests a simple meal, and therefore not very wealthy. Just as this dish is affordable in this part of the country (the west region of Cameroon, precisely Dschang), the poster associates this with the affordability of their bundle by saying "Renew your bundle before it expires and receive double," which implies that it is incentivizing clients to save money and not lose it. The fact that it is targeting individuals who may not have the extra funds (struggling parents or students) implies that it is mainly for the working class. To initiate digital citizenship, the poster encourages participation. By incentivizing clients to renew their bundles, they are also helping them remain active and not drop off the Internet. This normalizes active online presence, having the ability to have extra calls and data, is encourages the man in the photo to be present online and have a digital life. There is also the construct of local Pidgin English through the use of "Everything na double double" in local pidgin instantly establishes a connection with a Cameroonian audience. It shows that the company "speaks their language" and understands their culture.

The hegemonic effects of the poster reinforce the "common sense" idea that Orange is a reliable and value-oriented provider that understands the needs and culture of ordinary Cameroonians. This aims to normalize the idea that even those who are of a low class can feel digitally present. This Orange poster strategically employs language and visuals to construct an image that is relatable, affordable, and culturally resonant. By featuring familiar food, local language, and a relatable male figure, it positions Orange as a brand that understands and values the Cameroonian people.

I. Contribution to Cameroonian Linguistic Landscape Studies:

The posters map language use in advertising by providing concrete examples of how language is deployed in the Cameroonian public sphere, specifically within advertising. Analyzing the frequency, context, and prominence of French, English, and potentially Camfranglais in advertising is crucial for understanding the linguistic landscape of Cameroon. The posters also identify linguistic hierarchies by revealing implicit power dynamics and social status associated with different languages. Are English and French used equally, or does one language dominate? Does the use of Camfranglais signal a shift in these power relations? Do promotional materials in rural regions differ in language use compared to urban advertisements? These details help researchers map linguistic hierarchies within the country.

If these posters documenting code-switching and language hybridity or similar advertising materials utilize code-switching (mixing English and French) or incorporate Camfranglais, they provide valuable data for documenting these linguistic phenomena. They show how language is adapted and hybridized in real-world communication. The posters also help in understanding language ideologies and offer insights into underlying beliefs and attitudes towards different languages. Does the advertising reinforce the "official" status of English and French or promote the use of local languages? This reveals corporate language ideologies and how they intersect with broader societal attitudes.

II. Contribution to Critical Advertising Discourse

Revealing corporate strategies; by analyzing the language and visuals in these posters allows us to unpack the strategies used by multinational corporations like Orange to target specific demographics, create brand identity, and promote their products/services. This work also contributes to critical advertising discourse by identifying ideological underpinnings. Critical advertising discourse examines how advertising can perpetuate or challenge social norms, stereotypes, and power relations. For example, do these posters reinforce gender stereotypes, promote consumerism, or perpetuate inequalities based on class or location? It as well contribute to analyzing the construction of "Desire". Advertising works by creating a sense of desire for the product being advertised. Analyzing the language and visuals in these posters reveals how Orange and MTN constructs desire in the Cameroonian context, appealing to aspirations for modernity, connectivity, financial empowerment, and social mobility. And lastly we have evaluating ethical considerations. Critical analysis of advertising can also raise ethical concerns. Are the promises made in the advertisement realistic? Are they targeting vulnerable populations? Does the advertising promote responsible consumption or create unrealistic expectations?

III. Corporate Framing of Bilingualism, Camfranglais, and Rural-Urban Aspirations

The above posters, by potentially using both English and French, may be attempting to reflect and value Cameroon's bilingual heritage. This could be a deliberate marketing strategy to connect with a wider audience and project an image of inclusivity. By imposing a "Proper" bilingualism, the advertisements prioritize "standard" French and English. They might inadvertently reinforce a model of bilingualism that marginalizes local dialects or less formal language varieties. Corporations might also use Camfranglais in advertising to appeal to younger audiences or project a sense of "coolness" and

authenticity. However, this can also be seen as an appropriation of a language variety that is often stigmatized. For validation and normalization on the other hand, if used respectfully, the inclusion of Camfranglais in advertising can contribute to its validation and normalization within the public sphere.

If the posters consistently depict urban settings or associate the product with urban lifestyles, they might reinforce the idea that urban life is more desirable or modern. Conversely, if the advertising depicts rural settings or incorporates elements of rural culture, it could be an attempt to connect with rural communities and project an image of accessibility and relevance. Some advertising campaigns attempt to bridge the rural-urban divide by highlighting the benefits of technology for both urban and rural populations. For instance, the dominant use of French in the Orange Money poster may reflect the language's perceived status in financial transactions and potentially cater to an urban or educated demographic. The promise of financial bonuses tied to digital accounts frames financial empowerment as an urban and technologically driven aspiration. The use of a more informal tone ("double") in the man eating "koki" poster might be a deliberate attempt to connect with a wider audience, potentially including those in rural areas.

Conclusion

Through the languages used in the adverts, we were able to observe that producers of these ads turn to use languages that are more familiar with the context. Like the pidgin words (na, yamo, wanda), as well as pictorial languages like the local dish and local traditional attires. On the analyses of data collected from the corpus, it was found that the producer of adverts use both verbal and non-verbal language to give meaning to the products, literary devices as well as ideologies. They do this with the use of word coinage, adjectives, stylistic devices like repetition, and symbolism. both Orange and MTN are using familiar strategies, focusing on bundled promotions, and mobile money services, as well as culture, as seen in the man's attire in picture 2, while Orange's advertising strategy seems to emphasize much localized messaging, using pidgin and local foods to appeal to a broad demographic and convey simplicity and value.

Analyzing these posters provides valuable insights into how corporations like Orange navigate the complex linguistic and socio-economic landscape of Cameroon. They offer evidence on how language is used to construct brand identity, target specific demographics, and promote products and services. By studying these examples, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the power dynamics and ideologies that shape communication in the Cameroonian public sphere and contribute to critical discourse advertising. More research on these posters and similar advertising campaigns could be done through focus groups, interviews, and surveys. This helps further illuminate how the public responds to these marketing strategies.

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