

**A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF VACANCY ADVERTISEMENTS  
IN SELECTED NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS**

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**Abstract**

*This paper utilized the resources of stylistic to analysis the language of vacancy advertisements in selected Nigerian Newspapers. This study therefore hopes to contribute to the novel use of language of advertising in the media by revealing the style mostly used in advertising job post in the Nigerian newspapers. This study is based on the theoretical framework of Burke's Functional Stylistics. Burke (2014) remarks that functionalist stylisticians are "concerned with the ways in which the formal properties of language are used pragmatically" (p. 46). Advertising is one of the ways to let the public know about a product or service and the newspaper is considered to be one of the most authentic sources of advertising. From the analysis, it has been found that copywriters use bolder print for a stylistic effect and for easy grasping and understanding of the information by way of providing explicit messages to the candidates. Besides, bulletins are used to give direction to the applicants. It is also a form of attention catching device; while simple, complex and compound sentences are used to enable the readers recognize the importance attached to each piece of information, which is a necessary procedure if the reader is to appreciate the importance of each set of information. This study has therefore shown that vacancy advertisements in the Nigerian newspapers manifest unique stylistic features under the graphological, and grammatical considerations such as capitalization, the use of abbreviation, the unconventional use of capital letters and bold or small prints. The analysis equally demonstrates linguistic peculiarities such as sentence structures like simple, compound, complex sentences as well as catchy words and phrases.*

**Keywords:** Stylistics, Vacancy, Advertisements, Nigerian Newspapers

## **Introduction**

### **Language of Newspaper Advertising**

Attempts are being made by researchers to unravel the complexities of the language used in advertising and language is the most significant gift to human beings. Nigeria is a multilingual nation consists of people of different ethnic backgrounds, who speak various languages as their mother tongues. Nevertheless, English is the official language of Nigeria and it is widely used in schools, government institutions and it is the language of the media and advertising. When a piece of public advertisement or announcement is made in the print media, the intention is not likely to persuade the audience into believing it, but to simply pass information to them. However, Isife (2011) asserts that the mechanism of communication involves words, writing, printing and whatever may be the latest means of sending or receiving information. In view of this, language is regarded as the major and valid tool of communication. Ogunsiji (2001:70), as cited by Isife (2011) remarks that market transactions, and the use of language have a serious effect on both individual's present and previous experiences. This gives an advertiser the opportunity to employ different means of language to advertise his/ her products in a way to attract buyers. According to Wyckham, Banting & Wensley (1984) "Language is a major component of most advertisements" (p. 47). This means that words, phrases, and sentences are coined to convey information, to influence attitudes and to affect behavior in advertising. To them, "selecting appropriate terminology and the creative use of syntax to accomplish the advertiser's objectives are critical functions in the development of advertising" (p. 47). It shows therefore, that advertisers need to gain the readers' interest positively by using appropriate language to achieve their goal. That is why Chugh and Sharma (2012) say "this world would certainly be dark if the light of language did not illumine it" (p. 157). Citing Sapir, the great linguist, they said:

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society (p157).

From the forgoing, it then means that language is a powerful tool that conveys meaning through the process of communication. Language is such a powerful force in shaping our world. The final goal of advertising is to gain consumer's interest. In the case of this study, the goal is to attract job seekers through newspaper advertisements. Advertising helps in introducing a new product in

the market. (Neill, 1986, p.117) as cited by Maalej (2015) describes the language of advertising as “a discourse type whose main actors are people with ideas in mind seeking to cause a larger group of potential participants to change their attitude or buying habits, creating in them, the impulse to buy” (p. 2). Dada (2013) traces the history of advertising to the creation story in the Bible, and according to him “one can rightly assume that the first advertisement on earth happened when the serpent in Genesis 3 advertised the qualities of the forbidden fruit to Eve and thereby aroused her desire for it” (p. 35). Natkare (2012) defines advertising as “one of the important forms of mass communication which intend to persuade an audience to purchase or take a desired action upon products, ideas, services etc.” (p. 1). He stresses that a “successful advertisement is expected to achieve five goals such as attracting attention, commanding interest, creating desire, inspiring conviction and provoking action” (p. 1). In like manner, Osisanwo (2010) says that “the print adverts seem to be more unique in teasing the readers and catching their attention, particularly, graphologically” (p. 3). It is obvious, therefore, that some of the functions of advertisement include informing or persuading customers. Informative advertisements inform customers about goods, services, or ideas and then tell people how to get them by means of an identified sponsor. Rahman (2019) considers newspaper to be the most authentic and easy source of advertising. His assertion is based on the American Association of Advertising Agencies which states that “the public’s favorite source of medium of advertisement is newspaper” (p. 22). According to him, newspaper contains informative news for the audience in comparison to other sources of media. His view is also supported by a study carried out by Larkin, Ernest, and Grotta, (2013) which explains the fact that “newspaper contains the daily up to date news and information that perceive the local readers to know about the local news through newspaper” (p. 22).

Newspaper advertising can be done and published both online and printed. Some newspapers have the same contents in both online and printed versions and both versions contain advertisements. Nevertheless, our focus in this work is on the printed newspaper. Maalej (2015) adds that the style of advertising could be verbal or nominal. What he meant is that an imperative verb could be employed to encourage and persuade audiences or buyers to buy goods or services. Writing on the discourse of media advertising in Tanzania, Quarshie (2013) explains that the language of newspaper advertisement has serious implications for marketing outcomes apart from its pragmatic functions. She points out that consumers are addressed by the large numbers of marketing

message in English even if English is not their first language. I think, he is saying this because English is an international language which can catch the attention of much audience. Kress and Hodge (1979) are of the opinion that the reality of our world is shaped by language, an instrument of control as well as an instrument of communication. Harris and Heldon (2002) as cited by Wangu (2013) state that the process of composing advertising messages involves a keen understanding of various features of linguistic typologies so as to use the right language for the specific objective. Nigeria is a multilingual nation consists of people of different ethnic background, who speak various languages as their mother tongues. Nevertheless, English is the official language of Nigeria and it widely used in schools, government institutions and it is the language of the media and advertising. That is why Ebert (2010) as cited by Wangu (2013) insists that advertisers should make an informed opinion on the type of language to use in order to pass their message to the consumers so as to engender their feelings of trust. In view of this Dada argues that for an advert to be effective and successful the language used by the advertisers must be relevant and appropriate vocabulary must be used to persuade and influence the consumer because “language is a veritable tool in advertising” (p. 36). He advocates that the language of advertising must be transformed to the language of the consumer.

From this argument, we can say that language is a very important conduit pipe of advertising. That is why advertisers continually sieve their language to conform to vogue that takes place in the competitive world of business. Robert (2013) notes that the language of advertising does not follow grammatical or logical rules sometimes; she opines that the language of the newspaper advertisement is a kind of language which functions and familiarizes itself with the context in which it is used. This shows that the inevitable power of language can change people and their behaviours. On their parts, Ezejideaku and Ugwu (2010) argue that the earliest types of newspaper advertising were crude and unsophisticated but helped the local business men and women to sell their goods and services. The old newspaper ads equally set the pace for the modern methods of advertising which have undergone great transformations such that today, so much could be written about the language of advertising in Nigeria. Today, advertising has become more professional and can now engage copy-writers who exploit all the available linguistic devices to make their ads persuasive and aesthetically inviting.

Citing Coulson, (1984), Robert, (2013) posits that the language of advertising is informative, persuasive, and emotive and product claims. In view of this, the language of advertising serves the function of informing the public about the availability of a product on the market. It is also a persuasive and emotive language aimed at appealing to the minds of the consumers. Broom, (1978, p. 28) has this to say about the language of advertising:

... the language of advertising is audience oriented... this is because, notwithstanding the level of socialization and learning of the advertiser, he or she does not impose this on the listener, rather language that is transparent is used.

From this position, the language of adverts is directed at the audience's power to understand the message in the ads. Therefore, the advertiser does not bring to bear his level of sophistication when using language in advertising. That is the language of advertising is characterized with the use of simple diction, which the consumer can easily decode. (Leech, 1966, p. 25) as cited by (Ezejideaku and Ugwu 2010, p. 2) asserts that advertising language is "aimed to change the will, opinions or attitude of its audience". They argue that any aspect of language use is an aspect of discourse. In view of this, Dada (2007) posits that language is a rule-governed system of symbols which helps the users to generate meaning and in the process defines reality. He believes that language cannot be ignored in the field of advertisement. This means that language is a core feature of human behavior. Twitchell (2000: 1) as cited by El-daly (2011) puts it, "language about products and services has pretty much replaced language about all other subjects" (p. 2). This means that the language of advertising has become the language of all, even of those who are critical of it. The language of advertisement is exemplified in this paper via job/vacancy advertisements from selected Nigerian newspapers. The paper will analyse the stylistic features of job advertisements in these newspapers in order to determine effects of the use of language on the potential employees.

### **Aim and Objectives**

This study analyses the language of vacancy advertisements in the Nigerian Newspapers.

The specific objectives of this study are to:

- (i) Investigate the predominant stylistic features mostly used in vacancy advertisements.
- (ii) Identify and justify the persuasive strategies employed to convince the prospective applicants into action.

### **Statement of Problem**

A lot of researchers have identified graphological features in their studies. Modu (2019) analyses how the multimodal stylistic resources such as colours, images, graphological devices and lexical items displayed on the selected cover pages of newspapers and concludes that they either convey meaning possibilities or ideological insights. Dada and Bamigboye (2014) extensively analyse graphological features in a study titled: *“Foregrounding as a Stylistic Tool in Achebe’s A Man of the People*. Dada and Bamigbose state that graphical features account for linguistic features such as capitalization, the use of question marks, interjections, the comma, colon, the semi-colon, the dash, the quotation marks, italics, ellipsis, hyphens, the unconventional use of capital letters, paragraphing, spacing and bold or small prints. Stylistic features also demonstrate linguistic peculiarities such as sentence structures like simple, compound, complex, or compound sentences as well as phrases. According to Leech (1969), this indicates that foregrounding is noticeable artistic communication that a work of art in some way deviates from norms which we learnt to expect in a text. Such deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms are labeled “foregrounding” according to Leech (1969, P. 56).

Stylistics is the study of the language of literature. It studies the style of literature. “Style” is defined by Brummett (2008) as

a complex system of actions, objects, and behaviors that is used to form messages that announce who we are, who we want to be, and who we want to be considered akin to. It is therefore also a system of communication with rhetorical influence on others (p. xi).

Burke (2014) defines it as “the study and analysis of texts; it is in particular, although not exclusively, the study and analysis of literary texts” (p. 1). From these definitions, we can conclude that stylistics makes use of the resources offered to one by different styles, and style in this sense means the ways in

“which actions, objects, gestures, and commodities, as well as the properties of language, are used...” (Brummett, 2008, p.2). It means that the choice of language and other linguistic devices can determine the style of a writer. That is why Stylistics is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language. That is the reason why Simpson (2004) opines that “language is so important to stylisticians is because the various forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure are an important index of the function of the text” (p. 2). This is further confirmed by Burke (2014) as he emphasizes that stylistics is “the study and analysis of texts; it is in particular, although not exclusively, the study and analysis of literary texts” (p. 1). Thus, stylistics can be described as the linguistic study of style. It is a critical understanding and appraisal of the way in which a writer presents his/her writing through language.

In view of foregoing, stylistic analysis employs a technical strategies to the analysis of literature. Stylisticians use the analytic tools of linguistics in carrying out their study. Thus, stylistic analysis is concerned with the phonological, lexical, syntactic, semantic and graphical distinctive features found in a given text. However, we shall limit our analysis to graphological and syntactic features in this study. Another important feature of stylistic analysis is “foregrounding.” Sampson (2014) defines it as

a form of textual patterning which is motivated specifically for literary-aesthetic purposes. Capable of working at any level of language, foregrounding typically involves a stylistic distortion of some sort, either through an aspect of the text which deviates from a linguistic norm or, alternatively, where an aspect of the text is brought to the fore through repetition or parallelism (p. 50).

A lot of studies have been carried out by so many researchers on the language of advertisement. For example, Robert (2013) whose research focuses on the Language of Advertisement: A Study of Nigeria’s Nation Newspaper and Newswatch Magazine, found out that the language of advert is persuasive and informative. Studies on the discourse of vacancy advertising with a linguistic focus in Nigeria, seems relatively low. Studies on the language of advertisement as an academic pursuit have increased greatly over the years in Nigeria; but vacancy advertising has not received much attention by researchers unlike other aspects of advertisements. Laka-Badura (2015) explains the reason scholars’

inadequate empirical research in job advertising to insufficient and limited amount of literature. (Asprey, 2005, p. 268) in Lacka (2015) states this succinctly:

Recruitment advertising has always been seen as the poor relation to 'mainstream' advertising. This is reflected in the availability of reading resources about recruitment advertising only a handful of books are available to buy which are even vaguely related to recruitment advertising, and nothing new has been published since 1994 (p. 12).

Because of the lack of more attention in this area, more research needs to be done in the area of vacancy advertising. This study is an attempt to contribute to the field of Stylistics, precisely in the areas of vacancy advertising. The study differs from other studies in that it will investigate the style of vacancy advertising which has not received robust attention. In doing so, it will draw on various linguistic features. In addition, this study will provide analyses of two vacancy ads, using different linguistic characteristics for interpretations.

Dada (2013) investigates the stylo-rhetorical devices adopted in some Pidgin English adverts in Nigeria. He came up with the conclusion that Pidgin English advertisers pass across their messages through stylistic devices such as: verse paragraphing, rhyme and rhythm created through repetition and syntactic parallelism. Ibarahim's (2015) concern is the semantic analysis of language of advertisement. Vacancy advertisements seems to be an area of research unexplored in linguistic studies if compared with product and service advertising, where significant studies have been done. So many newspapers in Nigeria publish different types of advertisements and the primary motive of most advertisers is to make profit, but the goal of vacancy advertisements is to provide information.

This study is to examine the style of vacancy advertising as well as to analyze the linguistic strategies and features generally attributed to newspaper discourse as reflected in the texts of vacancy or job postings. The study's objective is to critically analyze the stylistic features of vacancy advertisements in the selected Nigerian newspapers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study adopts Burke's Functional Stylistics. Burke (2014) remarks that functionalist stylisticians are "concerned with the ways in which the formal properties of language are used pragmatically" (p. 46). He goes further to cite Halliday's 1984 work *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* who developed the idea that language has three primary roles or functions which intersect to make meaning. This language function is broken down into three interconnecting "metafunctions" as follows: Ideational - to express ideas and experience (clause as representation); Interpersonal - to mediate in the establishment of social relationships (clause as exchange); and Textual - to provide the formal properties of language (clause as message). Our concern in this study is the interpersonal functions which involve communication between the participants and how they express their attitudes towards one another and the way they relate to other people as they interact. Simpson (2004) corroborates the function of language in stylistics: "To do stylistics is to explore language, and, more specifically, to explore creativity in language use" (p. 3). He states that stylistics is interested in language as a function of texts in context, and it acknowledges that utterances (literary or otherwise) are produced in a time, a place and in a cultural and cognitive context.

### **Vacancy/Job Advertisement**

This is a print or electronic notification of the intention to employ a person to perform a specific work in a position at a company or institution. Recruitment advertisement in newspapers is considered to be one of the traditional and commonly used approaches to employee recruitment. Employers use a job advertisement to request applications from the public or targeted candidates. Aswathappa (2007) in Lacka- Badura (2015) explains that job advertising is widely regarded as one of the most popular recruitment methods, both from the point of view of employers and potential candidates. Traditionally, job advertising is defined by (Byars and Rue 2000: 155) in Lacka-Badura (2015) as "the placement of help-wanted advertisements in daily newspapers, in trade and professional publications, or on radio and television" (p. 24). Similarly, Newell (2005) views vacancy advertisement as "the process of attracting people who might make an organizational contribution to fill a particular role or job" (p.117). Most job advertisements have a specified period for candidates to apply. (Secord, 2003, p.355) states comprehensive goals of job vacancy to include advertising the company's image and attracting the attention of:

the best candidates who may not even be seeking another role, while not raising false expectations and allowing a healthy amount of self-selection. Notwithstanding, recruitment advertising is also advertising for the organization itself. The form and content will project an image of the organization.

It is clearly understood from this definition that the aim job advertising is to attract the attention of suitable candidates, to discourage and disqualify unqualified candidates, inexperienced and unsuitable candidates from applying leading to employee's self-selection. Besides, it aims reducing the risk of hiring wrong people, as well as the time and costs involved in the recruitment process. Saleem (2010) adds that the pre-interview information that is specifically targeted to increase applicant awareness and interest in learning about organization's offerings is the most important recruitment efforts.

A source, ([www.chron.com](http://www.chron.com)) lists and discusses the structure of job vacancy to include: job title, job duties, job pay and benefits and job qualifications. On their part, (Setiawan, Bakhti & Yuliah, 2017, pp. 44-46) identify three structures of job ads. The first is the beginning part of the job ads which serves as an introduction to the ads. It introduces the company at the same time announcing the job vacancy. This the position of (Dale, 2003, p. 65) as cited by Lacka-Badura that advertisement is often "the first place where potential applicants are told what the organization is looking for and what skills, abilities, and experience they should evidence" (p. 5). She stresses that content of job adverts is probably the most important determinant of their success in attracting well-matched candidates. This relevant information will enable the potential candidates to effectively perform the above stated functions. The second is the middle part of the job ads. It encompasses the most important contents and it usually covers the positions or job that the company needed as well as the prerequisites to fill up the posts. The third part is the end part of the job ads. It is the concluding remark in the advertisement. Rafaeli & Olive (1998) in Thompson (2015) explain that job advertisements can be broken down into parts: the skeleton and the embellishments. As part of the embellishments, they proposed that job ads have two messages: "a message about the organization - an impression management message"; and secondly, "a message about an employment opportunity in the organization - a recruitment message" (p37).

Fairclough (1992) in (Kheovichai, 2013, p. 166) states that genre contains a set of activity types which form a generic structure and realize the communicative purpose of the genre. According to him, these structures are moves which are “discourse units performing a particular communicative function” (p.161). Furthermore, a move can be a phrase, a sentence or even a number of paragraphs. An organization can announce its achievements in the opening move and its accomplishments in many respects. It can describe how well established they are, how many clients they have and the services they provide. Another way to make advertisements convincing to readers is to outline the organization’s missions and goals. This can inform potential employees about the work of the organization as well as its plan, showing its prospective future which could help candidates progress in their career. In addition, it might be a branding message that applicants need to embrace once they too become part of the organization. A move can introduce a job vacancy stating the main purpose of creating the advertisement. (Kheovichai, 2013, p. 164) states further that job advertisements frame this communicative purpose in four ways: announcing availability, inviting applications for the job, announcing a search and offering the job. In his detailed description, (Bruthiaux, 1996, p. 143) explains the structure of job adverts. According to him, job advertisements typically consist of five components:

First is a target element, stating the type of person being recruited... Second, a recruiter element includes information about the company or individual placing the ad... It also gives details of the major duties of the job being advertised: to handle scheduling; heavy phones; to drive private limo; no selling... Third is a requirements element, which specifies minimum qualifications or experience: word processing skills; a smile; no experience necessary... Fourth, a reward element often includes benefits in addition to details of salary.... Finally, the advertisement contains a contact segment, usually consisting of a telephone number and, in about a quarter of the cases, a name...

From this, we can observe some important information to be considered in job ads which includes: the candidate, the company or individual placing the advert, the requisites for the job, benefits and the address of the recruiter. We also notice that job ads tend to emphasize targets rather than writers. So the potential employees are the main audience of a job advertisement. Meurs (2010) adds that the main aim of job advertisements is to persuade potentially suitable candidates to apply for vacancies at organizations. He observes that besides the information given in a job advertisement which is to persuade potential employee, the information serves to motivate suitable candidates to apply.

According to Lacka-Badura (2013):

The function of job advertisement is not merely to inform potential candidates about the requirements and responsibilities involved in the positions advertised, but also, sometimes even more importantly, to encourage/persuade the most valuable candidates to apply, as well as to create or reinforce the employer's positive image in the eyes of all job market participants (pp. 273-274).

### **Methodology**

As a study concerned with style of a text, the appropriate research design is qualitative design where the text analysed is described in terms of the characteristics of stylistics found in the selected newspapers. The research uses content analysis to collect data. Mackey (2005: 31) in Sari (2018, p. 151) said that content analysis is technique of examining information or content in written or symbolic material. Two national newspapers were purposively selected: the *Nation* and the *Guardian*. The rationales for selection of the two papers are to limit the size of the corpus for the study as well as for comprehensive analysis. These are parts of the most widely read newspapers in Nigeria, published within two months (October, 9 and November, 6 2018 respectively). Two advertisements were chosen from ten advertisements based on random selection. The limitation of the advertisements to two was due to appropriateness and to avoid an excessive number of advertisements that might not contribute critically to this research. Besides, these newspapers give wide publicity to vacancy advertisement on daily basis. Similarly, they are easily and readily available. The

choice was made to limit the sample to two advertisements because of time and space.

## **Data Presentation and Analysis**

### **Graphological Analysis**

Graphological inscriptions are observed to show a degree of importance and emphasis of the messages portrayed in the advertisements. There are several effects of capitalisation in the texts such as:

**SALARY:** Very attractive and negotiable (*The Nation*): This is a deliberate deviation from the norm of normal printing in small letters. From the beginning of the advertisement, all sub-headings are written in lower cases except this (SALARY). Generally, capital letters are used in the first letters of proper nouns, the letters of abbreviations and acronyms, the first letters of the first words in numbered or bulleted lists, titles of organisations, institutions, directorates, committees and delegations and the first letters of the first words in a sentence, but this is used to create a foregrounding effect. As Modu (2019) describes it "They are used to denote clarity, articulation and meaning potentials" (p. 125). The use of capital letter here is a form of deviation to make the word to stand out as unique from the rest of the texts as it refers to an important aspect of life: money. Another effect of the use of capital letter here is that of eye-catching as salary is very important to any employee. This device is used to attract as many candidates as possible in order to select the best for the job. It a device prominently used to attract the best candidates for the job and this automatically captures the attention of the readers. Other examples are:

**Academic Staff Vacancies** (*The Guardian*)

**Method of Application** (*The Guardian*)

As discussed earlier, these two examples are the main headings in the advertisements which distinguish them from other sub-headings in the texts. The style of using capital letters in the advertisements are forms of deviation to create stylistic effect. It is a cynosure directing candidates to the most important thing to do in the ads. If the reader is persuaded successfully, he will comprehend the message and develop a positive attitude towards the advertisement. The advertisers foregrounds these writings in capital letters boldly because they want to draw the attention of candidates to important issues.

One other graphological feature employed in these advertisements is the use of bold typescripts as in:

**A. Qualifications and Requirements:** (*The Nation*)

**B. Radiology and Imaging:** (*The Nation*)

**C. Nursing Officers (Post Basic)** (*The Nation*)

**Operative, naesthesia, ENT, Ophthalmology, A& E, ICU/Critical Care. Paediatrics and Renal, etc.**

**SALARY:** Very attractive and negotiable

**Method of Application**

**Closing Date:** Two (2) weeks from the date of this publication.

**Signed:**

**Dr. Akionola Akinmade**

**Mr. Balasundacara Jeyakumar**

**WELLSPRING UNIVERSITY Benin City, Edo State**

**ACADEMIC STAFF VACANCIES**

**Professors**

**Associate Professors**

**Senior Lecturers**

**Lecturers 1**

### **Method of Application**

The main headings in these adverts are bolder than the sub-headings for stylistic effect: for easy grasping and understanding of the information by way of providing explicit messages to the candidates.

Besides, bulletins give direction to the applicants such as:

- Spine Surgery
- Pulmonology/Respiratory Medicine
- Cardiology (including Interventional Cardiology)
- Medical Gastroenterology
- Orthopaedics/Traumatology & Emergency Medicine
- Cardiovascular/Thoracic Surgery
- OB/YN/ Assisted reproduction
- Paediatric Surgery
- Paediatrics including Neonatology
- Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery
- Anatomic, Pathology
- Anaesthesia, Pain Management & Critical Care.

In addition, abbreviations were also employed by the copywriters in the selected advertisements. They are used for easy identification and to pass important information. These abbreviations are used for the purpose of space management since it is the space that consumes money in newspaper advertisement. Furthermore, people are already familiar with these simple abbreviations and easily comprehended. Few examples are: WAEC/GCE/ NECO, (R.N, R.M or B.NSC, BSc, ENT, NMCN, Ag. Chief Medical Director, ABUAD, etc. and PhD.

### **Grammatical Analysis**

These distinctive grammatical features are parts of linguistic elements which marks vacancy advertisements as clearly different from other types of advertisements. Some of these linguistic features are sometimes foregrounded in the texts. For examples, the use of complex sentences manifested in these adverts and multiple sentences appear not to be very frequent in the collected corpus of the vacancy advertisements; most probably this is because such structures tend to be longer and less memorable. Examples of complex sentences are:

**A frontline Research Centre and Higher Education Institution, Afe Babalola Babalola Multi-system Hospital** which is co-managed by Aster DM Healthcare based in Dubai and India, offers a wide range of Medical Services in different aspects of Medicine & Surgery.

Applications which must be submitted through this email: [medicaljobs@abuad.edu.ng](mailto:medicaljobs@abuad.edu.ng) should include the applicant's Curriculum Vitae, photocopies of all credentials with passport sized digital photograph and **an application letter addressed to the email above.**

A frontline Research Centre and Higher Education Institution, Afe Babalola Babalola Multi-system Hospital which is co-managed by Aster DM Healthcare based in Dubai and India, **offers a wide range of Medical Services in different aspects of Medicine & Surgery.**

The clauses that are not in bold print are dependent clauses which cannot stand on their own but depend on the second clauses (in bold) "offers a wide range of Medical Services in different aspects of Medicine & Surgery," and "should include the applicant's Curriculum Vitae, photocopies of all credentials with passport sized digital photograph," "and an application letter addressed to the email above." The underlined clauses are also called subordinate clauses because

they depend on the other clauses to complete the information. Besides, the third example has three clauses: a dependent clause and two independent clauses. This, therefore, enables the reader to recognize the degree of importance attached to each piece of information, a necessary procedure if the reader is to appreciate the importance of each set of information. The candidates are able to distinguish the important ideas from the supporting ideas in a sentence through this type of discourse. The device is used to expand the information content within the sentence.

The dominant feature of both simple and compound sentences occurring in the vacancy advertisements is their highly elliptical nature as in:

“Applicants must possess a fellowship of at least one of the postgraduate college or their equivalent.”

“Top rate and experienced Expatriate and Nigerian Consultants are required in the following Clinical Specialties...”

“Applicants must possess Fellowship in Radiology from a recognized college with a minimum of 3-4 years’ experience.”

“Interested candidates should possess PhD or equivalent professional fellowship in the relevant discipline and at least ten years of teaching and research experience in a university.”

The effect of using simple sentences here is to communicate clearly to the general public and make important points. It is therefore, easy to decipher any information presented in simple sentences. From the foregoing, it is clear that using simple sentences provide important information clearly and make communication effective and unnecessary information has been avoided.

*“Applicants must have a minimum of 3-5 years’ experience in their chosen specialties and be prepared to lecture in the ABUAD College of Medicine & Health Sciences.”*

The first clause is italicized and the second clause is underlined. The two clauses are joined by a coordinating conjunction, “and”. This has helped to create a single sentence that is more useful than writing many sentences with separate thoughts since it combines two independent clauses by using the conjunction, “and.” It has helped to reduce clause size by the use of ellipsis.

The language of vacancy advertising is persuasive. It is imperative in tone “and with positive politeness markers creates a hypnotic effect on the consumers.” (Natkare 2012, p. 2). One of the important function of imperatives here is to appeal anyone who reads the advertising. According to Natkare (2012) the imperative sentence aims to “change the consumer’s habit from one product to another” (p. 2).

- Applicants **must** possess a fellowship of at least one of the postgraduate college or their equivalent.
- Applicants **must** have a minimum of 3-5 years’ experience in their chosen specialties and be prepared to lecture in the ABUAD College of Medicine & Health Sciences.
- Applicants **must** possess Fellowship in Radiology from a recognized college...
- Applicants **must** possess 5 Credit Passes in the WAEC/GCE/ NECO and also possess the Professional Double Qualifications...
- Applications which **must** be submitted through this email...
- Interested candidates *should* possess PhD or equivalent professional fellowship in the relevant discipline and at least ten years of teaching and research experience in a university.
- Candidates *should* have ability to develop and execute research projects, and supervise postgraduate students.
- Interested candidates *should* possess PhD or equivalent professional fellowship in the relevant discipline and at least eight years of teaching and research experience in a university.
- Candidates *should* have ability to develop and execute research projects and supervise postgraduate students.
- Interested candidates *should* possess PhD in equivalent professional fellowship in relevant discipline and at least five years of teaching and research experience.

From these examples, the modal verbs in the sentences issue command through the use of “must”. The authority of ABUAD with respect to the post, its conditions and the procedure of application in this advertising is partly realized in mood and modality features. These modalities are foregrounded in verbal groups such as “must possessed,” “must have, “must be submitted.” There is also an instance of obligational modality “. . . should include.” There are instances of imperative mood as in: “be prepared,” and “are required”. According to Fairclough (1989), language is “a part of society, a social process

and a socially conditioned process” (pp. 18- 19). Furthermore, Fairclough (1985) says “this is a potentially face-threatening prediction about the professional ethics as well as behavior of the potential employee, with the modal verb (will) marking a high level of commitment to the proposition” (p.146), as in “will be an added advantage”, “and be prepared to lecture in the ABUAD College of Medicine & Health Sciences,” “Possession of a current Professional Practicing License is mandatory.”

The modal verb, “should” and “must” are the most occurred in all the texts, marking a high level of commitment to the advertisement. The purpose of using imperative sentences here is to provide information to the applicants in a simple and lucid manner. The use of full imperative here also indicates that the text shares a common focus on the giving of information. The use of “should” here is significant; it assumes that some information given is in the form of advice.

These imperative sentences provide instructions and make demands from the applicants. The verbs in bold and italics such as “must,” and “should” are used to describe the tasks, duties and responsibilities of the potential employees. This is the use of modal verb which Gee (1999) describes as “one of a series of helping verbs such as will/would; shall/should; can/could; must) that name things having to do with possibility, probability, obligation, intention, the future, ability” (p.154).

The verbs show commanding and instruction tone. The verbs also give direction and advice to the candidates. Generally, these sentences provide instruction and make demands from the potential employees.

### **Catchy Words and Phrases**

In advertising, the effective way of catching the attention of buyer is to create an attention catching device which can be easily remembered through the use of frequency of phrases and pre and post modifiers are used in these advertisements. The complete sentence, however attractive it may be, is not remembered for long time but the short phrases. Here are some examples:

Noun Phrase is used frequently in the advertisements to attract candidates to apply for vacancy as in the following examples:

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced Nigerian and non-Nigerian consultants for the under-listed positions in Afe Babalola University Multi-system Hospital, in Ado-Ekiti, South-West Nigeria.

m m h q  
Nigerian and non-Nigerian consultants for the under-listed positions  
The 400-bed ultra-modern Hospital  
state-of-the-art Medical Equipment  
optimum in Patient Care and Management  
A frontline Research Centre and Higher Education Institution, Afe Babalola  
Babalola Multi-system Hospital  
a wide range of Medical Services  
a fellowship of at least one of the postgraduate college  
their equivalent  
a minimum of 3-5 years' experience  
the ABUAD College of Medicine & Health Sciences.  
Spine Surgery  
Pulmonology/Respiratory Medicine  
Cardiology (including Interventional Cardiology)  
Medical Gastroenterology  
the vacant positions  
Computer Science  
Information Technology  
Mass Communication  
Business Administration  
equivalent professional fellowship in the relevant discipline  
five years of teaching and research experience  
Possession of a current Professional Practicing License  
photocopies of all credential

By choosing the noun phrases, the advertisers were able to foreground the messages with the use of modifiers to provide detailed information to the readers as in "the vacant positions" where the article "the" and the adjective, "vacant" are the modifiers to the headword, "positions". Others are: five years of teaching and research experience; equivalent professional fellowship in the relevant discipline; A frontline Research Centre and Higher Education Institution, etc. where the headwords are: "experience", "fellowship", "centre" and "institution." The use of modifiers here has the effect of precision as well as to establish details of the content of information the candidates need as regards the advertisements.

The copywriters used less of adjectival phrase in the advertisements for instance "with sophisticated and state-of-the-art Medical Equipment," and "with passport

sized digital photograph” are examples of adjectival phrase in the texts. This adds to the information needed by the candidates.

Adverbial phrases are not left out in the advertisements as in:

Applications are invited *from suitably qualified and experienced Nigerian and non-Nigerian* [adverbial phrase of place] consultants for the under-listed positions in *Afe Babalola University Multi-system Hospital, in Ado-Ekiti, South-West Nigeria* [adverbial phrase of place].

Medical Equipment offers optimum *in Patient Care and Management* [adverbial phrase of place].

Afe Babalola Babalola Multi-system Hospital which is co-managed by Aster DM Healthcare based *in Dubai and India*, [adverbial phrase of place] offers a wide range of Medical Services *in different aspects of Medicine & Surgery* [adverbial phrase of place].

be prepared to lecture *in the ABUAD College of Medicine & Health Sciences* [adverbial phrase of place].

Top rate and experienced Expatriate and Nigerian Consultants are required *in the following Clinical Specialties* [adverbial phrase of place].

Applicants must possess Fellowship *in Radiology from a recognized college* [adverbial phrase of place].

Applicants must possess 5 Credit Passes *in the WAEC/GCE* [adverbial phrase of place].

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for the vacant positions below [adverbial phrase of place].

Interested candidates should possess PhD or equivalent professional fellowship *in the relevant discipline* [adverbial phrase of place] *and at least ten years of teaching and research experience in a university* [adverbial phrase of time]. (4 times The Guardian).

Interested applicants should send details Curriculum Vitae not later than ten (10) days *from the date of this advert* [adverbial phrase of time].

Adverbials are used in the advertisements to add extra details to the information being provided to the job-seekers. The advertisers used many adverbial phrase of place with less of adverbial phrase of time and this is because the advertisements are time bound and candidates need to respond accordingly. In order for an advertisement to have a positive, persuasive effect on the readers, copywriters have to make sure that the readers comprehend the message by using phrases as a foregrounding and an attention catching device in order to impose their own concern on the job seekers as demonstrated above. This is what Vaicenoniene

(2006) describes as “appellative function (i.e. appealing to the receiver’s experience, feelings, knowledge and sensibility in order to make him/ her react in a specific way)” (p. 44). This is because of the fact that the information contain in advertisement are considered relevant to the applicants.

### **Findings**

Vacancy advertisements in the Nigerian newspapers show some features that tend to differentiate them from other types of advertisements like products, food and cosmetics advertisements. Graphological features identified in the texts are written using coinages and abbreviations such as: WAEC/GCE/ NECO, (R.N, R.M or B.NSC, BSc, ENT, NMCN, Ag. Chief Medical Director, ABUAD and the use of capitalization as in SALARY, ACADEMIC STAFF VACANCIES, and METHOD OF APPLICATION. Also, the use of bolder print which is for a stylistic effect and for easy grasping and understanding of the information by way of providing explicit messages to the candidates. Besides, bulletins are used to give direction to the applicants. It is also a form of attention catching device.

Simple, complex and compound sentences are used to enable the readers recognize the importance attached to each piece of information, which is a necessary procedure if the reader is to appreciate the importance of each set of information. Like any other types of advertisements, frequency of phrases as an attention catching device is not left out in the advertisements. This device manifested frequently in the selected texts. The modal verb, “should” and “must” are the most occurred in all the advertisements, marking a high level of commitment to the advertisements.

### **Conclusion**

Advertisements play a major role in shaping the society's values, habits, styles and attitude to life. This study has undertaken a graphological and syntactic analysis of vacancy advertisements in selected Nigerian newspapers. In the process of the study, we identified, analyzed and interpreted the various graphological and syntactic stylistic devices deployed by advertisers to communicate information to the public. The analysis of these advertisements show graphological style because style could be choice or selection, which may be grammatical, or even code choice, as seen in this analysis: capitalization, bold prints, bulletins, and various grammatical features such as simple, complex, imperative sentences, and phrases are tactically deployed to capture the attention of job seekers.

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