

Effect of the Use of Indigenous Language in Nigeria's Advertisement: A Study of Milk Billboard in Lagos State

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Abstract

Advertisement is an indispensable tool for producers and marketers of goods and services all over the world. Language is one of the most important element for a successful advert to take place. It important for the target audience to understand the message that is being passed across in order to achieve its ultimate objective which is to increase sales and maximize profit through its target market. The objective of this study is to examine the effect of advertising with the use of indigenous languages in Nigeria, which is a country with several tribes and ethnic groups. Peak Milk Billboard advertisement in Lagos State in Hausa Language was used as case study and quantitative method with the use of questionnaire as research instrument was used to determine the effect of the use of indigenous languages for advertising in a multi tribal country like Nigeria. Findings revealed that the use of the language which is different from the language of the location will not appeal to those that reside in that area. It was recommended that further research be done to achieve a more solid supposition.

Introduction

The aim of advertising is to increase sales and profitability; thus various tools and methods are often employed in a bid to appropriately reach the target audience and influence purchasing decisions. These span from the medium of communication, time of communication, advertisement layout, language used and more.

Language is a key consideration in advertising in Nigeria as there are over 250 ethnic groups in Nigeria. Lagos state is a cosmopolitan state with an estimated population of over 17 million and one of the largest urban agglomeration in the world. Hence the advertisement language should be impeccable, transcending ethnicity and social strata whilst putting the target audience in perspective.

Indigenous language has a great impact in aiding understanding, transmitting the accurate meaning of the advertisement and reaching those at the grass root level. Seeing that tribalism

has always been an issue in Nigeria, the choice of indigenous language is paramount so as not to create bias and conflict.

It is, therefore, based on this background that this paper seeks to evaluate the perception and disposition of target consumers on the use of Hausa language in the Peak Milk billboard advertisement in Lagos metropolis. This is with the objective of ascertaining the impact of such language on the consumers; especially in a situation where the language in question is not a dominant language of the environment.

Conceptual Definition of Terms

Conceptual description of the key words used are defined below as it relates to the context of the research.

Indigenous Language

An indigenous language is any language that is 'native' to a particular area" (Meaney, Trinick, & Fairhall, 2012). An indigenous language is that which is widely spoken and understood by the people of a certain community.

It is imperative to protect our indigenous languages as it is a veritable tool in transmitting and safeguarding one's cultural identity, heritage, values, norms and dignity from one generation to another.

Tribalism

Tribalism is an issue that has eaten deep into the fibre of most African societies. "Tribalism is the occurrence of groups and subgroups within existing social structures that divide into smaller subgroups or tribes. One of the criticism of the effects of tribalism, so defined, is it detracts from the unity of the general population" (Adams & Smith, 2009). Tribalism often stems from resilient loyalty to one's tribe or social group.

The belief that one tribe is more superior to others has birthed countless ineffable wars in Nigeria. Tribalism is a challenge militating against growth and development in Nigeria. "The damaging effects of tribalism, I am sure are well known. It promotes mediocrity and suppresses merit, encourages corruption by giving much needed cover and immunity for perpetrators, stands in the way of national cohesion and consensus, creates a distraction away from serious national issues and often to communal violence" (Bello, 2015). This is evident in every sphere of the nation's endeavours especially in the political spheres.

Ethnicity and Languages in Nigeria

Nigeria is a multi-cultural and multi-lingua society. Recent studies reveal that there are over 500 different tribes in Nigeria and an estimation of 521 languages. These is because, some ethnic groups have more than one indigenous languages. Amongst this estimate are 510 living languages, 2 languages without native speakers and 9 non-existent languages.

"There are about 250 ethnic groups in total in Nigeria such that each of the regions with its major ethnic groups carries a significant percentage of minority ethnic groups" (Obaje, 2009).

“Essentially, there are three main ethnic groups in Nigeria. The Hausa - Fulani in the north (29%), the Yoruba’s in the southwest (21%) and the Igbo in the southeast (18%). They are distinguished not only by region but also by religion and way of life” (Ugorji, 2012). Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulfulde, Kanuri, Ijaw, Edo, Tiv and Ibibio are the top most widely spoken indigenous Nigerian languages. Despite these diversities in Nigeria, English remains the official language used in day to day the business, educational and other professional interactions.

Ethnic Composition of Lagos State

The indigenous composition of the Lagos State people are the Yorubas - they consist of the Aworis, Eguns and the Ijebus. Over the years, Lagos State has become one of the largest urban agglomeration.

“Lagos state has a current population of 17 million, it is the commercial and industrial hub of Nigeria. Estimated to account for over 60% of Nigeria’s industrial and commercial establishments, with over 2,000 manufacturing industries and about 200 financial institutions, providing 60% of Nigeria’s Gross Domestic Product, 65% of national investments. Current trend analysis in terms of urban population revealed that the population of Lagos is growing ten times faster than New York and Los Angeles” (Chicharo, Fohrer, & Muller, 2015). Lagos State is a home for any Nigerian seeking a better life irrespective of religion and ethnicity.

The state boasts of remarkable accomplishments, “including being the nation’s nerve centre of economic and business activities; its contemporary role as the melting – pot of various cultures of its residents from various parts of Nigeria and being the pace setter of a new wave of infrastructural development in Nigeria” (Odulani, 2012). The capital of Lagos State is Ikeja.

Peak Milk Nigeria

Peak milk is a brand of FrieslandCampina Wamco Nigeria Plc. “It is an affiliate of Royal FrieslandCampina of the Netherlands, the world’s largest dairy cooperative. Its headquarters is in Ikeja Industrial area of Lagos state and operates an extensive distribution network across Nigeria’s 36 states of the Federal Capital Territory” (<http://frieslandcampina.com.ng/>, 2015).

FrieslandCampina Wamco Nigeria Plc boasted of an annual turnover of N111.12 billion in 2012 from being a leader in producing, packaging and marketing various milk products in Nigeria.

Peak milk has a variety of products such as Evap, Milk Powder, Choco, Peak Regular, Peak Easy, Peak Gold, Peak Low fat, Peak Sachet and Peak WAZOBIA that comes in a powdered and condensed form. Peak Milk Nigeria represents a symbol of quality for over sixty years in Nigeria thereby enjoys extensive brand awareness and brand loyalty in Nigeria.

Sampling Method

Non probability method of sampling was deployed as it was more workable, accurate, cost effective and unbiased as samples were randomly chosen.

Sample Size and Location

The target respondents were consumers (15 years above). 100 respondents were administered questionnaires. Qualitative and quantitative questions were asked. The location of enquiry was Lagos State.

Advertising as a Phenomenon

Advertising is as old as man and dates back to the Stone Age cave paintings. On a daily basis, we are bombarded and invaded with various forms of advertisements via diverse print, broadcast and online platforms. "Advertising is a form of communication paid for by an individual or companies with the aim of influencing people to think or act in a particular way or providing information" (Green, 2012). Advertising aims at informing, educating, persuading and publicizing goods and services.

The aim of advertising goods and services is to increase sales and eventually make profit. For this reason, "various advertisement techniques are used by advertisers of goods or products, services or ideas to distinguish theirs, captivate the attention or arouse the interest of the target audience and ultimately make them desire or buy the advertised goods or products, services or ideas" (Oluga, 2010).

Nigeria's Advertising Industry

The advent of the printing press in Nigeria revolutionized advertising in Nigeria. The first printing press was established in Calabar by the Presbyterian Church in 1846. In 1859, Reverend Henry Townsend established the first newspaper in Nigeria at Abeokuta which was titled, "Iwe Irohin fun awon ara egba ati Yoruba meaning; newspaper for the Egba speaking people and the Yorubas" (Osunbiyi, 1999). The paper was published every two weeks. It was made up of 8 pages and sold for 120 cowries. Subsequently as the paper grew, the English supplement was added in 1865.

The essence of the paper was aimed at propelling the gospel, encourage reading habits and announce issues pertaining to baptisms, births, marriages and other religious appealing information. Iwe Irohin drastically changed the face of advertising in Nigeria. It signified the inception of modern advertising in Nigeria as "the first media advertisement ever carried out in Nigeria and was in Iwe Irohin in form of information on shipping movement and cargo" (Bel-Molokwo, 2000).

To that effect, other advertisements concerning obituaries and other social activities started appearing in the newspaper and many more. The year 1863 to 1883 witnessed the float of several newspapers such as Anglo African, Eagle, Lagos Observer, Gold Coast and so on. Nevertheless, they were short lived as they were unable to attract advertising patronage. "In the early part of the 20th century, business activities in Nigeria had improved. The Royal Niger Company came into existence and it later metamorphosed into the conglomerate called United African Company called UAC" (Agwu, Ikpefan, Atuma, & Achugamonu, 2014). The West African Publicity Limited Company was established by UAC. "It was to provide marketing support for the parent company the UAC in response to the marketing demands of the expanding

multinational” (Alozie, 2011). West African Publicity Company later changed its name to Lintas West Africa United in 1965. The advertising business in Nigeria grew rapidly which led to the establishment of outdoor advertising arm of Lintas called – Afromedia.

The inception of radio and television advertising added flair to advertising. Broadcasting gave advertising a different perspective as the advent of radio and television in Nigeria gave a different definition to advertising in Nigeria. “Radio advertising started in Nigeria in 1955 with the birth of Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service. Television Broadcasting started in Nigeria with Western Nigeria Television” (Agwu, Ikpefan, Atuma, & Achugamonu, 2014). “The first television advertisement in Nigeria was for Star Beer and Krola Soft Drink” (Bardi, 2010)

In recent times, the Nigeria industry has witnessed a significant boom and the emergence of several advertising agencies. “This can be seen from the view point of agency billings and proliferation of advertising agencies and media houses, both state and private print and broadcast, the industry is indeed experiencing the best times” (Abone, 2007).

“Nigeria receives the largest amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa. FDI inflows have been growing enormously over the course of the last decade. From USD 1.14 billion in 2001 and USD 2.1 billion in 2004, Nigeria reached USD 11 billion in 2009. According to UNCTAD, making the country the nineteenth greatest recipient of FDI in the world” (Corporate Nigeria, 2011). This contributes to the increased patronage in the country’s advertising industry as there is need to consistently publicise goods, services and corporate image organizations via the mass media. Furthermore, “a report by African Economic Outlook has revealed that FDI in Nigeria and a couple of other African countries are expected to reach USD73.5 billion (N14.533 trillion) in 2015” (Abiodun, 2015). To this effect, “the fortune of Nigeria’s advertising industry jacked up in 2013 to N103.8 billion, far above N91.9 billion recorded in 2012. The pattern of the media spending by advertisers across the country represents an increase of N12.95 billion over the previous year” (Akingbolu, 2014).

It is also remarkable to note that, “the advertising industry in Nigeria is well developed as it is constantly improving and there is presence of all forms of advertising in Nigeria at the moment” (Keisha, 2015). Presently, the advertising trends within the nation is tilted towards outdoor and digital advertising which adopts various and complementary strategies, techniques and platforms. “Companies in a wide variety of sectors – from banking to telecoms to fast moving consumer goods and alcoholic beverages are driving the demands for online advertising with the goal of reaching young, affluent, middle class Nigerians who are considered a key demographic” (The Report, 2013).

Most of the advertising companies in Nigeria either has international affiliations, recognitions or has received an international award at some point. DDB, Insight Communications, Rosabel, Noah’s Ark, Markcelenz, Starcom Media, TBWA, Swift Digital Motions, Leke Alder are some of the most notable players in Nigeria’s advertising industry. The industry is regulated by the Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria (APCON).

2.2: The Use of Indigenous Languages In Advertising

The use of indigenous languages in mass communication is not a recent phenomenon as Iwe Irohin (1859), EkoAkete (1926), Eletiofe (1923), Iweirohinosese (1925) and Ekoigbehin (1926) had all been published in Yoruba indigenous language. Despite the fact that English is the official language of communication in Nigeria, most homes and communities in Nigeria connects in their individual indigenous languages and in certain instances, trades and events interactions are conveyed in indigenous Nigerian languages. Hence indigenous languages are powerful tools in conveying messages and influencing decisions as people relates easily in their mother tongue.

“People advertise in indigenous languages to enhance understanding, to direct advert messages to a particular nativity, and to let the people feel very important. As a result of this, indigenous languages catch people’s attention in advertisement than in English language and pidgin language as it has persuading force on customers” (Laittosprojects , 2015).

Nevertheless, despite the essence and the huge significant impact of advertising on the target audience, local languages in Nigeria are at the verge of extinction as many parents now believe it is a symbol of elites for the children to speak English fluently and that this ability maybe be impaired if the children try to speak indigenous languages” (ThisDayLive, 2011). The inability to understand and speak our mother tongue fluently poses a challenge.

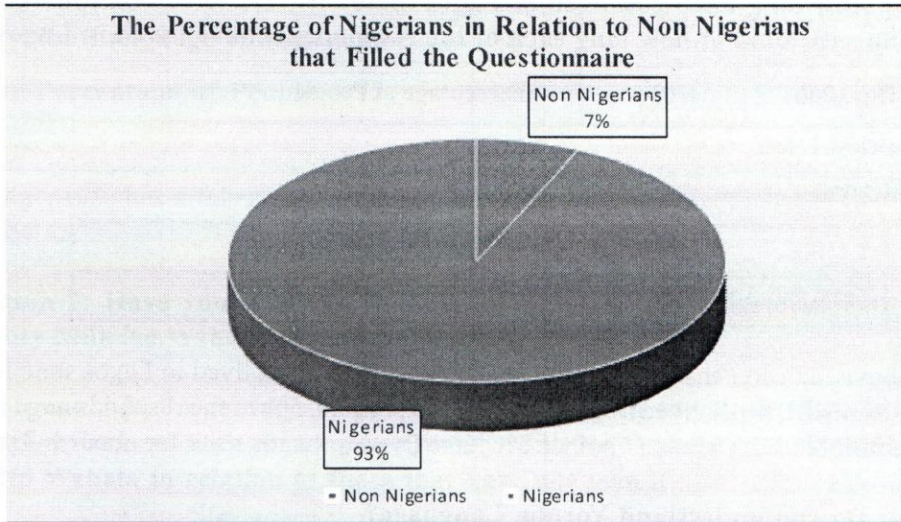
“The illiteracy in the mother tongue is a major factor militating against achieving desired goals of advertising in indigenous languages, that if indigenous languages are accorded their appropriate status, the masses and advertisers would benefit more” (Udemmadu, 2011). Hence deliberate efforts should be employed to learn our indigenous languages and accurately pass them along to the younger generation. However, caution should be taken by advertisers in the usage of proverbs and idiomatic expressions as ambiguous and diverse meanings could be interpreted leading to miscommunications.

Analysis of Primary Data

100 consumers were administered questionnaires in Lagos state - Nigeria. The analysis of the data obtained are as follows. However, for the sake of confidentiality, personal information would be withheld.

Question 1: Are you a Nigerian?

Figure 3.1: The percentage of Nigerians in Relation to Non Nigerians that filled the questionnaire:



Question 2: If Nigerian, Which Tribe are you?

Table 3.1: The number of Nigerians in relation to their tribes that filled the questionnaire:

Tribes	Number of People
Hausa	3
Ibo	20
Yoruba	25
Others	45

From the 100 respondents administered questionnaire, 93 of them are Nigerians - 3 Hausas, 20 Ibos, 25 Yorubas and 45 persons were from the minority Nigerian tribes.

Question 3: How long have you lived in Lagos State?

Table 3.2: Specification of how long each of the respondents have Lived in Lagos State

Duration	Percentage of People
Below 1 year	5%
1-2 Years	5%
3-4 Years	10%
4 Years and Above	80%

The table above indicates that most of the respondents (80%) has lived in Lagos state for well over 4 years whilst 10% has lived in Lagos state for 3-4 years. 5% of the respondents have lived in Lagos state for below 1 year and another 5% have lived in Lagos state for about 1-2 years.

Question 4: Do you understand Yoruba Language?

Table 3.3: Specification of the respondents proficiency in understanding the Yoruba Language

Yoruba Language Proficiency	No	Poorly	Fairly	Fluently
Percentage of People	17%	23%	10%	50%

17% of the respondents do not understand the Yoruba language, 23% has a poor knowledge of the language, 10% has a fair grasp of the Yoruba language and 50% comprehends the Yoruba language fluently.

Question 5: Do you understand Hausa Language?

Table 3.4: Specification of the respondents proficiency in understanding the Hausa Language

Hausa Language Proficiency	No	Poorly	Fairly	Fluently
Percentage of People	50%	17%	28%	5%

50% of the respondents do not understand the Hausa language, 17% has a poor knowledge of the language, 28% has a fair grasp of the Hausa language and 5% comprehends the Hausa language fluently.

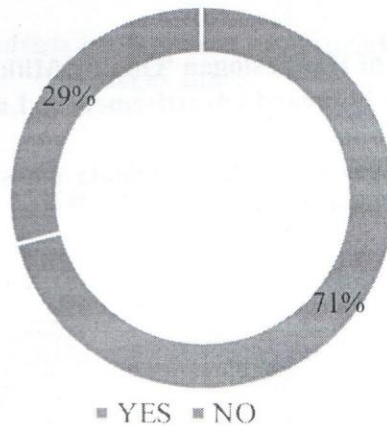
Question 6: Do you understand Ibo Language?**Table 3.5: Specification of the respondents proficiency in understanding the Ibo Language**

Ibo Language Proficiency	No	Poorly	Fairly	Fluently
Percentage of People	20%	40%	10%	30%

20% of the respondents do not understand the Ibo language, 40% has a poor knowledge of the language, 10% has a fair grasp of the Ibo language and 30% comprehends the Ibo language fluently.

Question 7: Have you seen the Peak Milk Billboard advertisement with the slogan 'Quality Milk No Wahala' and 'Shikini money No Wahala'?

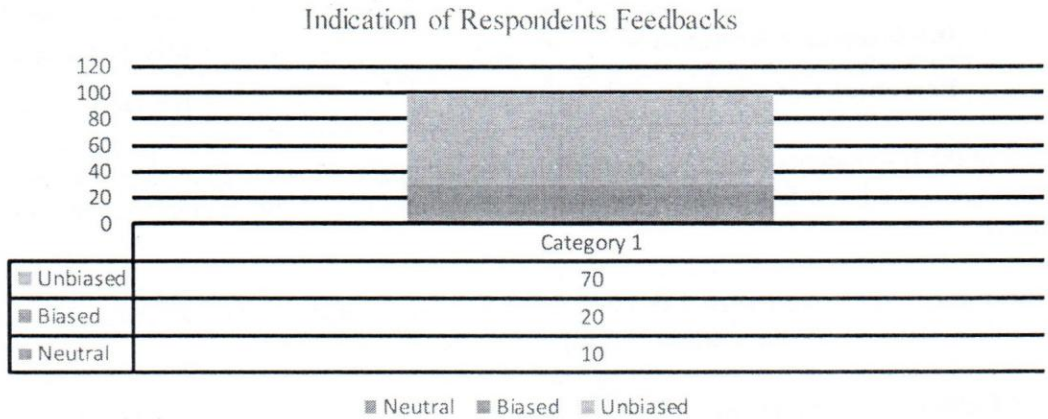
Figure 3.2: Percentage of people that have seen the Peak Milk Billboard advertisement with the slogan 'Quality Milk No Wahala' and 'Shikini money No Wahala' in relation to those that have not seen it.



71% of the respondents have been exposed to the billboard advertisements whilst 29% of the respondents were yet to see the advertisement.

Question 8: Does the use of Hausa slogan 'Quality Milk No Wahala' and 'Shikini money No Wahala' in Peak Milk Billboard advertisement in Lagos state make you feel biased?

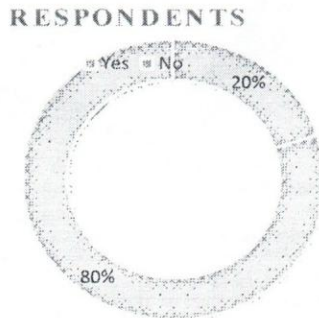
Figure 3.3: Indications of Respondents Perception (Neutral, Biased, and Unbiased) on the Influence of Hausa Slogan in Peak Milk Billboard Advertisement in Lagos state.



10% of the respondents has a neutral disposition about the use of Hausa Slogan in Advertisements in Lagos State. 20% felt biased about the use of Hausa Slogan in advertisement in Lagos state and 70% were unbiased.

Question 9: Can the use of Hausa slogan ‘Quality Milk No Wahala’ and ‘Shikini money No Wahala’ in Peak Milk billboard advertisement in Lagos state affect your purchasing decision of the product?

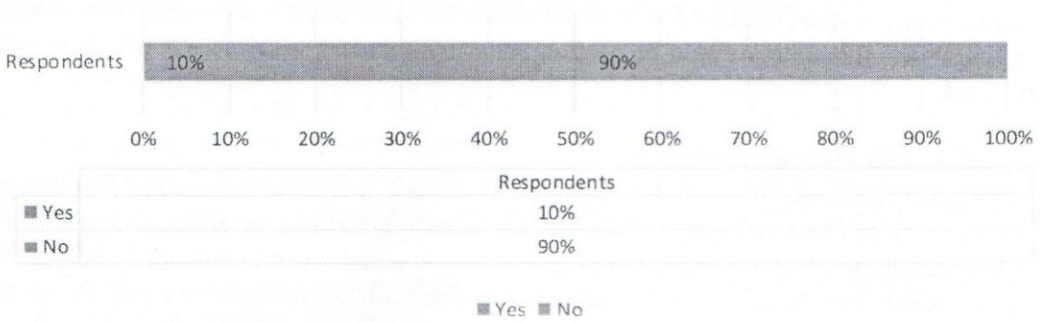
Figure 3.4: Percentages of the Respondents whose purchasing decisions can be influenced by the Advertisement.



20% percent of the responded indicated that the Hausa slogan used in Peak Milk advertisement in Lagos State can affect their purchasing decision of the product whilst 80% specified that the usage of Hausa slogan in Peak Milk advertisements in Lagos state cannot affect their purchasing decision.

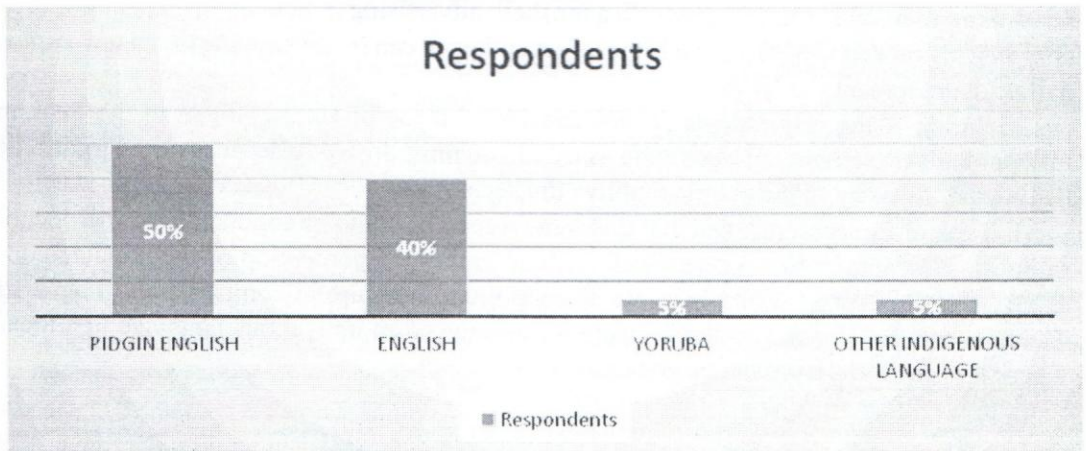
Question 10: Does advertisements in an indigenous language other than Yoruba in Lagos State make you feel offended?

Figure 3.5: Does Advertisements in an indigenous language other than Yoruba in Lagos State make you feel offended



Question 11: Which language in your opinion is most appropriate to advertise Products/ Services in Lagos State?

Figure 3.6: Answer of Respondents on the most appropriate Language to advertise in Lagos State.



Question 12: Please give your reasons for your above Answer

50% of the respondents are of the opinion that Pidgin English is most appropriate in Advertising goods and services in Lagos state as Pidgin English has become a proficient communication medium that transcends ethnicity and capable of reaching all and sundry irrespective of

educational and social strata whilst 40% of the respondents indicated that advertising in English language is most suitable in a bid to reach Nigerians and non-Nigerians alike as Pidgin English can sufficiently connect with only Nigerians. 5% of the respondents suggested that it is appropriate to advertise in Yoruba language in Lagos state as Lagos state is an indigenous Yoruba state. Whilst some people feel that it is tribalistic to advertise in other languages other than Yoruba language in Lagos state; another 5% of the respondents specified that any indigenous language other than Yoruba language could be used in advertising in Lagos state as Lagos state is a no man's land.

Conclusion and Recommendation

From the research, 50% of the respondents do not understand Hausa, 17% has poor comprehension of Hausa language, 28% has fair knowledge of Hausa language and 5% of the respondents comprehend the Hausa language fluently in comparison to 30% of the respondents that have an excellent grasp of the Ibo language whereas 50% of the surveyed population has a superb knowledge of the Yoruba language.

10% of the respondents have a neutral disposition about the use of Hausa Slogan in Advertising in Lagos State. 20% felt biased about the use of Hausa Slogan in advertisement in Lagos state and 70% were unbiased essentially because Lagos state is a cosmopolitan city with mixed population. Hence, language had little or no influence on the consumers purchasing decisions as consumers are well able to compartmentalise their thought processes and decisions.

With respect to the appropriate language to be advertised with in Lagos state, it would be most suitable to advertise either in Pidgin English so as to foster adequate understanding of all and sundry thereby eliminating bias. In a nutshell, advertising in indigenous language nurtures comprehension and very effective if the target audience can relate with the language employed in the advertisement.

Majority of the respondents do not consider the use of Hausa slogan in the Peak milk billboard advertisement in Lagos state as tribalistic most probably because of the multi-ethnic nature and diversity of the people that live in Lagos state.

It is therefore recommended that this same research should be conducted in other locations in South-West region like Akure, Ondo state to gather the perception of the populace on the same advertisement as Akure is a less cosmopolitan in nature in comparison to Lagos state. Then, we can fully ascertain the impact of the usage of an indigenous language in a location where it is not widely spoken by consumers.

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Consumer Evaluation Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

The objective of this survey is to collect tangible information about: **Tribalism in Nigeria's advertising – The Usage of Indigenous Language in Nigeria's advertising. (A Case Study of Peak Milk Billboard Advertisement in Lagos State in Hausa Language).**

All information provided by you will be kept confidential and will be used for 100% academic purpose. Please give your unbiased and frank opinion. Please answer the questions below.

Personal Questions

Name _____

Age: 15-25 25-35 35-45 45 Above

Gender: Female Male

Occupation: Student Self Employed Salaried
 Housewife Retired

Annual Income: Below 1 Million 1-2 Million 2-3 Million
 3-4 Million 5Million Above

Subject Matter Questions

1. Are you a Nigerian Yes No

2. If Nigerian, which tribe are you?
 Ibo Hausa Yoruba Others

3. How long have you lived in Lagos State?
 Below 1 Year 1-2 Years 3-4Years 4 Years Above