

A Figurative Analysis Of The Language Of The Petty Trader On The Douala-Melong Highway In Cameroon

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Abstract: Advertisement is everywhere in Cameroon. It can be seen on television, billboard posters, in newspapers, journals, on the mobile phones that people use, dresses and even bags too. In fact, almost every product mankind uses today is accompanied by an advert. It should be underscored here that these adverts are made known to the target consumer through language. It should also be understood that marketers use language in different forms such as sentences, phrases, lexical categories and figurative language to captivate the attention of their potential buyers so that they can buy what they selling. This paper examines figurative language used by the Petty trader on the Douala-Melong highway in Cameroon in the promotion of his/her goods. The descriptive qualitative research design was used to cull messages from Petty traders hawking a variety of goods on this highway like biscuits, toothbrush, toothpaste and African herbal medicine, to name but these in the month of August and September, 2023. The observation technique was used to collect the sampled data from four Petty traders on buses plying the Douala-Melong highway. The collected corpus was analysed using Keraf's (2009) theory. The analysis reveals that Petty traders hawking on this road use figurative devices such as simile, irony, personification, humour, hyperbole, oxymoron, onomatopoeia, contrast, rhetorical questions, tone, anecdote and euphemism. These feature were used for different reasons. For example, to exemplify that what the Petty trader is selling is not expensive, to demonstrate how effective the product in question is and the multiple illnesses it can cure. Furthermore, that when love is bestowed on others, irrespective of gender and race, we stand to benefit many things, just like this Petty trader, who because of the love he showed to a sleeping commuter went to his house with one full shopping bag and his wife was surprised because it is only bread that he always brings each time he travels, to mention but these.

Keywords: figurative analysis, language, Petty trader, Douala-Melong highway, Cameroon

I. INTRODUCTION

People and companies produce goods in different forms and in diverse parts of the world every day for human consumption and most importantly for sale. It should be underscored here that when these products have been produced, they need to be made known to the consumers. This is where advertising comes into play. There are different ways goods and services are promoted nowadays. People use the television, flyers, billboard posters, radio, newspapers, journals, and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube, plus social media applications such as Phoenix to make others know of

the services they are rendering or the products they are marketing, thanks to advertisement. It is worth noting that these adverts are made known to the target audience through language. Language plays an important role in society. People use language for different purposes depending on the context too. It is used in the judiciary, in the entertainment industry, in the political realm, in the educational milieu and in the medical world by these different actors to achieve different purposes. This is to show that language is very vital to humans. It is worth noting that language is also used in the commercial world by merchants to promote what they are marketing. They use it in different forms when promoting their commodities. Some make use of sentences, others use

phrases and lexical categories and others also use figurative language to captivate the attention of their potential buyers so that they can buy what they selling. The focus of this paper is on the use of figurative language by the Petty trader, one of the advertisers out of a multitude of vendors involved in business in Cameroon. The term figurative language shall be defined so as to specify the sense in which it relates to the present study. According to Ratna (2017), figurative language is another way to say something other than the usual way of making speech more beautiful. Figurative language is usually used to beautify words, to describe a specific impression or atmosphere such as lonely, busy, romantic, etc. Figurative language is language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different from the literal interpretation. Figurative language makes expression of varied thoughts and feelings (Radi & Latif, 2024). Abrams (1999, p. 96) states that figurative language is a conspicuous departure from what users of language apprehend as the standard meaning of words, or else the standard order of words, in order to achieve some special meaning or effect. Pambudi (2016) says figurative language refers to the use of language that carry multiple meanings. In the context of this study, figurative language is seen as beautified language used by markers especially the Petty trader on the Douala-Melong highway as a persuasive strategy to win the hearts and minds of potential customers buy what he/she is selling.

The aim of this paper is to identify types of figurative language used by the Petty trader in the promotion of his/her goods on the Douala-Melong highway. It also explores the role played by these language resources in the promotion of a small scale business.

This study is guided by the following research questions.

What is figurative language?

What are the types of figures of speech used by Petty traders in the marketing of their goods on the Douala-Melong highway?

What role do they play in conveying the messages of these marketers to their target customers?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This area of study has attracted the attention of so many scholars who have penned different writings in several spheres of learning. Some of these researchers have documented on the use of figurative language in movies (Sriwedani, et al., 2023, Nehe, et al., 2022, Muti & Nugraha, 2022, Nera, et al., 2024). These studies showed that the following figures of speech were used: simile, irony, metaphor, personification, euphemism and symbolism to name but these. In addition, these researchers found that figurative language served to afford imaginative pleasure, to add emotional intensity, it served to say much in brief, to describe some of the scenes performed by maleficent actors and each figurative language has non-literal meaning which makes the dialogue between characters have a different impression. Furthermore, the meaning of utterances is interpreted based on the conditions that they were mentioned. Novelists also make use figurative categories in their studies. In this light, Datondji (2017), Wulandari and Astri (2018), Al-Farabi (2019), Muh-Rochmat

and Iskandar (2022) investigated on figurative language in some novels and found that metaphor and hyperbole were the dominant type of figurative language. Their studies further revealed that more is being communicated than written and that the intended message can only be uncovered by reaching beyond the bare linguistic structure.

The use of figurative language has also been examined from the viewpoint of song lyrics (Edyawati, et al., 2016, Nursolihat & Kareviati., 2020, Permatasari et al., 2015, & Hulu, et al., 2021). These researchers illustrated in their studies that different types of figures of speech were used with varying frequencies and for different purposes. The above authors also noted that the dominant figure of speech used in their studies is metaphor. In the same vein, studies conducted by (Khadijah, 2016; Purwatiningsih, 2020; Nisa, 2020; Palguna et al., 2021; & Melly, 2022) illuminate that, many types of figurative language were used for different purposes. They were used either to give imaginative pleasure, additional imagery, add emotional intensity or concrete the meaning in the brief compass.

Some erudite have also conducted studies on figurative language from a marketing perspective (Widyanti, 2013, Yayianti, 2015 & Istiqomah, 2014) while obtaining different results. For instance, while Istiqomah (ibid) found that hyperbole is the most dominant in the advertisements because it is used to persuade the public to buy the products, Widyanti (ibid) demonstrated that six types of figurative language were found in this study: metaphor, hyperbole, personification, simile, metonymy, and synecdoche. Out of the six types that were identified, metaphor was ranked first. The application of metaphor does not only make advertisements attractive, but also informative and persuasive as well, and Yayianti (ibid) also showed that seven types of figurative language were employed in the headline and body copy of advertisements. They include: hyperbole, antithesis, parallelism, personification, simile, metaphor and repetition. Each type of figurative language used in the advertisements has its own function. The analysis further reveals that there are three factors which motivate advertisers to use figurative language in their advertisements-to grab consumers' attention, to change consumers' behaviour, and to aid memory. Further studies on figurative language have also been carried out on advertising discourse from different viewpoints. For instance, Ranta and Rusdi (2013), Chaysin (2013), Miller and Toman (2016), Laosrirattanachai (2017), Duboviciene and Skorupa (2014), Wahyuni, et al. (2020) examined figurative language in advertisements, advertising headlines, sub-headlines and slogans, with each study exploring different types of advertisement (food magazines, in-flight magazines, travel magazines, company websites, and internet sources) for different products and brands (food, alcohol, non-commercial products, unspecified products, cigarette, corporation brand, and accommodation) and found that advertisers commonly use rhetorical devices in advertisements, especially alliteration which was the top-three rank of every advertising's element. Regarding rhetorical devices in headlines, the top three types of devices were alliteration, repetition, and rhetorical questions, respectively. In the subheads, alliteration, rhetorical questions, and metaphor were found the most, while alliteration was the only type of rhetorical device that

appeared significantly in the copy. In relation to slogans, the devices that were found most were alliteration, followed by assonance, then metaphor, and parallelism (sharing the same rank).

The field of poetry is characterised by figurative language. For this reason, Poets always make use of figurative language in their poetry to pass across their message to the target audience. The use of figurative discourse in poetry makes the poems more interesting as the different figures of speech used in them express different sheds of opinions-emotions, attitude, tone and mood, to name but these. According to Sari (2018) many authors use figurative language to transfer their impressions about something in their literary studies so as to give special effects and unique understanding in every sentence of their works. This has attracted the attention of some scholars to delve into poetic works with the aim of identifying types of figurative language used in these studies and the role they play in understanding these poetic pieces (see Anggiamurni, 2020; Nuraeni & Peron, 2017; & Sinarsih, 2019). Furthermore, Rezeki (2021) conducted a study on figurative language and messages of poems about CovID-19. The aim of the study is to identify types of figurative language used in the poems and also to explain the messages of these poems. Using Leech's (1969) theory to identify the types of figurative language and that of Nurgiyantoro (1995) to explain the meanings of the figurative language, the analysis revealed that there were eight types of figurative language found in the poems: metaphor (14.5 %), personification (13.3 %), simile (16.9%), hyperbole (13.3%), irony (8.5%), litotes (1.2%), metonymy (28.9%), and oxymoron (3.7%). The dominant type of figurative language used was metonymy. Furthermore, two kinds of messages were found in the poems, namely social and moral messages. Khairunisa, et al. (2020) also investigated the use of figurative language in Amir Hamzah's poems and found that there were twenty-two types of figurative language which stood as follows: three types of metaphor, representing (13.63%), seven types of hyperbole, which stood at (31.81%), five types of personification, giving (22.72%), and seven types of simile, representing (31.83%). The literal meaning of figurative language in the poems was about the love story of Amir himself and also his longing for his mother.

Many studies have been conducted on advertising discourse in Cameroon, and from different postures. Some researchers have investigated advertising discourse in Cameroon from a stylistic perspective (Foneng, 1994, Foncho, 1997, Tchhoffou, 2004, & Fomukong, 2016), others from a pragmatic viewpoint (Epie, 2016), from a semiotic analysis (Eka' Aban, 2009, & Gemo, 1998), from a lexical stance (Acha, 2007 & Ngum, 1989), from a symbolic perspective (Emvana, 2000), from a persuasive angle (Mbe, 2001, Fuh, 2004, 2011, 2018, Atemba, 2007, & Ekane, 2007), from a bilingual perspective, (Ngu, 1990, & Ngo, 2006), from a communicative stand point (Jean, 2013), from a marketing outlook (Kuoh, 2014, Zonese, 2014, Raisa, 2012, Ajasse, 2004, Agiam, 1998, Andong, 2004, Wouodjom, 1998, Ekellem, 1992 & Ghaila, 1998), by looking at which language the Petty trader uses in advertising on the streets of Douala (Fuh, 2023), from the viewpoint of linguistic inequalities in terms of language (Nkamta & Ngwenya, 2017) and from a

deictic perspective (Fuh, 2024c). From the above information, it could be said that a lot has been documented on the language of advertisement from countless perspectives, however no study has delved into the use of figurative language as a persuasive marketing tool in the promotion of goods or services in Cameroon, although it has been observed that in Cameroon, marketers in general and the Petty trader in particular always makes use of the above language features when selling his/her goods on Cameroonian highways such as the Douala-Melong highway, so that he/she can convince his/her target customers to buy what he/she is marketing. This linguistic gap created by these scholars needs to be filled, hence the importance of this study.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are three different categories of figurative language. They are figurative language by comparison comprising metaphor, simile, personification, and apostrophe, figurative language by association which include metonymy, synecdoche, symbol and allegory, and figurative language by contrast consisting paradox, irony, hyperbole, and litotes. This classification of figurative language is adopted from the theory of Perrine (1969). The functions of figurative language (Perrine, 1982) set out to give imaginative pleasure, to give additional imagery, to add emotional intensity and to concrete the meaning in brief compass. However, this study is hitched on Keraf's (2009) perception of figurative language. According to this author, there are 16 types of figurative language which include: simile, metaphor, allegory, personification, allusion, eponym, epithet, synecdoche, metonymy, antonomasia, hipflask, or hipalase, irony, satire, innuendo, antiphrasis, and paronomasia. In the context of this paper, this study dwells on these figures of speech as spotted in the corpus: simile, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, irony, onomatopoeia, euphemism, humour, contrast, anecdote, tone, personification, and oxymoron. The explanation of each type of figurative language is given in the section below.

SIMILE

It is a figure of speech in which a more or less fanciful or unrealistic comparison is made, using like or as (McArthur, 1992, p.935). According to Protus (2007:502), a simile is a form of comparison in which one thing is likened to another by the use of "as + adjective + as" or "like." The above authors provide these examples:

"As generous as a dream."

You're not going to go storming in there like a bull in a China shop, aren't you?

Sentence 2 means a person who is clumsy, careless or moves in a very awkward way (Maula, 2013)

IRONY

It is the use of words to convey the opposite of their literal meaning. A statement or situation whose meaning is contradicted by the appearance or presentation of the idea (Barnet, et al., 1963, p.34). It is frequently used in indirect

speech as a major rhetorical strategy (Fuh & Nouhou, 2023, p.21) as cited in Wales (2001). According to Partington (2007), irony is a speech mode in which the purpose is contrary to the word. It is the use of words to express something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning. For example:

For example, John tells Mary, “you are very dull” whereas she is very intelligent.

PERSONIFICATION

It is a figure of speech by which animals, abstract ideas, or inanimate things are referred to as if they were humans (Baldick, 2001). On the other hand, giving human qualities to an object that is neither human nor animate is called personification (Protus, 2007, p. 500). For example:

The trees are singing.

It is well known that trees do not sing, but in this situation this sings due the qualities (human) attributed to it.

HYPERBOLE

Padillah, et al. (2016, p.72) state that hyperbole is a figure of speech that contains an exaggeration, by exaggerating something or discussed style containing an over statement. To Colston (2015, p.111), hyperbole is a figure of speech that contains an exaggerated statement while to Samba (1988, p.86) the word “hyperbole” means an exaggerated statement used either for serious or comic effect and not intended to be taken literally. On the other hand, Fitria (2018), states that hyperbole is an intentional exaggeration or overstatement, or comic effect. It is also used to express a strong feeling or produce a strong impression, and is not meant to be taken lightly. It can be concluded that hyperbole is a statement that is deliberately made to amplify facts to grab the attention of audiences and gain greater expressive power as illustrated in the example below.

Mary is the most beautiful woman in the world.

RHETORICAL QUESTION

A rhetorical question one asked for the sake of persuasive effect rather than as a genuine request for information, the speaker implying that the answer is too obvious to require a reply (Baldick, 2001). To Protus (2007, p. 501), it means a question addressed to someone but needing no response. For example:

Who has seven hundred francs?

Five hundred francs?

OXYMORON

It is a figure of speech that combines two usually contradictory terms in a compressed paradox, as in the word bittersweet or the phrase living death (Baldick, 2001). According to Protus (2007, p.500), the word oxymoron comes from the Greek expression which means pointedly foolish and is used to link two terms that seem to contradict each other. For example:

Michael’s case of abortion is now an open secret.

EUPHEMISM

Cameron (1995, p.73) defines euphemism as “a term used deliberately to avoid or soften the negative associations of words that deal directly with taboo subjects.” Lutz (2000, p.231) sees euphemism as “an inoffensive or positive word or phrase designed to avoid a harsh, unpleasant, or distasteful reality.” For example, instead of calling a girl a prostitute, one could say:

Sister of the night.

ONOMATOPOEIA

As a figure of speech, onomatopoeia occurs when the meaning of a word is echoed or suggested by its sound (Barnet, et al., 1985, p.530). It involves the use of words which "sound like what they mean" at least supposedly (Perrine, 1978, p.744). For example:

The galloping of horses.

HUMOUR

Crawford (1994, p.57) defines humour as any communication that generates a “a positive cognitive or effective response from listeners.” Humour primarily consists of jokes (spoken or written words) and actions which elicit laughter or generate mirth (these actions can be described in words) (Critchley, 2002; & Ritchie, 2004).

TONE

The quality of a writer or speaker’s attitude and feeling towards the subject matter or audience is called tone (Protus, 2007, p. 503). It should be understood that the tone of a writer can be playful, serious, sincere, sad, mocking and pessimistic, just to mention but these. For example:

If you do not buy this product now for 500francs, next time you shall buy it for 2000francs.

ANECDOTE

An anecdote is an interesting short story because it is funny and impressive (Wardani, et al., 2018). An anecdote is a means of delivering messages and criticism of social phenomena through the packaging of funny stories but full of meaning.

CONTRAST

Contrast is comparing two things in order to show the differences between them.

FUNCTIONS OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

We cannot discuss about figurative language without talking about its functions. Perrine (1969, p.71) identified four different types of functions of figurative language. He maintained that, they are used to give imaginative pleasure, additional imagery, add emotional intensity, and concrete the

meaning in the brief compass. They are discussed in turn below.

TO GIVE IMAGINATIVE PLEASURE

Figurative language can lead to the reader's imagination flows. The function of a text is to invite the reader to create an imagination, to give imaginative pleasure in reading a story. Imaginative pleasure refers to a feeling of being satisfied or having pleased imagination. The reader has probably taken pleasure in staring into a fire and seeing castles and cities in it, or looking into the clouds and shaping them into animals or faces, or in seeing a man in the moon. It provides imagination through the language used that can be lovely in the reader's mind. Perrine (1969, p.33) underscored that it makes the reader pleased after obtaining a source of pleasure in the exercise of the imagination through the text.

TO GIVE ADDITIONAL IMAGERY

Figurative language is applied to create something abstract to become more concrete. Imagery means producing mental picture or visual imagination in the reader's mind as if they were experiencing every story line. The illustration of how the story occurred is pinned in the reader's mind. The visualisation of the story drawn in the mind can influence the reader to experience the story as well. When the ideas direct the reader to build an imagination, the mental picture helps to conceptualise how such description seems to be. Figurative language here has the function to give additional imagery. As a result, the reader's imagination becomes wider.

TO ADD EMOTIONAL INTENSITY

The use of figurative language can cause the emotional expression to the readers. In order to add beauty, the word play is often used to direct the expression from the characters to create emotional sense. The great feeling of the story invites the readers to feel the atmosphere of the story line itself. In other words, the readers could experience what the character feels.

TO CONCRETE THE MEANING IN THE BRIEF COMPASS

This is the way authors express a simple statement without making it into a long text. To concrete the meaning in the brief compass, the figurative language takes a part to make the sentence to be more effective, a way of saying much in brief compass. It can be concluded that there are many types of figurative language and each type plays a crucial role in readers' mind and feelings, especially when they are associated to their various functions.

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive qualitative research design. According to Kothari (2004) qualitative approach in research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitude, opinion

and behaviour. The observation technique and random sampling were used to collect the sample of data from Petty traders hawking a variety of products like toothpaste, biscuits, sweets and African traditional medicines to name but these on the Douala-Melong highway. This method helped the researcher to identify, study and collect the different types of figurative language used by these vendors in the promotion of their goods on this highway. A total of four Petty traders were observed how they sell their goods on the Douala-Melong highway when this researcher travelled from Douala to Melong and from Melong to Douala as a passenger. During the two trips that were made on this particular highway, the researcher observed how these marketers make use of different figures of speech to woo their potential customers to buy what they are selling. This exercise was conducted in the month of August and September, 2023. After observing these Petty traders display their products to their customers, the researcher identified the different figures of speech, classified them in terms of types, counted the occurrence of each type and also found the most dominant type they use and why they use it when they are advertising their goods to passengers in these buses.

ANALYSIS

This section focuses on the analysis of the data. The analysis of this study is hitched on on Keraf's (2009) perception of figurative language as discussed below in the context of this study.

SIMILE

As mentioned earlier, a simile is a figure of speech used to compare two things by using the words as or like. The use of simile in this study by the Petty trader is seen in the following sentences below:

- ✓ "Some people di frown their face like say they don loss money" (Some people are frowning their faces as if they have lost money).
- ✓ "Bible talk say, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself" (The Bible says, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself").
- ✓ "After this treatment, Madam no go slap Junior again talk seh, "as useless as your father." (After this treatment, Madam will not slap Junior again and say, "as useless as your father").
- ✓ "After you do wam so, you go piss like River Wouri don burst for under" (After you have done so, you are going to urinate like River Wouri that has burst under).
- ✓ "This product...your mouth go shine like Christmas tree" (This product...your mouth is going to shine like a Christmas tree).

This figure of speech has been used for these reasons. To demonstrate how efficient, the product sold is. For example, it shall make the mouth of the buyer to shine like a Christmas tree, see sentence 5. Similarly, the product shall make the user urinate like River Wouri that has burst under, see sentence 4. In the same line of thought, this expression which is used in sentence 3 does not only illustrate how effective this product is. It is equally used to advise men whose wives slap their

children and say they are as useless as Junior to buy what he/she is selling so that this beating and insult can stop. It is used in sentence 2 to illuminate the importance of loving those around us and of course the remunerations that come with this gesture. This figurative language is used in sentence 1 to show the unhappy state of the people. They are frowning just like someone who has lost his/her money. They are grimacing because of the varied challenges they are facing, may be health, marital, etc.

HYPERBOLE

Another figure of speech used by marketers in the marketing of their goods and services in general and the Petty trader in particular is hyperbole. The following sentences as used by the Petty trader are deliberate exaggerations aimed at winning buyers' attention, so that they can buy what he/she is selling.

- ✓ "After you do wam so, you go piss like River Wouri don burst for under" (After you have done so, you are going to urinate like River Wouri that has burst under).
- ✓ "This product...your mouth go shine like Christmas tree" (This product...your mouth is going to shine like a Christmas tree).
- ✓ "Some of we deh here weh if we move wa shoes man go check se satan don open e pot for soup[...] After that process dog no go carry your shoes again you begin talk se na neighbor don tif your shoes. Na weti?" (There are some of us here that if we remove our shoes, somebody will think that it is the devil who has opened the pot of his soup...After that process a dog will not carry your shoes again and you start to accuse your neighbour for stealing your shoes. What is it?).
- ✓ "Make sure you no miss day. Gastric go run" (Make sure you do not miss a day. Gastric is going to run).
- ✓ *For cough, take panaxia and honey with the same measurement for 3 days. Bye bye cough.*
- ✓ "This woman call me. All a be de hear na, "would you like to have? Why don't you take? Have you ever tasted?" (This woman called me. All I could hear was, "would you like to have? Why don't you take? Have you ever tasted?")
- ✓ "Junior go comot resemble na neighbour, e de take number 53 out of 50 for class but di chop pass all man for house." (Junior will come out and resemble the neighbour. He will take number 53 out of 50 in class but he eats more than anybody in the house).

The above figure of speech has been used to showcase the goodness of the product the vendor is marketing. For example, see sentences 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12. In the same vein, it is also used to illustrate that if we show love to our neighbours, we shall benefit things from people we never expected to have as seen in sentence 11 above.

RHETORICAL QUESTIONS

A rhetorical question is one asked by a person without providing an answer to the said question. The collected corpus shows that when the Petty trader is advertising his goods on the Douala-Melong highway, he makes use of rhetorical questions. Examples from the corpus include:

- ✓ How do they taste?
- ✓ How much do you buy a bottle of beer?
- ✓ Who needs this product again?
- ✓ Is the product expensive?
- ✓ How much do you consult at the hospital?
- ✓ How much do you think we should sell this product?

These rhetorical questions as used by the Petty trader do not only create anxiety in their customers, but they also urge them to go in for what is being advertised.

IRONY

Another rhetorical device deployed by advertisers so that they can convince their target audience buy their goods is irony. The following sentences as used by the Petty trader are ironic.

- ✓ "A go give am for free instead of 1000 francs per bottle." (I am going to give it for free instead of 1000 francs per bottle).
- ✓ "Madam go get bele born pikin. Junior go comot resemble na neighbour, e de take number 53 out of 50 for class but di chop pass all man for house" (Madam will be pregnant and put to birth. Junior will come out and resemble the neighbour. He will take number 53 out of 50 in class but he eats more than anybody in the house).
- ✓ I am Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States of America.
- ✓ "Man fit enter bus salut e neighbour e no answer, because e get a very bad mouth stench. You get fine voice but you no fit sing because people go collapse. Something funny you but you no fit laugh or smile. All that one na punishment." (Someone can enter the bus and greet the neighbour but he/she does not answer, because he/she has a very bad mouth stench. You have a very nice voice but you cannot sing because people will collapse. Something is funny but you cannot laugh or smile. All this is punishment).

These expressions which are ironic are persuasive for these reasons. First, they attract the attention of the public to what the Petty traders are selling, see sentences 19 and 21. Second, they make the target customer to know why he/she needs to buy they product, see sentences 20 and 22. Third, they also urge them to buy the product because it will resolve the problem they are currently facing, see sentences 20 and 22.

ONOMATOPOEIA

It is the creation and use of words which include sounds that are similar to the noises that the words refer to. For example:

- ✓ "Fowl weh e no hear sshhh go hear mmbamm" (The fowl that is stubborn will find itself in trouble).
- ✓ Some of you cannot play a match for ninety minutes. You enter the field and after five minutes you start sleeping and rumbling like thunder, "huuuuhhh!!!"

Sentence 23 is a warning and at the same time, an advice. The advertiser is calling on his target audience to buy what he is selling now than wait for trouble to meet them before they buy what he is selling when it might be too late. After all, prevention is better than cure, they say. Similarly, sentence 24 is also an advice to those who cannot play a match for ninety minutes to wake up and do the needful.

EUPHEMISM

We have these examples from the collected data:

- ✓ “Yes for man pikin weh e no fit still perform e duties them very well go mix yah own with garlic and two tea spoon for 1 week, morning, evening. After this treatment, madam no go slap Junior again say, “as useless as your father.” (Yes, for a man who cannot perform his duties very well, he is going to mix his own with garlic and 2 teaspoons for one week, morning and evening. After this treatment Madam is not going to slap Junior and say, “as useless as your father.”)
- ✓ Some of you cannot play a match for ninety minutes. You enter the field and after five minutes you start sleeping and rumbling like thunder, “huuuuuhhh!!!” Your partner is waiting for you to score the goal but you are sleeping. But I tell you, your solution is here. If you use this product morning and evening, you will play a better match and even go for prolongation. I tell you, the next day your wife will call you all types of names. For example: darling, honey, kuku and this time around your meat will no longer be eaten by your neighbour.

This figure of speech has been utilised to create awareness in the minds of the customers of this marketer concerning their situation (without offending them) and the action they need to take so that they can satisfy their sexual desires and those of their partners.

HUMOUR

Humour is another weapon used by the Petty trader when selling his products in buses on the Douala-Melong highway as exemplified in the sentences below.

- ✓ “Now I wan seh make all man taste but I beg if you know seh you get witch no taste tam because you no go comot for nite, e go tie you for bed.” (Now I want everybody to taste it, but I am pleading that if you know you are a witch, do not taste it because you won’t be able to go out at night. It is going to tie you in your bed).
- ✓ “Yes for man pikin weh e no fit still perform e duties them very well go mix e own with garlic and two tea spoon for 1 week, morning, evening. After this treatment, madam no go slap Junior again say, “as useless as your father.” (Yes, for a man who cannot perform his duties very well, he is going to mix his own with garlic and 2 teaspoons for one week, morning and evening. After this treatment Madam is not going to slap Junior and say, “as useless as your father.”)
- ✓ “Man fit enter bus salute e neighbour e no answer, because e get a very bad mouth stench. You get fine voice but you no fit sing because people go collapse. Something funny you but you no fit laugh or smile. All that one na

punishment” (Somebody can enter the bus and greet the neighbour but he/she does not answer, because he/she has a very bad mouth stench. You have a very nice voice but you cannot sing because people will collapse. Something is funny but you cannot laugh or smile. All this is punishment).

- ✓ “Some of we deh here weh if we move wa shoe man go check se satan don open e pot for soup[...]After that process dog no go carry your shoe again you begin talk se na neighbor don tif your shoe. Na weti?” (There are some of us here that if we remove our shoes, somebody will think that it is the devil who has opened his pot of soup... After this process a dog will not carry your shoes again and you begin to say a neighbour has stolen your shoes. What is it?)

The Petty trader uses humour to make his audience to laugh. This marketing strategy is very important because it makes the travelling passengers not to sleep, thus they pay attention to what he/she is saying. The result is that he/she seduces them to buy what he/she is selling as seen in the sentences above.

CONTRAST

Contrast means to bring out differences that exist between two things. The use of contrast is seen in this narration by this Petty trader.

- ✓ “[...]Person weh e shidon for your corner now so na ya neighbour. So this love mean say make we no wan chop forget our neighbour. Like some day when I be di travel, some woman weh na pastor enter motor start chop weh e no even salute e neighbour. When e don finish for chop chicken, cake and e drink fruit juice, e turn tell e neighbour say “Make we share the word of God.” That kind thing no fine. If na me da woman for e corner a for slap that woman pastor. Another day weh me I be di travel too, this woman be shidon for my corner. After some time e start for di slip for my shoulder. If I be wicked, I for shake my hand. Time weh we reach Melong money no be dey me for even buy bread reach give pikin dem for house. This woman call me. All I be de hear na, “Would you like to have? Why don’t you take? Have you ever tasted?” I reach house witi one full shopping bag soteh my madam wonder because na ever bread I di bring. All this thing dem because of e head weh I support tham witi my hand. So I beg make we try love our neighbour.”

[...]The person who is sitting by you now is your neighbour. So this love means that when we want to eat, we should not forget our neighbours. For example, one day when I was travelling, a woman who is a pastor entered the car and started eating without greeting the neighbour. When she had finished eating chicken, cake and drunk fruit juice, she turned and told the neighbour, “Let us share the word of God.” This type of thing is not good. If I were this woman beside this woman who was a pastor, I would have slapped her. Some other day I was travelling too, and there was a woman who was sitting beside me. After some time, she started sleeping on my shoulder. If I were wicked, I would have shaken my hand. By the time we reached Melong, I did not have money to buy

bread for my children in the house. This woman called for me. All I could hear was, "Would you like to have? Why don't you take? Have you ever tasted?" I reached the house with one

full shopping bag and my wife was surprised because it is only bread that I always bring each time I travel. All these things because of a head I supported with my hand. Am pleading that we should try and love our neighbours).

This stylistic device has been used to show the disadvantages of not showing love to our fellow human beings. For example, we expect the pastor to show love to the neighbour by sharing what she was eating and drinking with him/her, but she did not. The effect is that the neighbour is not likely to pay attention to what she is saying and take it seriously too, for action speaks louder than words. On the other hand, it is also exemplified here that when love is bestowed on others, irrespective of gender and race, we stand to benefit many things, just like this Petty trader. In sum, this device is used to attract the attention of the audience so that they give listening ears to the discourse of this seller.

ANECDOTE

It is a brief narration about an interesting or amusing person, event or thing often used for illustration. This stylistic device is demonstrated in this story as narrated by this Petty trader to his target audience on the Douala-Melong highway.

✓ *One day a nursing mother was travelling from Douala to Yaounde just as we are travelling now. The person sitting next to this woman was a man. After some time, the two started sleeping. In the course of this man sleeping, his head found itself below the breast of this suckling mother. Not long he started snoring with the mouth wide opened. As this woman was sleeping her child started crying. In her sleep she removed her breast and without opening her eyes, she put it in the mouth of the baby. Unfortunately, her breast entered the mouth of this man who started sucking the woman's breast. Not long the child cried more and more. At this junction she could not sleep again. When she opened her eyes she could not believe what her eyes saw. Another grown up baby with beard and teeth was busily sucking her child's breast milk, nodding the head and the right hand scratching the head. My dear brothers and sisters when you are travelling it is not good for you to be sleeping because good things will pass you by.*

The use of this anecdote is to create humour and also to make his target audience pay attention to what he/she is selling. It should be underscored that travelling is a tedious exercise given the inconveniences that go with it such as sitting for long hours and not being able to sit comfortably too, so by using this stylistic device, it makes the journey lively. For this reason, the commuters hardly sleep thereby enabling this seller to market his goods to them.

TONE

Tone is the attitude a writer has toward a subject matter. The tone of a writer can be that of dislike, respect, admiration,

sympathy or advice. The tone of the Petty trader is seen in these sentences:

- ✓ *For this reason, instead of selling a packet for one thousand francs, a packet is going to cost seven hundred francs in this bus.*
- ✓ *"If you no get support for now maybe next time you go buy two for 1500frs" (If you do not have your support now, maybe next time you shall buy two for 1500frs).*
- ✓ *"Fowl whey e no hear sshhh, go hear mbamm" (The fowl that is stubborn is going to be beaten).
"So for the price e no dear, but how weh na wuna first time, I go give am for free instead of 1000frs per bottle" (For the price, it is not expensive. But given that it is our first time, I will give it for free instead of 1000 francs per bottle).*

The tone of this Petty trader is that of warning, see sentences 34 and 35, and that of advice, see sentences 33 and 36. He is advising them to buy what he his selling now, if not next time the amount shall be doubled.

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is giving human qualities to an object that is neither human nor animate. For example, "the trees sang with the breeze." The use of personification is seen in this example below:

- ✓ *This drug in this small bottle is called Kiriku. He is small but very powerful. He cures many diseases like cough, headache, body pains[...]For those of you who do not know how to cry at a funeral, you need him. What you need to do is that before you get to the funeral site, you should sniff Kiriku in the left and right nostril. Before you know tears will just be flowing down your cheeks. When you get to the funeral site people will think that it is a family member of yours who has died.*

This product has been attributed human qualities to demonstrate how efficacious it is and the multiple illnesses it can cure; plus, the many functions it plays as illustrated in extract 37 above.

OXYMORON

As stated before, it comes from the Greek expression which means pointedly foolish, and is used to link two terms that seem to contradict each other. For example, "in order to arrive safely you must hasten slowly." In the context of this study, we have these examples in the sentences below from the collected data:

- ✓ *I am here this morning to share these products with you.*
- ✓ *I want to help you this morning as you are travelling.*

The above statements are contradictory in that, in business you don't share or help given that the aim of a businessman is to make profit. This stylistic use of language is effective in that it captivates the minds of the target audience to buy what this Petty trader is selling, because they believe that what he/she is selling is not expensive because of the use of the words "share" and "help."

V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As a reminder, this paper conducted a study on figurative devices used by the Petty trader in the promotion of his/her goods on the Douala-Melong highway in Cameroon in the month of August and September, 2023. Hitched on Keraf's (2009) theory, the study indicated that twelve types of figurative language were used at varying degrees. For example, the dominant type of figurative language used by these Petty traders is hyperbole with seven appearances, followed by rhetorical questions which occurs six times, simile, five times, irony, humour and tone with four occurrences; onomatopoeia, euphemism and oxymoron having two manifestations each, with the least being contrast, anecdote and personification which occur just once. The analysis further established that these figures of speech were used for different purposes. For instance, oxymoron was used to exemplify that what the Petty trader is selling is not expensive because of the use of the words "share" and "help." In the same vein, personification was used to demonstrate how effective the product in question is, the multiple illnesses it can cure, plus other functions it plays. On the other hand, tone and onomatopoeia were used to advise and warn the target audience to buy what is being sold at the moment because next time the price shall be tripled. Anecdote was also used to create humour, thereby making the journey lively. This made the travelers to be awake throughout the journey and pay attention to his/her messages. Similarly, humour was also utilised to make the target audience of the Petty trader to laugh. This marketing strategy is very important because it makes the travelling passengers not to sleep, thus they pay attention to what he/she is saying. The result is that he/she seduces them to buy what he/she is selling. Contrast was used to exemplify that when one bestows love on others, irrespective of gender and race, the person stands to benefit many things, just like this Petty trader. For example, because of the love he showed to a sleeping passenger by supporting her head, he went to his house with one full shopping bag and his wife was surprised because it is only bread that he always brings each time he travels.

Just like the other figures of speech, euphemism has been used to create awareness in the minds of the customers of this marketer concerning their situation (without offending them) and the action they need to take so that they can satisfy their sexual desires and those of their partners. Irony was used to attract the attention of the public, to explain to them why they need to buy the product and to urge them to buy the product because it shall resolve the problem they are currently facing. Rhetorical questions were used to create anxiety in the customers of this Sole proprietor, and also to urge them to go in for what is being advertised. Hyperbole has been used to showcase the goodness of the product the vendor is marketing. Simile was used for three reasons. First, to demonstrate how efficient the product sold is. Second, to illuminate the importance of loving those around us and of course the remunerations that come with this gesture. Third, to show the unhappy state of the people. They are grimacing because of the challenges they are facing, may be health and marital issues. In sum, these figures of speech were used to convince the target customers to buy what the marketers are selling.

The use of persuasive language above falls in line with White's opinion who states that:

Rhetorical actions can alter people's conceptions of reality and as a result, those people may choose to act in ways that do directly change other phenomena or events. Such a change can only be effective with the context, because context shapes rhetorical discourses and their consequences. Rhetoric therefore, is any discourse someone perceives as intended to influence attitudes or beliefs (1992, p. 30).

The use of language by Petty traders does not only influence their customers but also makes them to believe in what they are selling. In the words of the renowned advertising pioneer, Weilbacher (1984:20) "The truth isn't the truth until people believe you, and they can't believe you if they don't know what you are saying, and they can't know what you are saying if they don't listen to you and they won't listen to you if you are not interesting unless you say something imaginatively, originally and freshly." Therefore, the novelty and freshness of advertising language is justified for the purpose of attracting people's attention, winning their trust and swaying their thinking. This is just what the Petty trader does when he/she is selling his/her goods on our highways. It is worth noting that, the above language features as used by the Petty trader, in his/her adverts appeal to the five senses of the target audience and most often consumers are captured and enticed by these adverts. With this irresistible persuasive strategy, the consumer is forced to afford the product by all possible means.

The study above is similar to that of Fuh and Nouhou (2023a) in that they both dwell on figurative language, but differ in terms of context and analysis. For example, the present endeavour looks at how figurative language is used in the commercial world by the Petty trader to convince potential customers to buy what he/she is selling while Fuh and Nouhou's study (2023, p.26) examines how figurative language is used on social media during the death of Queen Elizabeth II by the public to laugh at her, to mock, to satirise, to show that there is nothing good about her reign as it was one of pain, murder, frustration and the carting away of African resources. The study also demonstrates that the social media is a place where the underprivileged in society empty their minds especially against all the oppressors in general and to the dead Queen in particular who was hurting them when she was alive. Furthermore, while Fuh and Nouhou (2023, pp. 23-25) identified nine types of figurative devices in their study, the present research found that the Petty trader made use of twelve forms of figurative language. In sum, the findings illustrate that these figures of speech were used for different purposes and they also achieved different results. Furthermore, this study also differs from that of Chambers (2001, p. 1) in that while this researcher looks at types of figures of speech used by the Sole proprietor and the role they play in the marketing of his/her goods, Chambers (2001, p.4) rather looks at advertising from a historical perspective. The scholar opines that more than two thousand years ago, advertisements for hotels and restaurants were displayed on the walls of Roman cities so as to entice passing merchants to stay in the city and to spend the night there. Outdoor advertising increased over the centuries and was the principal medium until 400 years ago. Newspapers came on the scene

and the idea of mass advertising began. Since then every product and service imaginable has been promoted, capturing our attention and encouraging us to part with our money. According to Chambers, (ibid) billions of pounds are spent worldwide on advertising. It is worth noting that advertising is around us, on the clothes we wear, on the bags we carry, on the shoes we wear, on huge boards which colour our streets, public streets, television, and on the media. The rapid increase in the number of companies, banks, radio houses and others is making competition very fierce, thus making advertisement to boom.

IMPLICATION TO RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

This research is beneficial first, to the Petty trader and to marketers as a whole in the sense that it unveils to them types of figurative language they use in selling their goods and how they can better use this type of language to win the hearts of many potential customers to buy what they are marketing so that they can gain a market share and stay in business. In the same line of thought, the study also elucidates how figurative language should be used in the marketing domain and the role they play in convincing their target customers to buy what they are advertising. This research makes it easier for the public to identify types of figurative language used in the commercial world and what they mean, given that this type of language is different from what people speak on a daily basis because it is a coded language. This study is also important to those who want to engage in commercial activities in that, it offers them an array of figurative language that they can use to create employment for themselves and others, thereby reducing social ills in their communities such as unemployment, banditry, prostitution, and kidnaping to name but these. It should be said that researchers also have much to learn from this paper. This is because the study demonstrates types of figurative language the sole proprietor uses, their meanings and the role they play in the promotion of his/her goods.

VI. CONCLUSION

This paper explored figurative expressions used by the Petty trader on the Douala-Melong highway from August to September, 2023 in the marketing of his/her products. The findings indicated that twelve types of figures of speech were used during this period. They include irony, simile, humour, personification, anecdote, contrast, onomatopoeia, euphemism, tone, rhetorical questions, oxymoron and hyperbole. The study also demonstrated that these figures of speech were used for different reasons. For instance, oxymoron was used to exemplify that what the Petty trader is selling is not expensive, personification was utilised to demonstrate how effective the product in question is and the multiple illnesses it can cure. On the other hand, tone and onomatopoeia were used to advise and warn the target audience to buy what is being sold at the moment because next time the price shall triple. Anecdote was also used to create humour, thereby making the journey lively. This made the travelers to be awake throughout the journey and pay attention

to his/her messages. Similarly, humour was also used to make the target audience of the Petty trader to laugh. This made the travelling passengers not to sleep, thus they pay attention to what he/she is saying. The result is that he/she seduces them to buy what he/she is selling. Contrast was used to exemplify that when love is bestowed on others, irrespective of gender and race, we stand to benefit many things, just like this Petty trader. For example, because he demonstrated love to someone, he went to his house with one full shopping bag and his wife was surprised because it is only bread that he always brings each time he travels. Just like the other figures of speech, euphemism has been used to create awareness in the minds of the customers of this marketer concerning their situation (without offending them) and the action they need to take so that they can satisfy their sexual desires and those of their partners. Irony was used to attract the attention of the public, to explain to them why they need to buy the product and to urge them to buy the product because it shall resolve the problem they are currently facing. Rhetorical questions were used to create anxiety in the customers of this Sole proprietor, and also to urge them to go in for what is being advertised. Hyperbole has been used to showcase the goodness of the product the vendor is marketing. Simile was used for three reasons. First, to demonstrate how efficient, the product sold is. Second, to illuminate the importance of loving those around us and of course the advantages that come with this gesture as mention earlier. Third, to show the unhappy state of the people. They are grimacing because of the health challenges they are facing. In sum, these figures of speech were used to convince the target customers to buy what the marketers are selling.

This study concludes that the Petty trader in particular and marketers as a whole should make use of figurative language in their discourse as they display and market their goods and services so that they can gain a market share and also keep body and soul together.

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