

Linguistic Analysis of the Road Signs of Sudan Mobile Telecommunications Network (MTN)

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze the language of advertising of business companies specially the telecommunication companies in the area of signs, taking Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN Sudan) as an example. The signs are many and varied collected from various resources. The data collection main resource for this study are some signs in the main streets inside the capital of Sudan (Nile Street and Alsiteen Street), the company's website page, and from some of the company's employees in Khartoum. The innovation of the signs and their role in the development of the company business are of a main concern, to find out how does it affect and compete in the world of telecommunication, and to see how much signs could attract the clients. An analysis of six signs is done due to Grice's Maxims speech act theory, which showed a result of a moderate relation. In the same way, the signs were put under a comparison with John Swales six criteria of genre concept of a discourse community, the study agreed with his genre analysis in a high degree of harmony. The (MTN) policy in producing the signs, is to display them in both English and Arabic Language with more concentration on the Colloquial Sudanese Arabic because in the company's view point that the colloquial translation is open, easy and more attractive to the clients who are of various and different educational and cultural backgrounds for it is a language that addresses the conscience. Four signs were translated in the colloquial Arabic, an analysis is applied to rate the degree of the clients interaction, the analysis measurement resulted a rate of 94 % of interaction which was an excellent rate that keeps the company competitors away. This analysis founded that the company's choice to use a different advertising policy, namely the informal use of language (colloquial), this policy, has broken the monotony of the reality on which the advertising language is based, and not like other companies from different disciplines using peremptory language in their advertising. From the total analysis, we found that the signs were really attractive to the clients and the research served the aim of the study in approving that the Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) with its policy of innovation of signs, payed much concentration on the suitable business language, that provide value to all company clients including the type of communication, and built customer loyalty, increase market share, and differentiate itself from its competitors.

Keywords: Grice's Maxims speech acts, innovation, communication

INTRODUCTION

Telecommunication companies in Sudan are competing in providing good customer service to increase its subscriber's number and to keep their competitors away. Taking Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN Sudan) as a research topic in examining the innovation of the signs in the development of the company through using of a thrilling language to attract clients, to find out to what extent does it affect and compete in the world of telecommunication, to what extent the sign language could attract the clients.

The research aims to analyze the business context of Telecommunication Network (MTN Sudan) signs depending on Grice Maxim speech act theory, through it; there is a need to know to what extent the business language provides value to all company clients. Including the genre of business language used by the company in the translation of the English sign language, to the Colloquial Sudanese Arabic rather than Classical Arabic, and find its degree of success. To what extent it is able to build customer loyalty, increase market share, and differentiate itself from its competitors.

Method: The research adopts qualitative descriptive and analytical method. The analysis is based on the speech act theory of Grice Maxim. Different signs are subjected to different analysis. Data are collected from the textual analysis of different signs based on Grice Maxim's speech act analysis. The study assumes an interpretive paradigm type.

Grice Maxims Speech Acts

The linguist Paul Grice stated that the conversation is a cooperative activity in which, the speaker and the hearer (addressee) engaged to achieve a successful communication. According to the Grice's theory the speaker and the hearer will cooperate to convey and to get the messages clearly in each turn of speech, so the speaker intends deliver his message clearly in an understandable fashion and the hearer intends to understand the speaker's message in each turn of the conversation. Successful conversation is a conversation which fulfills the goals of cooperative principles; *Grice (1989)* summarized these goals into one main principle and four subheadings named as maxims. He defined his theory which is known as Grice's Cooperative Principle as follows: "*Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged*" (p. 26). In his theory the "Conversational Maxim", *Grice (1975, 1978, and 1989)* identifies a set of principles that make language effective in communication. This principle is called cooperative principle divided into maxims of conversation; these maxims are: maxims of quality (be truthful); maxims of quantity (be informative as required); maxims of relation (be relevant); maxims of manner (be perspicuous).

Grice (1975, 1968, and 1989) investigate the conceptual relation between natural meaning and non-natural, linguistic meaning of utterances. Grice suggests two notions of implicature; conversational implicature is a generated inference when the maxims are flouted whereas, conventional implicature is defined as a no truth conditional attached to particular lexical items and/or linguistic construction. The success of a conversation depends upon the way of interaction between the sender and the receiver. Cooperative principle can be identified as the way in which the speaker and the hearer attempt to make their dialogues effective and meaningful . To convey and to get the messages clearly in each turn of conversation the speaker and the hearer should cooperate among each other, so the speaker indents to deliver his message clearly in an understandable fashion and the hearer intends to understand the speakers' message in each turn of the conversation. The conversation should follow some principles to be a successful conversation. *Grice (1975)* proposed a principle called "cooperative principle" and if the speaker and the hearer follow those principles they will have a successful communication and he named them as "Conversation Maxims", he classified them into four groups which are: Quality Maxim, Quantity Maxim, Relation Maxim and Manner Maxim. *Brown and Yule (1983:32)* explain them as "The conversational convention or well-known as maxims, which support this principle are as follows: Quantity: Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange). Do

not make your contribution more informative than is required; Quality: Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence; Relation: Be relevant; Manner: Be perspicuous; Avoid obscurity of expression; Avoid ambiguity; be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity); and be orderly.” In the next part the researcher will explain them one by one by giving examples for each maxim. Grice’s general principle could be explained clearly them by giving examples for each maxim and then explains the meaning of flouting maxims, observing maxims and implicature. The current researcher elaborates the four maxims of cooperative principle and also reviews some of the previous studies which relate to Grice’s theory of cooperative principles (1975) in several contexts such as: religion, politics, movies comedy context.

Maxim of Quantity

Grice mentioned that the first sub-maxim related to Quantity is naturally essential in conducting debate as any type of conversation tries to present specific information that have to be adequate for the targets of the conversational exchange. Otherwise, the intended message could not be transmitted effectively to the listener. From another point of view, Grice confesses that the maxim quantity is arguable in relation to violating; this maxim can be concerned as time wasting but would not contravene the Cooperative Principle. Nevertheless, *Grice (1975)* alleges “such over in formativeness may be confusing in that it is liable to raise side issues; and there may also be an indirect effect, in that the hearers may be misled as a result of thinking that there is some particular point in the provision of the excess of information”.

Maxim of Relation

Grice talks about one sub-maxim related to relevance, and simply, it refers to exchange info that meet the goals of the conversation. For instance, if John requires a screw driver, Ahmad is expected to hand in a screw driver but not a hammer, cassette, keys, etc. Grice suggests this maxim as clarification for a specific kind of regularity in conversational behavior; meanwhile taking in his considerations the information relevance provided at each level of a conversation. *Grice (1975)* pointed out that when you are involved in communication, Relation Maxim assumes you to be relevant. Grice presents this maxim as a explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior with respect to the relevance of information provided at each turn of a conversation.

Maxim of Manner

Maxim of manner is to be perspicuous: by Avoiding obscurity of expression; Avoiding ambiguity; Being concise (avoid unnecessary wordiness) and being well-ordered. Grice proposes that manner maxims are totally different from the others; whereas other maxims care about “what is said”, the manner maxim focuses on “how what is said to be said”. When participated in a discussion, the Maxim of Manner requires you to be a person who has clear, understood expressions, which includes, but not limited to other smaller maxims like avoiding obscurity of expression, avoiding ambiguity, being brief (avoiding unnecessary prolixity) and being orderly. The maxim of manner is related to how something is being said in the conversation. Grice proposes this maxim as an explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior with respect to the way information is provided at each turn of a conversation.

Maxim of Quality

Regarding Quality, Grice refers to a super maxim that simply expresses the truth. According to Grice, this super maxim includes two sub-maxims; the first one implies not telling lies and the second one indicates not saying things which you are not sure about. Maxim of Quality was proposed by HP Grice in 1975, and he said that when you are involved in conversation, the Maxim of Quality requires that not saying what you believe to be incorrect, and that you do not say that for which you do not have ample evidence. In other words, do not commit the crime of laying. The Maxim of Quality required information provided in conversations to be genuine and justified. Grice presents this maxim as an explanation for a certain type of consistency in conversational behavior regarding to the genuineness of information given at each turn of a conversation.

Tools

A data from the Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) is used to handle this research analysis. The company road signs that spread in the streets of Khartoum city, the capital of Sudan and with the help of the company website, posts and photos are taken for analysis.

The targeted six road signs were chosen because they are the latest most famous, with clear and easy language to be understood by citizens.

An analysis of the business context is done to find out to what extent does it succeed in attracting clients.

An analysis of the degree of clients' interaction towards some of the translated signs is done. This shows the affection of colloquial language in business context success. One of the main streets in Khartoum city the capital of Sudan, is the Nile street. This street by itself consists of 400 signs distributed in a space of 5 meters between signs.

- The signs are as following:
- What are we doing today?
- Doing doesn't do snooze buttons.
- Doing makes a plan.
- Doing dares you to do more.
- Doing doesn't stop at done.
- Everywhere you go.

Putting in consideration that MTN network Sudan covers about 98% of the regions across the country with 10 million subscribers approximately.

About 285 million subscribers are spread in Africa and Middle East countries. The sign language to some extent is considered as a highly sophisticated and highly diplomatic talks to all types of citizens; this is why it has been chosen to examine it so as to figure out the reasons behind its success in attracting customers who are different socially and educationally.

Data Collection

The data is collected from:

1. The company main center in Sudan.
2. The company website.
3. The company Facebook account.
4. The company telegram web pages.
5. The signs spread in some of the main streets in Khartoum city in a very attractive Yellow colour which is considered as a synonymous to (MTN).

Data Analysis Method

In this research the new sign (What Are We Doing Today?) of the Mobile Telecommunication (MTN Sudan) is highlighted. Its innovation in the development of the organization, and find out to what extent does it affect and compete in the world of telecommunication. Besides, an SPSS analysis of the four signs refresh of the first sign is done, as well as the old and most famous sign of the company from its establishment in 1994 (Everywhere You Go).

The language of the signs is translated in Sudanese Colloquial Arabic because it is attractive and easy to be understood by all types of citizens of the country. It is designed in a way that one could feel the sign is directed to him / her precisely, it is thrilling and attractive in a very special way of advertising.

The Arabic sign “*خمنل شنو الليلة*” appears in an interrogative sentence type gives the receiver the freedom of choice and a free space of imagination and detecting of what is coming or what will happen, this way of displaying messages, sheds the light on the company’s keenness to employ the psychological mood of customers and exploit it in marketing.

This analysis is applied on five main tables.

Philosopher Paul Grice’s maxims of speech act are applied on the six signs. They are the maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner.

The analysis is aided with some principles of Profession Genre Analysis developed by John Swales.

Grice’s Maxims of Speech Act

Philosopher Paul Grice’s maxims of speech act are going to be applied on the six signs. They are the maxim of quantity, maxim of quality, maxim of relation, and maxim of manner.

Principles of Profession Genre Analysis

The analysis is aided with some principles of Profession Genre Analysis developed by John Swales. Swales (1990) defines the term “genre” as follows:

John Swales’ Definition of Genre

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. *Swales, John. M. Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Setting Cambridge University Press, 1990.*

John Swales’ Genre Concept

Swales (1990: 24-32) proposes six defining criteria that any discourse community should meet:

1. A discourse community has a broadly agreed set of common public goals.
2. A discourse community has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members.
3. A discourse community uses its participatory mechanisms primarily to provide information and feedback.
4. A discourse community utilizes and hence possesses one or more genres in the communicative furtherance of its aims.
5. In addition to owning genres, a discourse community has acquired some specific lexis.

6. A discourse community has a threshold level of members with a suitable degree of relevant content and discourse expertise. *Swales, John. M. Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Setting. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990 .*

John Swales' Genre Concept is having a great importance in this study because of its strong relation with the application of our main issue, the road signs. The Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) used a thrilling language in the sign or road signs to attract the customers without forcing them to do that, it gives them the freedom to do what they want, but at the same time leads them to the vast communicative community of telecommunication with a certain mechanism of intercommunication between its members.

Tables of Analysis (Statistical – SPSS- and Linguistics Analysis)

The study is subject to some statistical and linguistics analysis displayed in five main tables, then they are subdivided in more expressive tables.

The 5 Tables of Analysis (Statistical and Linguistics Analysis)

Table 10.1 Signs' Sentence Type:

No.	Sign	Sentence Type
1.	What are we doing today?	Interrogative
2.	Doing doesn't do snooze buttons	Declarative
3.	Doing makes a plan	Declarative
4.	Doing dares you to do more	Imperative
5.	Doing doesn't stop at done	Declarative
6.	Everywhere you go	Declarative

This table shows the use of different sentence type, like interrogative, declarative, and imperative verb type in an attractive use of language that leads the person to think, because it gives him the freedom to choose the best without giving orders. Paves the way for imagination and prediction of what is coming.

Table 10.2 Signs' Parts of Speech

No.	Sign	Word	Part of speech
1.	What are we doing today?	What	Question word
		Are	Verb
		We	Pronoun
		Doing	Verb
		Today?	Adverb
2.	Doing doesn't do snooze buttons	Doing	Verb
		Doesn't	Adverb
		Do	Verb
		Snooze buttons	Noun phrase
3.	Doing makes a plan	Doing	Gerund
		Makes	Verb
		Plan	Noun
4.	Doing dares you to do more	Doing	Verb (present participle)
		Dare	Verb (imperative)
		You	Pronoun
		To do more	Infinitive verb phrase
5.	Doing doesn't stop at done	Doing	Verb
		Doesn't	Negative adverb
		Stop	Verb
		Done	Past participle
6.	Everywhere you go	Everywhere	Adverb
		You	Pronoun
		Go	Verb

This table shows the dominance of ‘Do’ verb in the six signs, with different forms ‘doing, doesn’t, done’ as a sign of giving the client more freedom of choice without forcing as will appear in the analysis table below.

Table 10. 3 Use of Verbs in the Signs

No	Number of Signs	Number of words in every sign	Number of whole signs words	Number of Do verbs	Number of declarative verbs	Number of imperative verbs	Number of interrogative verbs
1	6	Sign 1: 5	28	8	4	1	1
2		Sign 2: 5					
3		Sign 3: 4					
4		Sign 4: 6					
5		Sign 5: 5					
6		Sign 6: 3					

This table requires something to do, or to say. It portrays the verb ‘Do’ as a bridge between Can & Done and the distance between them represents the great achievements.

Table 10.4 Effect of Colloquial Sign Translation

No.	Sign	Translation	Degree of interaction
1.	What are we doing today	حتمل شمر الليلة	100 %
2.	Everywhere you go	معك في كل مكان	100 %
3.	Stay connected	اتواصل ما تقيف	95 %
4.	MTN... Start	ابدا حياة مليانة حياة	93 %

This analysis shows the degree of the interaction of the clients towards the colloquial translation of signs which are send in a form of SMS messages, through which the percentage of interaction is measured with 94 % which is a high percentage. The company choose a different policy of advertising, that is the informal use of language, this policy, broke the realty on which language is based, not like any other companies of different specializations who are using imperative type of language. The degree of interaction is majored according to some procedures, like majoring of the number of clients’ interaction with SMS messages and the degree of response, the degree of interaction in the different social media types such as Facebook, Telegram, Twitter, Tick Tok etc.

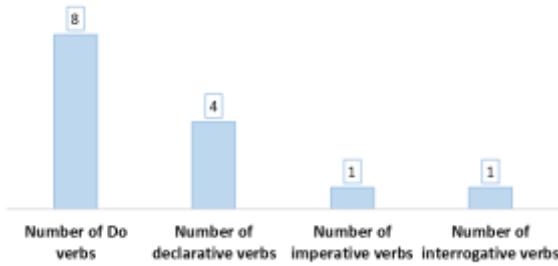
Table 10. 5 Grice Maxim’s Speech Act Analysis

Sign	Maxim quantity of	Maxim of quality	Maxim of Manner	Maxim of relevance	Number of relevant maxims	Number of violated maxims	relevant maxims (%)	violated maxims (%)
What are we doing today?	Relevant	Relevant	Relevant	Relevant	4	0	100%	0%
Doing doesn’t do snooze buttons	Violated (no enough information)	Violated (no useful information)	Violated (no useful information)	Violated (irrelevant to each other)	0	4	0%	100%
Doing makes a plan	Relevant	Violated (vague information)	Violated (ambiguous information)	Relevant	2	2	50%	50%
Doing dares, you to do more	Violated (more words than needed)	Violated (no meaningful information)	Violated (need to be supported)	Violated (need to be supported)	0	4	0%	100%
Doing doesn’t stop at done	Violated (too much information)	Violated (no meaningful information)	Violated (need to be supported)	Violated (vague information)	0	4	0%	100%
Everywhere you go	Relevant	Violated (need to be supported)	Relevant	Relevant	3	1	75%	25%
Total	2	1	2	3	9	15		

This table shows the effect of Grice Maxims theory upon the usage of the six signs, as will appear in details in table number 4.5.E below.

The 5 Tables of Analysis (Statistical and Linguistics Analysis)

Table 10.1.A Use of verbs in the Signs



This table shows the dominance of ‘Do’ verb in the six signs, with different form as a sign of giving the client more freedom of choice without forcing.

Table 10.2.B Grice Maxim’s Speech Act Analysis



Table 10.3.C Total Number Grice Maxim’s Speech Act Analysis in the Signs

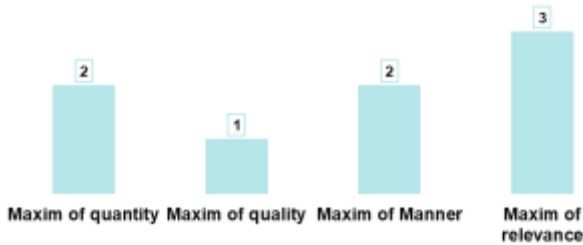


Table 10.4.D The Effect of Colloquial Sign Translation



This analysis shows the degree of the interaction of the clients towards the colloquial translation of signs which are send in a form of SMS messages, through which the percentage of interaction is measured with 94 % which is a high percentage.

Table 10.5.E Association Between Number of Words Depends on Grice Maxim’s Speech Act Analysis:

H0: There’s no association between Number of words in every sign and Grice Maxim’s
 H1: There’s an association between Number of words in every sign and Grice Maxim’s

		Number of words in every sign				(The Chi-Square value)	P-	Correlations	Over all Correlations
		3	4	5	6				
Maxim of quantity	Violated	0	0	2	1	0.343	-0.707	-0.55	
	Relevant	1	1	1	0				
Maxim of quality	Violated	1	1	2	1	0.753	0.158		
	Relevant	0	0	1	0				
Maxim of relevance	Violated	0	1	2	1	0.392	-0.500		
	Relevant	1	0	1	0				
Maxim of Manner	Violated	0	0	2	1	0.343	-0.707		
	Relevant	1	1	1	0				

From table above the chi-square P-value is greater than 0.05, So we accept the null hypothesis(H0), which indicates that There’s no association between Number of words in every sign and Grice Maxim’s. And correlation coefficient measures the strength of the relationship" the negative sign means inverse relationship"

Correlation scale	0	0.01 - 0.19	0.20 - 0.39	0.40 - 0.59	0.60 - 0.79	0.80 - 1.00
	No correlation	Very Low	Low	Moderate	High	Very High

According to the association of correlation of the signs upon Grice Maxim’s speech act theory, a moderate relation is shown.

The maxims of quantity: when the sign words’ number appear as overstatement, when it shows strong opinion or show something is worse than it is

appear, or to try persuading other persons to agree with or in repetition the statements, produce are more details than what is needed.

The maxims of quality: when the sign message is being conveyed less informative or when it produces the statements as metaphor or rhetorical question or irony.

The maxims of manner: when the sign expression is obscure, ambiguous, and disorderly.

The maxims of relation: it describes the sign ability to link its contribution to the issue being discussed.

Results

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that clients follow the maxim of quantity most than other. They follow maxim of quantity with a high relevance rate, maxim of quality with a low relevance rate, maxim of relevance with a moderate relevance rate, and maxim of manner with a high relevance. They violate the maxim of quality most in their interaction, while the maxims of quantity and maxim of manner were of a high relevance. The quality maxim is violated because the business context that is used, is of an easy, open and attractive language translated in the colloquial Sudanese Arabic rather than the Traditional Arabic for more attraction and interaction of clients.

This analysis founded that the company choice of using a different policy of advertising, which is the informal use of language, this policy, broke the reality on which language is based, not like any other companies of different specializations who are using imperative type of language.

Clients interaction with the signs were of a moderate rate specially when rating the interaction of different clients with various concepts, living in an environment full of competitors of the same telecommunication field.

CONCLUSION

This research is made to analyze the language of the signs of business companies specially the telecommunication companies in the area of signs, taking Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN Sudan) as an example. The innovation of the signs in the development of the organization were of a main concern, so as to find out to what extent does it affect and compete in the world of telecommunication, to what extent sign language, could attract the clients. Through the analysis based on Grice's Maxims speech act theory, the research showed a result of a moderate relation, because the (MTN) policy in producing the signs, is to display them in both English and Arabic Language with more concentration on the Colloquial Sudanese Arabic, because in the company's view point, the colloquial translation is open, easy and more attractive to the clients who are of various and different educational and cultural backgrounds. The company choice of using a different policy of advertising, which is the informal use of language, this policy, broke the reality on which language is based, not like any other companies of different specializations who are using imperative type of language.

From the total analysis, we found that, the sign language were really attractive to the clients, and the research served the aim of the study in approving that the Mobile Telecommunication Network (MTN) with its policy of innovation of signs, payed much concentration on the suitable business language, that provide value to all company clients including the type of communication, and built customer loyalty, increase market share, and differentiate itself from its competitors.

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