

Article

Local Voices, Global Impact: The Changing Trend of Indigenous Languages in Transforming MTN Nigeria's Advertising

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Abstract: Integrating indigenous languages in MTN Nigeria's advertising signifies a powerful evolution in the company's approach. It underscores the value of local cultures while driving business growth. This study explores the changing trends in the use of indigenous languages in advertising practice, particularly in the context of globalisation. It focuses on MTN advertisements from 2019 to 2023 and the staff of advertising agencies in Lagos and Abuja. It is anchored on the theory of linguistic imperialism and the reception theory of communication. The study adopted the survey and content analysis research design and used the Snowball and purpose sampling methods. Findings show that while Pidgin is the most widely used indigenous language in advertising, the overall trend in MTN advertisements shows a decline in usage over the years, with occasional increases in specific years. Findings also highlight a growing recognition among consumers, as identified by respondents, of the importance of using Indigenous languages in advertising campaigns for culturally or regionally associated products despite the need for clear consensus on their efficiency. The study recommends advertising strategies that align with local linguistic identities to foster consumer engagement.

Keywords: Advertising; globalization; indigenous languages; MTN; telecommunications

Introduction

In an increasingly globalized world, the role of language in communication and cultural identity has never been more pronounced. Indigenous languages, often viewed as mere relics of the past, are experiencing a resurgence in various domains, including advertising. They are powerful tools for connecting diverse audiences, making the advertising more engaging and interesting. This phenomenon is particularly evident in Nigeria, which is characterised by its rich linguistic tapestry, with over 500 languages spoken across its vast regions. (Olofin et al., 2024). As one of Africa's leading telecommunications companies, MTN Nigeria has recognised the strategic importance of incorporating indigenous languages into its advertising campaigns. This has reflected and amplified the voices of local communities. This practice improves brand resonance, which refers to consumers' emotional connection and loyalty towards a brand, and enhances its cultural relevance and authenticity.

The trend towards using indigenous languages in advertising promotes cultural inclusivity. Challenges the dominance of colonial languages, mainly English, which has historically overshadowed local dialects in formal and commercial contexts (Dalamu, 2017). By embracing local languages, MTN Nigeria aims to foster a deeper

emotional connection with its customer base, which is essential in a competitive market where consumer loyalty is increasingly tied to cultural relevance and authenticity (Akwataghibe et al., 2022). This strategic pivot reflects an understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics at play and highlights the transformative potential of language in shaping consumer perceptions and driving brand engagement.

In addition, adopting indigenous languages in advertising aligns with broader global movements advocating for linguistic diversity and preserving endangered languages (Adeniji & Akinbode, 2023; Oyesomi & Salawu, 2019). In Nigeria, where many indigenous languages face the threat of extinction due to urbanisation and globalisation, MTN's initiatives represent a critical intervention that not only seeks to enhance market penetration but also serves as a catalyst for cultural revival. By examining how MTN Nigeria uses indigenous languages in its advertising strategies, this study aims to explore the intersection of language, culture, and commerce. Thus highlighting local voices that contribute to a global impact in the telecommunications industry. While existing research explores the impact of globalisation on indigenous languages, little attention has been given to its implications for advertising practices in Nigeria's telecommunications sector. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by analysing MTN Nigeria's advertising strategies and cultural impacts.

Literature Review

1. Globalisation and Indigenous Languages

The concept of language endangerment is one of the most significant effects of globalisation on indigenous languages. Economic globalisation has been considered a primary driver of language extinction since it frequently causes Indigenous people to be displaced from their ancestral territories and the degradation of their cultural and linguistic heritage (Balogun et al., 2024; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Megbowon & Uwah, 2023). As Indigenous people are forced to migrate for economic possibilities, they may lose contact with their native lands and languages (Nettle, 1999; Nzeaka & Ehondor, 2025).

Studies such as Nzeaka and Ehondor (2025), Kubota (2025) and Liao et al. (2025) Have shown that economic globalisation has a particularly severe impact on the linguistic diversity of small-scale societies. Smaller communities may find it challenging to maintain their own cultural and linguistic traditions in the face of pressure to adapt to dominant cultures as global markets become more integrated and interdependent (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). This can result in the extinction of linguistic diversity and cultural heritage when dominant languages and cultural norms replace indigenous languages and knowledge systems.

Furthermore, economic globalisation frequently results in English dominating the world. Indigenous languages may be marginalised and stigmatised when English becomes more commonly used as a language of trade, education, and media. This could make it difficult for young people to appreciate the importance of learning and speaking their ancestral languages, contributing to language shift and endangerment. (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006; Samuel & Akujobi, 2024).

Despite these obstacles, many efforts have been made to preserve and promote indigenous languages in the context of globalisation. Community-based language programs, language policy initiatives, and advocacy campaigns have emerged worldwide to encourage the resuscitation of indigenous languages and cultural traditions. Indigenous groups, who recognise the need to preserve their linguistic and cultural legacy in the face of globalisation, have often led these initiatives. (Hinton & Hale, 2013; Huszka et al., 2024). Overall, the influence of economic globalisation on indigenous languages is a complicated and multifaceted problem that requires serious thought and analysis. By examining how economic globalisation contributes to language endangerment among indigenous communities, researchers can better understand the challenges facing these communities and the opportunities to promote linguistic and cultural diversity in the context of globalisation.

2. Use of Indigenous Language in Advertising

The indigenous language is sometimes called the language of a particular place. It is typically the mother tongue of a particular population or community (da Silva et al., 2024; Grenoble & Whaley, 2006). Additionally, the

community culture is reflected primarily in the language. The mother tongue is how communication is made in the cultural environment is made. Human interaction and communication are defined by language. This implies that the advancement and prosperity of society are determined by language. Therefore, it becomes crucial to ensure that the appropriate language is used in the appropriate contexts (Gregory & Carroll, 2018; Ogundeyi, 2023). The socio-cultural importance of language to man is highlighted by the fact that it is strongly tied to culture in the sense that it expresses the shared cultural experiences of the speakers of a specific language. Given the psychological and sociocultural significance of language to man, it is inevitable that the child's mother tongue, as the first language learned to express his or her ideas about himself or the world in which he or she lives, will tend to have some psychological and sociocultural effects on the child.

As a primary communication channel with the public, advertising is a crucial component of a company's interaction with its target market (Salawu & Amenaghawon, 2023; Trachuk et al., 2021). While communicating with the target market, language is critical, and it is not just any language but one that audience members will fully understand. The message has a more significant impact when delivered to a person in a language they can understand (Konovalova & Petrova, 2022; Ogundeyi et al., 2024). For this reason, the use of native languages in advertising is necessary. The target audience must be considered for advertising to be effective and produce positive results. When considering the audience members, their aspirations, beliefs, norms, and values must not be compromised. These cultural values are reflected in their language. Due to the ease with which individuals can recall the words and details of advertisements, the indigenous language is crucial in advertising. People may recall and repeat those commercials both consciously and unconsciously with ease.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on the theories of linguistic imperialism and reception.

Linguistic Imperialism Theory

Linguistic imperialism theory was first postulated by Robert Phillipson in 1992 and has since been expanded upon by other scholars from various fields, including linguistics, cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology. Linguistic Imperialism is the practice of imposing and spreading a dominant language on people who speak a different language, which then leads to the marginalisation or extinction of many minority languages. It is also known as language imperialism or linguistic domination (Phillipson, 1992).

The theory explains the potential consequences of the globalisation of languages in advertising, particularly how dominant languages and cultures can displace and suppress indigenous languages and cultures, leading to language loss and endangerment. Understanding linguistic imperialism is relevant to research work, as it highlights the importance of promoting and preserving indigenous languages in the face of globalisation and cultural domination. The theory addresses the systematic factors contributing to language loss and offers potential solutions to preserve and revitalise endangered languages.

Reception Theory of Communication

Reception theory, developed by Stuart Hall in 1973, asserts that media texts are encoded and decoded. The producer encodes messages and values in his media, which are then decoded by the audience. Reception theory is a critical framework that emphasises the audience's active role in understanding and making sense of cultural products such as advertisements. The theory suggests that the meaning of an advertisement comes from the interaction between the text, video, or audio and the viewer's experiences, values, and cultural background; this means that the meaning of an advertisement is not fixed as it differs for each audience (Hall, 1997).

In the context of the globalisation of languages and changing trends in advertising practices, reception theory highlights the importance of considering the diverse audiences that advertising campaigns target. As advertising messages are distributed worldwide, they must consider the linguistic and cultural differences of the intended audience. This theoretical framework focuses on how audiences interpret and respond to advertising messages. It considers how the globalisation of languages and the spread of advertising practices across different cultures and

languages impact audience reception and interpretation; it also examines how audiences actively engage with advertising messages and how their cultural backgrounds and social experiences shape their interpretations. The reception theory of communication provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of the audience in the globalisation of languages and changing trends in advertising practices. Advertisers must consider their audience's diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and adapt their strategies accordingly to ensure that their messages are received in the intended way.

Methodology

1. Study Design

This study adopted a quantitative approach using a survey and content analysis. The justification for using the survey method is due to the generalisable data involved in the study, which will help identify the changing advertising trends. The content analysis in the study identified the changing trends in language advertising and how globalisation affects advertising practices and language use. This study used quantitative content analysis to numerically measure the frequency and pattern of specific elements within the data set (Kleinheksel et al., 2020)

2. Study Population

The study used two research methods, namely survey and content analysis. For the content analysis, the population was the MTN Nigeria advertisements from 2019-2023. This study focuses on MTN ads broadcasted in the last five years, from 2019-2023. These ads were analysed to determine the existing trends. MTN was purposively picked among the other telecommunication services because it has the highest number of subscribers, with 83.3 million (Maijamaa et al., 2023). It is also the largest telecommunications company in Nigeria, with a market share of 37.9% (Kayode & Alex-Ojei, 2024).

For the survey, the target population is individuals who work in advertising agencies in Nigeria. The number of advertising agencies in Lagos and Abuja was used as the population. According to Nigerian Finder (2023), there are 37 advertising agencies in Abuja and Lagos. Therefore, that number was used as the population for the study.

3. Sample Size

For the survey method, the sample size for this study was 80 professionals working in advertising agencies in Lagos and Abuja. The justification for the sample size of 80 is provided by the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The table states that, for a population of 100 and a margin of error of 0.5%, a population of 80 is acceptable. The study used MTN Nigeria ads broadcasted between 2019 and 2023 for content analysis within the last five years.

4. Sampling Technique

This study used snowball sampling technique. Snowball sampling is a nonprobability sampling method that is helpful when the target population is hard to reach or poorly defined. Since snowball sampling does not involve a random selection of participants, there is no standard formula for calculating the sample size of this study. This sampling technique was used because of the nature of the target population (advertising agencies) to identify and recruit hard-to-reach or specialised participants by leveraging existing subjects to refer others within their network, ensuring access to a relevant and often hidden population. Purposive sampling was also used to select the advertisements to be analysed. MTN aired these ads between 2019 and 2023 to determine the changing trends in their advertising messages. Snowball sampling was an appropriate choice for this study as it facilitated the identification of participants with specific knowledge or experience related to indigenous languages in MTN's advertising. These participants are professionals working at advertising agencies in Lagos and Abuja. This technique is beneficial in studies focused on niche or hard-to-reach populations, where initial participants can help uncover others within their networks, increasing the sample size and diversity.

5. Instrument for Data Collection

The questionnaire was chosen because it allows freedom to express your opinions, gain the information necessary for your study, and anonymity. Another instrument used was the coding sheet. Coding can convert the data produced into effectively justifiable numerical values or symbols instead of explicit features or given variables or signs. The coding sheet was used to collect information on advertising messages, analyse these messages, and identify patterns and trends in the use of indigenous languages in advertising in the context of globalisation. The units of analysis for the content analysis were examined under the following categories: Advert identifier, use of indigenous languages, type of indigenous language used, language code-switching, overall message, use of indigenous cultural elements, use of subtitles or translations, year of advertisement, and other observations.

6. Content Categories

The units of analysis for this study were examined under the following categories:

Use of Indigenous Languages in MTN Adverts

- i. Cultural Identity and Representation: How indigenous languages represent local cultures and identities in advertising.
- ii. Localization of Marketing Strategies: Examining how using indigenous languages helps MTN tailor their advertisements to regional audiences, ensuring relevance and relatability.
- iii. Consumer Engagement and Trust: Analyzing the impact of indigenous languages on consumer trust, loyalty, and emotional connection with the brand.
- iv. Language and Inclusivity: Exploring how including indigenous languages fosters inclusivity and creates a sense of belonging among diverse audiences.

Type/Frequency of Indigenous Languages Used

- i. Language Variety and Selection: Identify the specific indigenous languages used in MTN advertisements, such as Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and others, and understand the factors influencing these choices.
- ii. Regional Distribution of Languages: Analyze the frequency of each language used based on geographic regions and how MTN targets specific areas where these languages are predominant.
- iii. Language Representation and Dominance: Exploring whether specific languages are more prominently featured than others and what this dominance indicates about the market focus or demographic reach.
- iv. Language in Multilingual Campaigns: Studying how MTN integrates multiple indigenous languages in the same campaign, considering the balance between cultural inclusivity and audience segmentation.

Frequency of Indigenous languages used in Each Year

- i. Frequency of Language Usage in Advertising Campaigns: Measuring how often indigenous languages appear in MTN's advertising campaigns and assessing any patterns in language frequency over time.
- ii. Yearly Frequency Trends: Tracking the frequency of indigenous language usage in MTN advertisements over multiple years to identify patterns or shifts in their advertising strategy.
- iii. Comparison of Year-on-Year Language Usage: Comparing the number of campaigns or instances where indigenous languages are featured yearly to assess how MTN's focus on cultural localisation has evolved.
- iv. Impact of Market Changes on Language Frequency: Analyzing how changes in market conditions, such as consumer behaviour, competition, or technological advancements, have influenced the frequency of indigenous language use in advertising.
- v. Event-Driven Language Usage: Examining if specific events, like national celebrations, cultural festivals, or political changes, lead to a spike in using indigenous languages in specific years.

7. Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers created questionnaires, which were distributed virtually distributed using Google Forms. The questionnaires were administered to people working in advertising agencies in Nigeria. Data were presented quantitatively using tables and percentages. It was used to evaluate data derived from the copies of the respondents' questionnaires. A coding sheet was used to analyse data and results for content analysis. A coding sheet was used to analyse data and results for content analysis. The coding guide was developed by defining clear, measurable variables based on research questions, reviewing existing frameworks, and conducting pilot coding to refine the categories and ensure consistent and objective data classification. The coding guide's intrinsic validity was obtained using an index of reliability statistics popularly known as Guilford's intrinsic validity coefficient (Iyappan & Subramani, 2018). This was done by calculating the square root of the reliability score. Two independent coders went through a sample of the ads and coded the contents. Afterwards, the results were compared and checked for consistency. The study also adopted the rule of thumb, as stated by Wimmer and Dominick (2011), that content analysis must typically report a minimum reliability coefficient of about 90% or above when using Holsti's formula and about .75 or above when using *pi* (Robinson et al., 2016).

Results

1. Data Presentation and Analysis

This session involves presenting, analysing and discussing the findings of the study. Adopting the survey research method, 80 copies of the questionnaires were distributed online to individuals who work in advertising agencies in the selected states. All copies of the distributed questionnaire were filled out correctly and returned, representing a 100% return rate. This chapter is divided into two parts; the first part is the presentation and interpretation of the results from the distributed copies of the questionnaire, while the second part discusses the results based on the findings.

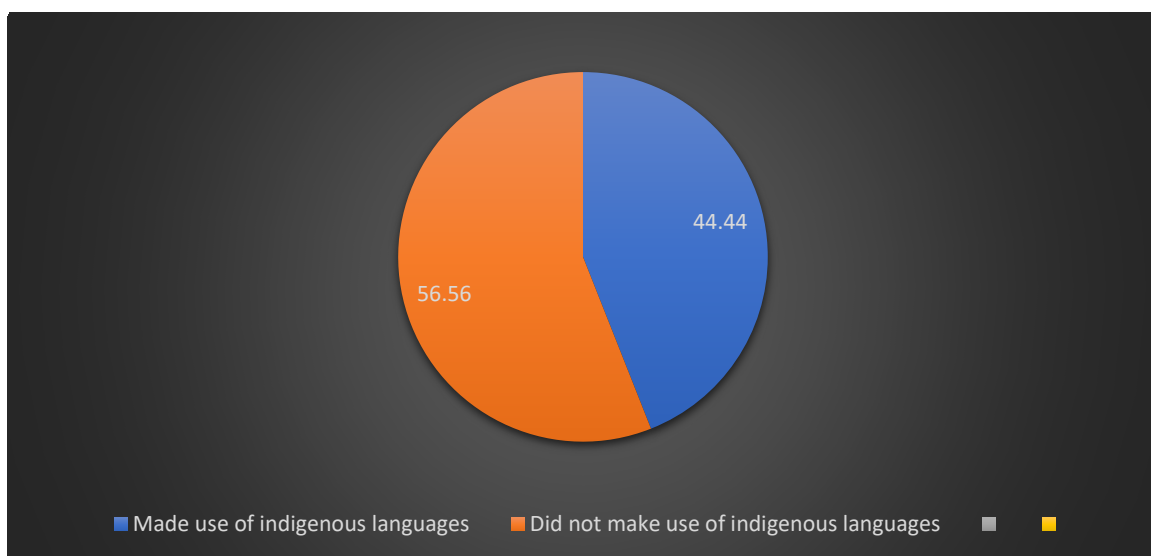


Figure 1. Use of indigenous languages in MTN Adverts

As seen in the pie chart above, more MTN ads did not use indigenous languages than those used. As seen from the pie chart, it can be estimated that the MTN advertisements are mainly done using foreign languages. This suggests that the company can target a broader or more metropolitan audience, probably prioritising languages spoken by a large population or considered more widely understood. This advertisement can reflect marketing strategies aimed at reaching urban areas or specific demographic groups rather than focusing on regional or local communities, which can reflect marketing strategies that speak indigenous languages instead of focusing on regional or local communities.

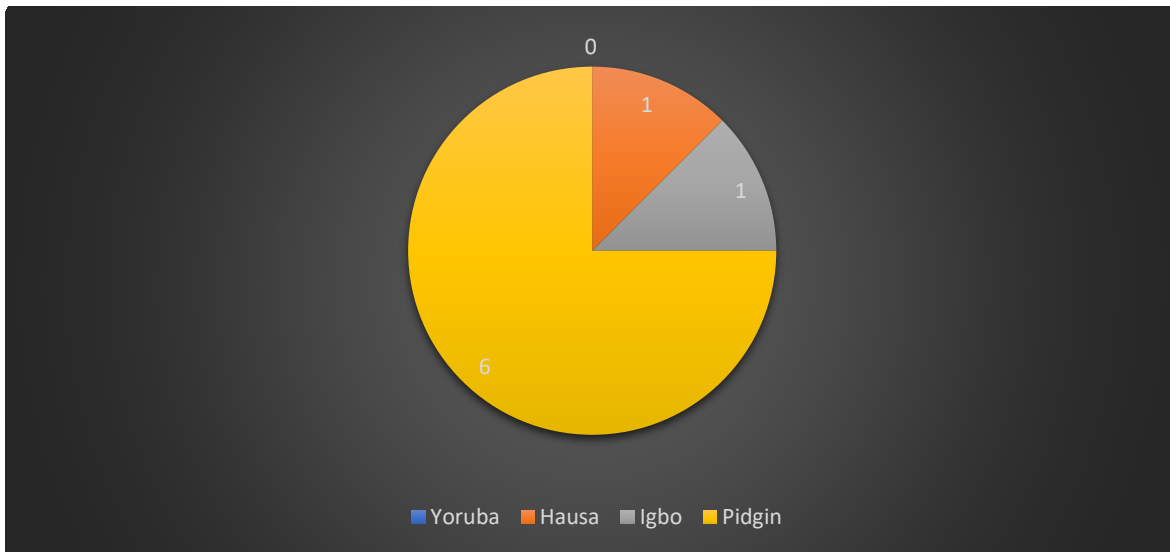


Figure 2. Type/frequency of indigenous languages used

The pie chart shows the frequency of usage of different indigenous languages in MTN ads. The chart indicates that of 8 MTN ads that used indigenous languages, Hausa was used in one advertisement, Igbo was used in one advertisement, and Pidgin was used in six. However, there is no record of Yoruba being used in MTN advertisements.

The chart suggests that when MTN's advertisement included indigenous languages, there was a strong preference for Pidgin, which appeared in six out of eight advertisements using indigenous languages. This suggests that MTN can target a diverse audience, including pidgin -interactions, which are widely spoken and understood in various fields in Nigeria. The limited use of the complete absence of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba may indicate that the advertising strategy of MTN does not focus too much on these special linguistic groups, possibly to see a significant part of the population that speaks Yoruba, Which is one of the largest indigenous languages in Nigeria.

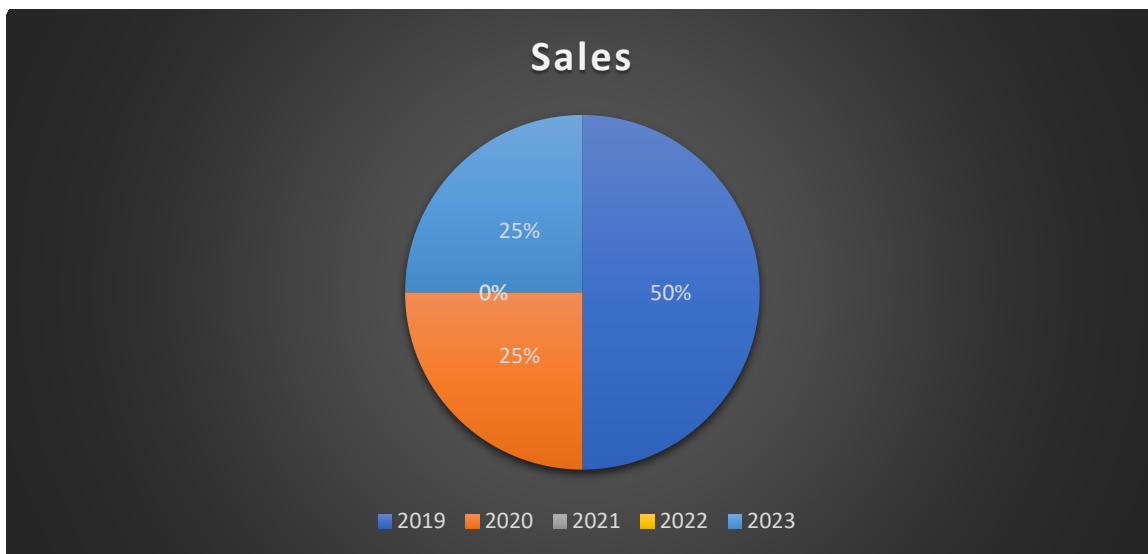


Figure 3. Frequency of indigenous languages used in each year

The pie chart represents the frequency of use of indigenous languages in MTN advertisements for 2019 -

2023. It shows indigenous languages were used in 4 MTN ads in 2019 and 2 MTN ads in 2020. However, there is no record of the usage of indigenous languages in MTN ad campaigns for 2021 and 2022 and advertisements in 2023. The total number of times indigenous languages were used in MTN advertisements in the five years is 8 times.

The data suggests a significant decline in the use of indigenous languages in MTN advertisements over the five-year period. While there was some effort to incorporate indigenous languages in 2019 and 2020, with four ads in 2019 and two in 2020, there was a complete absence of indigenous language use in MTN ads in 2021, 2022, and 2023. This shift could indicate a strategic pivot by MTN to focus on broader, possibly more global or urban-oriented marketing, moving away from regional language inclusivity. The sharp reduction in indigenous language use could reflect changing advertising priorities or the company's desire to reach a more diverse or international audience, potentially overlooking the cultural significance of indigenous languages for a portion of their consumer base.

Table 1: Gender distribution of the respondents

Gender	Percentages (%)
Male	19
Female	81
Total	100
	n= 80

Table 1 indicates the demographic characteristics of the respondents, showing that a higher percentage of the respondents were women, 81%. The 62% difference could be due to more women than men in advertising. It could also mean more females were more exposed to the questionnaire than males.

Table 2. Years of experience of the respondents

Year	Percentages (%)
1 year – 5 years	71.4
6 years – 10 years	14.3
11 years – 15 years	0
16 years – 20 years	4.8
21 years and above	9.5
Total	100
	n= 80

Table 2 indicates the respondents' years of experience, showing that most respondents (71.4%) had 1 to 5 years of experience. The second largest group of respondents (14.6%) had 6 to 10 years of experience. There were no respondents who had between 11 and 15 years of experience. A small percentage (4.8%) of the respondents had between 16 and 20 years of experience, and 9.5% had 21 years or more of experience. The reason for 1 to 5 years having the highest experience could suggest that the study's respondents may be relatively young.

Table 3. Usage of indigenous languages by organizations in creating its advertisement

Year	Percentages (%)
Always	9.5
Sometimes	42.9
Rarely	47.6
Never	0
Total	100
	n= 80

Table 3 indicates that most of the respondents surveyed (47.6%) reported that the organisations they work

for rarely use indigenous languages in their advertisements. Another 42.9% of the respondents reported that their organisations sometimes use indigenous languages in their advertisements. Only a small percentage of the respondents (9.5%) reported that the organisations they work for always use indigenous languages in their advertisements, and none reported that their organisations never use indigenous languages. This suggests that while some organisations recognise the importance of incorporating indigenous languages into their advertising, it is not a common practice. The reasons for this could vary, including a lack of knowledge or resources to produce advertisements in indigenous languages or a perception that it may not be necessary or relevant to their target audience.

Table 4. Frequency of the use of indigenous languages in advertisement

Year	Percentages (%)
Within the last month	9.5
Within the last six months	28.6
Within the last year	28.6
More than a year ago	23.8
Two years ago	4.75
Never	4.75
Total	100
	n= 80

Table 4 indicates that about 28.6% of the respondents indicated that their organisations had used Indigenous Languages in their ad in the last six months and the last year, respectively. 9.5% of the respondents reported the usage of indigenous languages in Advertising within the last month. However, 23.8% of the respondents reported that their organisations used indigenous languages more than a year ago, and only a small percentage of respondents (4.75%) reported that their organisations never used indigenous languages in their advertisements. The least frequent usage of indigenous languages in Advertising was two years ago, reported by 4.75% of the respondents. The results indicate that the usage of indigenous languages in Advertising is relatively low, with most respondents reporting usage within the last year or more.

Table 5. Usage of different indigenous languages

Year	Percentages (%)
Yoruba	37.1
Igbo	11.4
Hausa	5.7
Pidgin	42.9
Others	2.9
Total	100
	n= 80

Table 5 presents the usage of different indigenous languages among the respondents. Table 4.5 shows the usage of different indigenous languages to create advertisements. The results indicate that Pidgin and Yoruba are the languages most frequently used in advertisements, with 42.9% and 37.1% of respondents, respectively, reporting their use. Hausa was the least frequently used language, with only 5.7% of respondents reporting its use. 11.4% and 2.9% of the respondents used Igbo and other indigenous languages in advertisements. The findings suggest that organisations prioritise using indigenous languages that are widely spoken and understood, such as Yoruba and Pidgin, in their advertisements.

	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Globalisation has led to a decline in the use of Indigenous languages in advertising	52.2	34.8	4.3	8.7	100
The use of Indigenous languages in advertising campaigns is becoming less relevant in a globalised world	38.1	47.6	9.5	4.8	100
The use of Indigenous languages in global advertising campaigns can help companies connect with consumers from diverse cultural backgrounds, but it is becoming less relevant in a globalised world	47.6	52.4	0	0	100
The use of Indigenous languages in advertising campaigns is more critical for promoting products that have a solid cultural or regional association	33.3	54.4	9.5	4.8	100
The use of Indigenous languages in advertising makes advertising messages more efficient	19.1	23.8	33.3	23.8	100
The non-usage of Indigenous languages in advertising will limit the reach of advertising campaigns and negatively impact a company's bottom line	14.3	9.5	52.4	23.8	100
The non-usage of Indigenous languages in advertisements will lead to the marginalisation of communities	13.6	45.5	22.7	18.2	100
Advertising agencies are responsible for promoting indigenous language use in advertisements.	19.1	33.3	28.6	19	100 n=80

Table 6 shows a list of results. It shows that most of the respondents perceive that there has been a decline in the use of indigenous languages in advertising due to globalisation. This could have a negative impact on the promotion of indigenous languages, as advertising is a significant means of promoting and preserving languages. Furthermore, there is a growing perception among the respondents that the use of indigenous languages in advertising campaigns is becoming less relevant in a globalised world. It is also important to note that many respondents still value using indigenous languages in advertising campaigns.

Most respondents (100%) believe using indigenous languages in global advertising campaigns can help companies connect with consumers from various cultural backgrounds. This positive perception suggests that leveraging indigenous languages in advertising could effectively engage a diverse consumer base. The results suggest that many respondents consider using indigenous languages important for promoting products with a solid cultural or regional association. The data suggest no clear consensus among the respondents about the efficiency of using indigenous languages in advertising. Although a significant portion of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, a considerable percentage agreed or strongly agreed. Many respondents do not believe that the non-usage of indigenous languages in advertising significantly negatively impacts a company's bottom line. They could feel that other factors, such as product quality, price, or brand reputation, significantly impact sales and revenue.

A considerable number of respondents recognise the potential negative impact of not using indigenous languages in advertisements in marginalised communities. This finding highlights the importance of considering the use of indigenous languages in advertising campaigns and how it can affect different communities. The results also show that many consumers do not believe that advertising agencies are responsible for promoting the use of indigenous languages in advertising. This may suggest that, while consumers acknowledge the potential benefits of using indigenous languages in advertising campaigns, they may not necessarily believe that advertising agencies are responsible for doing so.

Discussion

The results of the content analysis show that the trend of using indigenous languages in MTN advertisements has decreased over the years. In 2019, the frequency of its usage was the highest, with four advertisements, which decreased to two in 2020. There was no record of the usage of indigenous languages in MTN ads for the years

2021 and 2022, indicating a significant drop in usage. In 2023, the usage of indigenous languages increased to two ads again, but it is still lower than the usage in 2019. Therefore, the trend shows a decline in the use of indigenous languages in MTN advertisements over the years, with occasional increases in specific years. This observation is consistent with the more significant trend of decreasing the use of indigenous languages in advertising due to globalisation. Researchers such as Yeboah-Banin (2023) have underscored the impact of globalisation on language use in advertising to support this claim. He noted that the goal to reach a larger international audience has resulted in a move towards employing global languages in advertising efforts, such as English. This trend may be seen in the decreased use of indigenous languages in commercials, including MTN's. Furthermore, the specific example of MTN's advertising tactics supports the more significant trend. The increase in indigenous language usage for two advertisements in 2023 partially reverses the decrease. However, it is crucial to note that this growth is still below the levels witnessed in 2019.

The changing trends in using indigenous languages for advertisements in Nigeria reflect a broader movement towards cultural inclusivity and consumer engagement in a diverse linguistic landscape. Historically, advertising in Nigeria relied predominantly on English and other colonial languages, which often marginalised the country's rich array of indigenous languages spoken by various ethnic groups. (Meyer, 2019). However, recent shifts have seen a growing recognition of the value of local languages as brands strive to connect more authentically with their audiences. A significant trend is the increasing incorporation of indigenous languages into marketing campaigns by major telecommunications companies, such as MTN and Airtel. These companies have begun to use local dialects to enhance relatability and resonate with consumers on a cultural level. By doing so, they acknowledge Nigeria's linguistic diversity, where over 500 languages are spoken. (Usono & Nsit, 2024). This approach has proven effective in fostering brand loyalty, as consumers feel more recognised and valued when advertisements reflect their linguistic and cultural identities. (Ayokunle, 2024).

Furthermore, the rise of digital media is expected to facilitate using indigenous languages in advertisements. With increased internet penetration and smartphone usage, brands are expected to use social media platforms to reach younger audiences. This trend is particularly relevant in urban areas, where bilingualism is common, and consumers often switch between languages based on context. (Eze et al., 2020). Engaging with audiences in their preferred languages can enhance message retention and positive brand perception. In addition, a growing movement among consumers and advocacy groups emphasises the importance of linguistic diversity and cultural preservation. This social awareness has prompted brands to reconsider their marketing strategies, leading to a more balanced approach incorporating Indigenous and global languages. (Adeola, 2023). By embracing local languages, brands contribute to cultural preservation and position themselves as socially responsible entities prioritising community values. These assertions contradict the findings in this study as there is a decline in the use of indigenous languages for ads by a global brand like MTN in Nigeria.

Findings from staff of advertising agencies in Lagos and Abuja show that most respondents (47.6%) rarely use indigenous languages to create their advertisements. This means that most advertising agencies predominantly use the English language to create their advertising messages. However, the respondents noted that pidgin is the indigenous language used by their organisation. This can be attributed to Pidgin being a creole language that has evolved from a combination of English and local languages, making it more commonly used in advertisements by organisations in Nigeria. (Ghevoler et al., 2023). The study by Osoba (2021) supports this finding, highlighting that pidgin is a lingua franca in Nigeria and is not only spoken by illiterate, uneducated, lower class and educated people. Furthermore, most respondents believed that globalisation has decreased the use of indigenous languages in advertising. Isakova (2021) examined the influence of globalisation and English on industrial advertising. He found that language influences the formation of tastes, ideas, industrial policy, and communication in industrial advertising.

There is a growing recognition among consumers of the importance of using indigenous languages in advertising campaigns, particularly for products with solid cultural or regional associations. While there is no clear consensus on the efficiency of using indigenous languages in advertising, a significant portion of the respondents (75.8%) do not believe that the non-usage of indigenous languages significantly negatively impacts

a company's bottom line. However, a considerable number of respondents (59.1%) recognise the potential negative impact of not using indigenous languages in advertisements in marginalised communities.

The effect of globalisation on the use of indigenous languages in advertising, particularly within Nigeria's telecommunications sector, presents a complex interplay between cultural preservation and the influence of dominant global languages. Globalisation has facilitated the rapid spread of information and communication technologies, increasing competition among telecommunications companies such as MTN. As these companies expand their reach, they often adopt advertising strategies prioritising English or other widely spoken languages, which can overshadow indigenous languages. (Meyer, 2019). This linguistic dominance reflects a broader trend in which global brands promote standardised messages that may alienate local consumers who identify with their native languages.

However, the rise of globalisation also opens opportunities for revitalising indigenous languages in advertising. As consumers become more aware of cultural identity and heritage, brands increasingly demand to authenticate with local communities. (Adeola, 2023). In response, some telecommunications companies have begun incorporating indigenous languages into their marketing campaigns, recognising that local dialects can foster stronger emotional connections and enhance brand loyalty. (Eze et al., 2020). For example, MTN Nigeria has successfully integrated local languages into its advertisements, allowing greater relatability and cultural resonance among diverse audiences. (Usoro & Nsit, 2024).

The study's findings are consistent with broader global advertising trends emphasising localisation, cultural integration and consumer participation. This reflects a growing shift towards embracing local identities instead of relying on globalisation or prominent languages. This approach helps increase brand relevance in a specific space and preserve culture. It provides a platform for indigenous languages to thrive in contemporary media. There is a worldwide advertising push to present a more authentic and respectful representation of local culture. This is the trend of language emphasising the importance of preserving cultural heritage, strengthening the vitality of linguistic diversity in a globalised world, and providing commercial benefits and social value.

The implications of Linguistic Imperialism theory and reception theory are significant in understanding the findings related to the changing trend of indigenous languages in transforming MTN Nigeria's advertising. In the context of MTN Nigeria's advertising strategies, incorporating indigenous languages is a counter-narrative to this theory. By embracing local dialects, MTN validates the linguistic identities of its diverse consumer base and actively resists the homogenising effects of linguistic imperialism. Findings from this study affirm that using indigenous languages in advertising allows for a richer and more nuanced reception by the audience. It enhances relatability and emotional connection, as consumers can interpret messages through the lens of their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is consistent with findings suggesting that advertisements incorporating local languages are more likely to elicit positive consumer responses, as they feel recognised and represented. (Meyer, 2019).

Conclusion

The study's analysis indicates that globalisation has contributed to a decline in the use of indigenous languages. Nonetheless, there remains a trace of vernacular, such as Pidgin English, in MTN Nigeria's advertisements. Survey results reveal that advertising professionals acknowledge the diminishing role of indigenous languages due to globalisation. However, they do not believe that using these languages impacts advertising effectiveness. This suggests a lack of awareness among advertising agencies and advertisers regarding the more profound implications of language in their work. The study contributes to advertising and cultural studies by highlighting how integrating local languages can enhance brand engagement, foster cultural identity, and reflect evolving societal dynamics in marketing practices. Future research could explore the long-term impact of indigenous language usage in advertising on consumer behaviour, brand loyalty, and the preservation of cultural identity, as well as the challenges brands face in balancing language diversity with mass-market appeal.

Recommendations

Regarding the findings of this study, the following recommendations are being made:

- i. When creating advertisements that include indigenous languages, advertising agencies and production companies should ensure that the peculiarity of the audience is considered for easy understanding of the message that the brand is passing across.
- ii. The telecommunication industries must incorporate indigenous languages to accommodate and include all diverse cultures. Using indigenous languages is crucial, as it helps bridge communication gaps and ensure that people from various cultural backgrounds can fully participate in their services.
- iii. Advertising agencies and organisations should ensure that they create advertising campaigns tailored to specific regions and cultures. This involves adapting the advertising messages to suit the target audience's language, customs, and beliefs. This can include using specific cultural references, idioms, humour, and language that resonates with the local population.
- iv. The government should create more awareness and relevant stakeholders to understand the importance of using indigenous languages in establishing Nigeria as a global economy. This would be a nationwide PR campaign to change perceptions.

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