

CONTEXT AND DISCOURSE FEATURES IN THE LANGUAGE OF NIGERIAN ONLINE BRAND INFLUENCERS ON INSTAGRAM

Mofayobi Oluwaferanmi. AFE

Abstract

In this age of the internet, brands and organisations have relied on brand influencers as endorsed third parties to promote their services to the public. These brand influencers anchor on the plethora of social media platforms to engage with their followers/audience by making them aware of the latest products/services. Existing literature on brand influencers' marketing shows how they use social media to persuade their audience to purchase the brand's (their clients') products and services, with little focus on the brand influencer's language use. Therefore, using the traditional notion of context and Interactional Sociolinguistics, this study investigates the contexts that mark Nigerian online marketing, as well as the language tools employed by brand influencers to persuade their audience. Twelve purposively selected marketing posts from the Instagram pages of Lily Odior and Obis Ora (Nigerian brand influencers) were used as data for the study. From the analysis of the data, five contexts were discovered to have marked online marketing. They are fashion, culinary art, property procurement, drop shipping, importation and exportation. Also, linguistic tools employed by brand influencers in Nigerian online marketing include literal translation, code switching, capitalization, stress, and borrowing. These tools are employed by the influencers to persuade their audience into purchasing the marketed products and services.

Keywords: Context, discourse features, Nigerian online marketing, brand influencers, Instagram.

Introduction

Marketing by brand influencers dwells on the use of influencers to expose brands' messages to reach the target audience. Brand influencers have been relied upon by brands and organisations as the endorsed third party to drive their services to the public, in this age of ubiquitous Internet (X.J, L. & Radzol, M. et. al., 2017). Brand influencers anchor on the plethora of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X and YouTube to introduce products and services from brands to their online followers. These brand influencers engage with their followers/audience daily by keeping them abreast of the latest products or services by brands. Followers of brand influencers are instinctively loyal to them and trust their opinions about brands' goods and services based on the relationship the brand influencers have developed with the followers over time through dropping lifestyle tips and other content that the followers find quite useful. This relationship is what the brands depend upon to gain those customers from the influencer's pool of followers/audience, since endorsement plays a significant role in achieving a brand's good reputation and business goal.

In the past years before the emergence of social media and brand influencers, marketing/advertisement is done through television, radio and newspapers which characteristically results in a one-way form of marketing. While the business goals are met, it remained to fill the gap of getting feedbacks or reactions from the prospective customers. But with the emergence of social media, certain individuals have established themselves as potential endorsers due to their resource of large audience, based on certain possessed qualities and assets which interest and entertain these audience. With the avenue to receiving feedbacks as one of the social media's features,

brands and companies began moving from the traditional medium of marketing, that is through televisions and radios to pitching their tents with these “individuals”, who were later referred to as brand influencers. The utilizing of brand influencer marketing grew as brands and companies received instant feedbacks and it became evident that brand influencers marketing showcase compelling outcome in both media coverage and consumer persuasion which translates to increase in sales for the brands and companies. Unlike marketing through the traditional medium, the language of marketing by these brand influencers are more friendly and flexible. This also further establishes trust in their followers concerning the brands which these individuals endorse. The language use of these brand influencers is what this study examines in order to determine the features responsible for the outcome of the brand influencer marketing.

Brand Influencers

Brand influencers on social media are individuals with a significant following on social media who are paid by brands to promote their products to said followers, via free products and trips and/or cash payment per promotional post (Kadekova & Holieneinova, 2018). The purpose is to persuade followers to purchase such products. Instagram is one of the popular choice for social media influencing. An influencer has the power to affect the decision of others to purchase because of their authority, knowledge, position or relationship with their audience. It is important to note that brand influencers are not just marketing tools but rather assets that affect social relationship with which brands can collaborate to achieve their marketing objectives. The majority of influencers fit into the categories of celebrities, industry experts and thought leaders, bloggers or content creators and micro-influencers. It should

be noted that influencers do not only affect their followers but also their followers' network. When an influencer has loyal followers they can also drive traffic to the Instagram page of the brand thereby increasing exposure of the page and sales for the brand's goods and services. One of the main foci of a brand influencer which is marketing a brand, can be categorised into two; product marketing and service marketing.

Biaudet (2017) in her research work titled “Influencers Marketing as a Marketing Tool: The process of creating an influencers marketing campaign on Instagram,” explores why companies should use influencer marketing as a marketing tool and the process of creating an influencer marketing campaign on Instagram. The qualitative study, which is based on a semi-structured interview with the Co-founder and CEO of the Finnish influencer marketing agency MONOCHROME, aims to get a deeper understanding of the subject. The discussed themes were influencer marketing in general and the process of influencer marketing campaigns. The results of the research study indicated that influencer marketing on Instagram can be described as a logical process, and that the built-in level of trust between influencer and reader is essentially impossible for a brand to build alone with the consumer, which is a very strong argument for answering why a company should use influencer marketing as a marketing tool.

Burns (2016) examines how the top social media brands use influencer and brand advocacy campaigns to engage fans. The study explains that the importance of brands in the lives of consumers combined with easy access to social media tools that can be used to share brand love has contributed to much online chatters about brands. In conclusion, Burns explored how the organisations behind popular brands are increasing their shared voice on social media, the social media sites used, and how they are being transparent about their involvement in direct brand conversations.

This present study, however, differs from the study above as it seeks to investigate the context within which the marketing occurs and also examines the language of the influencers. The aim of this study, therefore, is to explore the micro contexts under the broad umbrella of the social media marketing context as well as the linguistic devices that brand influencers use to persuade their audience.

Theoretical Framework

Interactional sociolinguistics and Fetzer's traditional concept of context are used in the analysis of data. Interactional sociolinguistics is used to investigate the discourse features, while the theory of context is used to investigate the contexts that mark the language of service marketing.

Context

Context is the depth of meaning negotiation, as it is crucial to the production and decoding of language cues. van Dijk (1977; 11) defines context as all that is needed "to properly understand the event, action, or discourse". Though utterances come with their intrinsic meanings, the context of use determines whether such intrinsic meanings are maintained, modified, or rejected. Odebunmi (2008: 25) describes context as "the spines of meaning". A classification was made by Odebunmi (2016) which bifurcates context in two parts: the broad and narrow parts. This study focuses on the broad context which is the macro concept and the traditional configuration of context. The macro concept according to Fetzer (2004) encompasses the constituting parts of model user, conversational contribution, surrounding and their presupposition. Fetzer further divides this idea of context into three divisions namely: cognitive, linguistic and social contexts. Context is highly relevant to the analysis of this study because communication does not occur in vacuum, it has to be situated in a particular context. Therefore, identifying the context in

which the data occur helps to earn extra or further meaning to linguistic and non-linguistic markers found in the data.

Interactional Sociolinguistics (IS)

Interactional sociolinguistics (IS) studies the language use of people in interaction. The theory holds that because talk cannot completely express the thoughts of speakers, language users must rely on extracommunicative knowledge to infer. IS relies on linguistic and discourse analysis (grammar and text), culture and interactive conventions. Tools for analysis in IS as proposed by Gumperz (1982: 378) include conversational inferencing and contextualization. Contextualization cues include code switching, colloquial style, and shift from formal to informal, borrowing, literal translation, repetition, tone, stress, accent, posture, gesticulation, and facial expressions. This theory is found relevant to this study because of its all-encompassing features, which allow for an in-depth pragmatic analysis of both linguistic and non-linguistic discourse cues.

Methodology

For data, twelve marketing contents were purposively selected from the Instagram pages of two Nigerian brand influencers: Lily Odior and Obis Ora. These influencers are the leading Nigerian female influencers on Instagram and have the largest audience, which is why the study focuses on their pages. These data were selected owing to their richness in discourse features. Attention was given to both linguistic and non-linguistic cues in the data, as they both serve as pointers to discourse features. These data were later subjected to a top down pragmatic analysis approach using the theories above.

Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

The major context that characterises the language of marketing by the brand influencers is evidently the context of internet

marketing. Internet marketing refers to the set of activities carried out on the internet by companies or brands to promote the buying and selling of their products. Internet marketing includes market research, positioning, competitive analysis, market strategy, and promotion of product advertising. Within the broad context of internet marketing are sub-contexts or issues (henceforth referred to as issues) which include: fashion, culinary art, property procurement, drop shipping, importation, and exportation. In this aspect, the data shall be categorised based on their inherent issues.

Fashion

This refers to the area of activities that involve styles of clothing, accessories and appearance in general. For the purpose of this analysis, the focus on fashion includes clothing and styling. The following extracts are considered data for this issue:

Extract 1

@Hustlersquare: Hi ladies, do u look like you are permanently pregnant when you're not? Do you have trouble getting dresses that fit because of your big tummy? Are you still wearing maternity clothes when u shouldn't? We've got the solution right here. If you've tried many waist cinchers without result, worry no more. Alter Ego Steel Bone Waist Trainer and Gym services is here for you!!! Follow @waisttrainingwithugoo to combat diastasis recti, waist fold and slack, slouch posture etc. Join the promo and enjoy price reduction on products and gym services.

Extract 2

@Obis.ora: So, I am currently at the Small World 2019 Food Festival with my Husband. It is a festival where over 30 countries display food. So many flavors. We eat, eat, and

drink. We always attend it annually. They close up the festival with traditional dance performances from all the countries present.

So because I know I will be eating, I don't have the strength to be sucking Belle. So I wore a fitted dress, paired it with my red shoulder bag. And used a scarf from @Wardrobemerchant over my shoulder to blend the red and yellow. Also, because it is a big field and I will be doing lots of walking, I settled for chic sandals.

If your own is to sit at home all day every day, please make time to go out with your hubby and have a good time. While at it, dress well, don't go and disgrace me with your looks. If you are finding it hard to dress up, sign up for my 21-day style challenge, click the link in my bio, or send a DM.

In extract 1, the focus of the influencer is on marketing a brand that offers the sale of accessories for body enhancement as well as a gymnasium service. Body enhancement is a common issue in the context of internet marketing, as most audiences are seeking ways to get their body back in shape either after childbirth or to get rid of excess fat. A statement like 'Do you have trouble getting dresses that fit because of your big tummy?' is a pointer that signifies that the caption is more about fashion than health purposes. Ordinarily, the focus on body weight and tummy reduction usually tilts towards the health conversation, but in the above statement, the influencer insinuated that the caption is more about fashion looking fit for the purpose of fashion (fitting into dresses)- than health purpose. Further, the speaker constructs persuasion almost entirely through carefully staged questions that appear harmless on the surface but are in fact deeply loaded. By asking whether the reader looks “permanently pregnant” or is “still wearing maternity clothes,” the advertiser does not explicitly accuse the reader of having a body issue; instead, the

reader is subtly positioned to arrive at that conclusion independently. This is where inference does most of the work. The meaning is not stated; it is triggered. Within Fetzer's framework, this relies on the assumption that the audience already recognises a flat stomach as the desired norm and will therefore interpret deviation as a problem requiring correction. Persuasion then follows almost seamlessly, as the product is introduced as a ready-made solution to a problem the reader has just been led to acknowledge. The inclusion of medical terms such as "diastasis recti" further strengthens the persuasive force, not necessarily by informing, but by signaling expertise and authority. The cues here are quite revealing: rhetorical questions that demand silent agreement, exclamation marks that heighten urgency, and a direct address to "ladies" that narrows the audience and creates intimacy. Even the shift from problem identification to reassurance ("worry no more") is a cue that emotional relief is part of what is being sold, not just the product itself.

In extract 2, still on the issue of fashion, the influencer started the caption talking about food and drink; however, the latter part of the caption, which ends with the statement 'If you are finding it hard to dress up, sign up for my 21-day style challenge, click link in my bio or send a DM' indicates that the extract is about fashion. The influencer is marketing for a brand that offers wardrobe services. This is another issue/service that is trending on the internet, teaching people how to dress up. Also this excerpt operates differently, relying less on overt problem construction and more on lifestyle narration. The influencer recounts an outing with her husband at a food festival, describing the experience in a way that feels casual and personal, yet it is precisely this informality that carries persuasive weight. The inference here is layered: a good life includes going out, enjoying food, maintaining one's appearance, and sharing experiences with a partner. None of this is stated outright, yet it is clearly implied through the narrative.

The reader is invited to compare their own life to this depiction, and in doing so, may feel a subtle pressure to align with it. Persuasion emerges through aspiration and mild social correction. Statements like "don't go and disgrace me with your looks" are framed humorously, but they carry an underlying judgment that influences standards of appearance. Within Fetzer's model, this works because the audience shares an understanding of social presentation and respectability, especially in public or relational contexts. The cues include code-switching expressions like "sucking Belle," which ground the message in local linguistic reality and make it relatable, as well as exaggeration ("eat, eat and drinkkk") that adds liveliness and authenticity. The shift from storytelling to direct instruction which encourages readers to sign up for a style challenge, marks the point where persuasion becomes explicit, but by then, the groundwork has already been laid through narrative alignment.

Culinary art

This refers to the art of preparing, cooking, presenting, and serving food. For this analysis, the focus is on the art of learning various dishes and the presentation of food in a joint.

Extract 3

@Hustlersquare: Don't miss this one!!! Any food you want at your doorstep!!! @zataefoodmart gat you!!! Affordable, organic and healthy for the entire family!!! Mummy...Daddy...Aunty...Uncle...Oyaaaa!!! Legooo there... Come relax @zataefoodmart barbeque/grill/juicer bar ad give yourself a yummy treat with sharwamma, smoothies and different kinds of fruit juice... Located at plot 22 Ogombo road, opposite Abraham Adesanya estate, Ajah Lagos. Phone no: 07062598197.

Extract 4

Hustlersquare: I am an advocate of getting better at what you do!!! @lyndishes is giving you a chance to be a certified chef... Woyosay??? Plus, they have a posh environment for you to do your long-overdue cooking show... Tag someone who needs this ASAP before they become overbooked, oyaaaa!!! Are you thinking of having a cooking show but have issues finding a kitchen with all the right equipment? @lyndishes has got your back. Also, registration is on for Lyndish's Kitchen hands-on culinary training coming up in March. The 4-week course will cover different types of dishes and different styles of cooking: African dishes, Continental Dishes Italian Dishes. Cost: 150,000. Limited slots available. For enquiries, DM @lyndishes.

In excerpt 3, inference is driven by the promise of convenience and communal satisfaction. By calling out “Mummy... Daddy...Aunty ...Uncle,” the speaker is not merely listing family roles but invoking a shared cultural understanding of food as a collective experience. The audience is expected to infer that this service caters to everyone and fits seamlessly into everyday family life. Persuasion is built through sensory appeal and immediacy. The mention of shawarma, smoothies, and fruit juices activates taste and desire, while the emphasis on affordability and doorstep delivery addresses practical concerns. Within Fetzer's framework, the effectiveness of this message lies in its reliance on shared experiences of busy urban living and the appeal of easy access to enjoyable food. The cues are unmistakable: repeated exclamations that create excitement, the use of Pidgin and colloquial expressions like “Oyaaaa” that establish familiarity, and the inclusion of a physical address and phone number that ground the message in reality and credibility. Even the slight irregularities in spelling or structure contribute to an impression of authenticity rather than polish.

In the fourth extract, the persuasive strategy shifts toward self-improvement and professional aspiration. The influencer begins with a general statement about getting better at what one does, which functions as a moral premise. The reader is expected to agree with this idea, and from there, the transition to the advertised culinary training feels almost logical. The inference is that failing to take such opportunities equates to stagnation, while enrolling signals ambition and progress. Persuasion is reinforced through the promise of certification and the description of a “posh environment,” both of which tap into desires for status and professionalism. Within Fetzer's model, this works because the audience already values upward mobility and recognizes formal training as a pathway to it. The cues include rhetorical questions like “Woyosay??” that invite engagement, as well as detailed listings of course content that lend credibility and specificity. The mention of limited slots introduces scarcity, subtly pressuring the reader to act quickly, while the repeated calls to tag others or send a message create a sense of urgency and communal participation.

Drop shipping

This is a strategy in the retail business where the vendor fulfills orders from a third party and has them shipped directly to the customer.

Extract 5

@Hustlersquare: This lady @titi_fashionstore has impressed me overtime... She has one of the biggest whatsapp groups for wholesalers and drop shippers who wanna do business and make good profit... Start your side hustle today...We all have BSc na hustle end am... No excuses!!! Call/Whatsapp: 08181672330

Extract 6

@Hustlersquare: Are you looking for a full or side hustle???

Why not try @mrken_store???

They are calling on all drop shippers who wanna partner with their already great team...

This simply means more money in your pocket!!! Send them a DM now and start packing money with basin...

The fifth extract draws heavily on shared socio-economic realities, particularly the tension between formal education and financial survival. The statement “We all have BSc na hustle end am” encapsulates a widely recognised frustration, and it is through this shared understanding that inference operates. The reader is expected to accept that a university degree is no longer sufficient, and that alternative income streams are necessary. Persuasion then builds on this premise by presenting the advertised opportunity as both practical and proven, reinforced by the testimonial-like praise of the business owner. Within Fetzer's framework, the success of this message depends on the audience's familiarity with hustle culture and the normalization of side businesses. The cues include informal language that enhances relatability, emphatic punctuation that conveys urgency, and direct contact information that reduces barriers to action. The phrase “no excuses!!!” functions as both motivation and pressure, pushing the reader toward immediate engagement.

The sixth extract is more concise but no less strategic. The inference here is straightforward: joining the advertised team will lead to increased income. This is not argued or explained; it is presented as an obvious outcome, relying on the audience's desire for financial gain. Persuasion is centered almost entirely on profit and belonging, with the idea of partnering with a “great team” suggesting both opportunity and support. Within Fetzer's model, this works because the audience is already predisposed to value financial improvement and may associate teamwork with legitimacy. The cues

are minimal but effective: a rhetorical question that frames the option as appealing, colloquial exaggeration like “packing money with a basin” that dramatises potential earnings, and a direct call to action that simplifies the next step.

Property procurement

This refers to the act of acquiring properties such as lands, buildings, and estates for the purpose of investment.

Extract 7

@Hustlersquare: Our Hustlersquare Estate is in full gear and we are rounding up things as it is... Documents are being prepared and demarcation is in March. Inspection is necessary so that you can see what you want to buy... Journey will take about 3 hours to and fro so come prepared... if it is too far for you please take several seats behind... Thank you!!! Send a text message to 09022769277 to secure your seat as vehicles will be provided for free. You can also drive down if you want... Investment especially land investment is a choice... Don't be a story teller like our fathers...Selah...

Excerpt 7 introduces a more forceful and somewhat confrontational tone. Here, inference is driven by the contrast between those who invest and those who do not. The phrase “Don't be a story teller like our fathers” invokes a generational narrative of missed opportunities, encouraging the reader to position themselves differently. Persuasion is built on a combination of fear and opportunity, suggesting that land investment is both wise and necessary for future security. Within Fetzer's framework, this relies on shared cultural values surrounding property ownership and long-term wealth. The cues include directive language that leaves little room for hesitation, practical details about inspection and travel that enhance credibility, and the offer of free

transportation as an incentive. The use of “Selah,” with its biblical connotation, adds a layer of reflective authority, as though the statement carries deeper wisdom beyond mere advertising.

Importation and Exportation

Importation is the act of bringing goods and services into a country from abroad for sale. It is one of the trending issues within the context of online marketing.

Extract 8

Hustlersquare: Not every time China... Sometimes you wanna import from Vietnam, Turkey, Uk and America but you don't know how... We have found someone to teach you how... This one is first come, first serve... You asked for it... Now it is here!!! Once the class is full you will be locked outside ooh so hurry, ehen!!! Are you in the business of clothes, shoes, bags and other fashion accessories? Then don't miss this training!!! With just #3000, let's teach you how to start a business with 10k. To register, make a payment of #3000 to Uchenna Enemu, 2043662100-UBA. Send proof of payment to 08170177177 and you will be added to the Whatsapp group.

In extract 8, the influencer markets a brand that brings in products from other countries into Nigeria for sale. The issue of importation is made manifest in the online marketing caption by the influencer through statements like “Sometimes you wanna import from Vietnam, Turkey, UK and America but you don't know how... We have found someone to teach you how...” The service which the brand is offering is a training on importation “Are you in the business of clothes, shoes, bags and other fashion accessories? Then don't miss this training”. Also this extract is dominated by urgency and the fear of missing out. The repeated emphasis on limited space and the

warning that latecomers will be “locked outside” create a strong sense of time pressure. Inference operates through the suggestion that this training offers rare access to knowledge about international trade beyond the usual focus on China. The audience is expected to recognise this as an advantage and to act quickly to secure it. Persuasion is reinforced by the relatively low cost of entry compared to the potential benefits, framed as the ability to start a business with minimal capital. Within Fetzer's model, this depends on the audience's familiarity with importation as a lucrative venture and their desire to tap into global markets. The cues include repetition that builds momentum, a conversational tone that maintains relatability, and detailed payment instructions that lend an air of legitimacy and organisation.

Finally, across all the excerpts, what stands out is how consistently inference is used to draw the audience into the message, allowing them to complete the meaning themselves based on shared context. Persuasion rarely feels imposed; instead, it emerges from assumptions the audience already holds. The cues—whether linguistic, stylistic, or structural—serve as signals guiding interpretation, ensuring that the intended meaning is not only understood but also felt.

Discourse features in the language of Nigerian online brand influencers on Instagram

In a bid to be persuasive and connect with their audience so as to gain their trust, brand influencers employ certain linguistic features, which can be seen in use in their captions. Some of these features include contextualisation cues.

Contextualisation

This involves determining what understated extra communicative knowledge contributes to or disambiguates the meaning of what it said and/or (re)negotiating the relevant context. (Verschueren 1999:11). It

is the means through which speakers signal and listeners interpret what the activity is, how each sentence relates to what precedes or follows (Gumperz, 1982: 131). Unlike the language of the old medium of advertisement which tends to be formal and structured, the language of brand influencers is filled with colloquial features which are a shift from the supposed norm of advertisement. These shifts are marketing strategies by the influencers to be able to penetrate into the seat of decision making of their audience. Some of these features can be categorised as 'contextualization cues'. Contextualization cues include prosodic features and verbal signs such as tones, stress, accent and non-verbal signs such as posture, gesticulation, facial expression, hesitation, distractions etc. Contextualization cues also include discourse features and style such as code switching, shift from formal to informal, literal translation, borrowing, calquing and lot more. Some of these features are inherent in the extracts below and they are discussed, including their pragmatic functions.

Extract 9

@Hustlersquare: Do you want to join the leagues of importers cashing out this 2019??? Are you tired of drop shipping or buying from hand to hand??? Contact @raysfashionstore to learn how to be your own boss for 4500naira only... Swipe to see my goods that I quickly ordered not too long ago... I am not sleeping!!! Please don't sleep!!! Pay and get started!!! See you at the top!!!

Here, the influencer is trying to persuade her followers/audience to join the importation service offered by a brand '@rayfashionstore'. She initiated the process by asking a question which she characterised by three question marks. The use of three question marks here represents the stress – a contextualization cue- which marks the asking of the question, which could have been more

evident if the conversation were real life. This stress signifies the importance attached to the question 'Do you want to join the leagues of importers cashing out this 2019???' which is actually more of a rhetorical question. The question is not necessarily meant to be answered by the audience but to awaken their desire for financial success. The same goes for the second question 'Are you tired of drop shipping or buying from hand to hand???' which presupposes that some of the audience member have been engaging in the act of drop shipping or buying directly from retailing vendors, which might not be a financially wise decision since it might cost more. It is also a 'stressed' rhetorical question, which the influencer utilises to signify the urgency of the marketing situation.

There is also the instance of literal translation in the extract, which usage stems from both the shared cultural knowledge and shared situational knowledge of the brand influencers and her audience/followers. Conventionally, the 'I am not sleeping!!! Please don't sleep!!!' refers to the act of lying in bed and resting. But in this context, it is a literal translation of 'Joo ma sun', which the influencer confidently employs for the purpose of motivation. 'Joo ma sun' is a common expression in the Nigerian context. It is a Yoruba expression which has been turned to a slang amongst the Nigerian youth, which is mostly used in conversations on social media. The expression is mostly used to motivate- in a crude manner- the person it is said to. That is, he/she should not miss out on an opportunity. The influencer is confident that her followers will be able to deduce the meaning ascribed to the expression in that context, since a.) the concept of shared cultural knowledge exists between her and her audience, in that they will be able to make out that it is a literal translation of the Yoruba slang 'joo ma sun', and b.) the concept of shared situational knowledge exists between her and her audience, in that, the slang is a 'crude' motivating common slang amongst youths within the Nigerian context. Hence, the influencer employs the usage of the

slang to motivate her audience, which she expects will, in turn, ensure the agitation of the audience towards patronizing the service of the brand being marketed.

Extract 10

@Hustlersquare: See the Awoof photography package just for you! Please don't go and use a quack photographer that will tell you the stories that laptop don crash with all your shakara pose; you will just faint!!!? ? ? Go for a professional... Go for @omobaba_photography to enjoy 25% discount on all wedding packages and let your mind be at rest, ehen!!!

Extract 11

@Hustlersquare: Swipe to see what you can learn for 5k only!!! The Best investment ever is investing in yourself... This is not tied to gender, ANYONE CAN LEARN HOW TO COOK LIKE A PRO... @cookingwithemy has got you on this!!! Oyaaaaa!!!

Extract 12

@Hustlersquare: where do I start from when it comes to @roki_foods??? It is Marketing? Profitability? Content creation? Business acumen? Abeg, if you miss this you have lost a golden opportunity!!! I am already excited for those that will register and join!!! Plus you will now be an exporter abroad!!! Full Package!!! See you in class!!! 15k pere!!!

The instances of borrowing and code switching can be seen in extract 10. These are features employed by the influencer in gaining the attention of her audience and well as convincing them. 'Awoof' in the first sentence, "See Awoof photography package just for you!" is a

borrowed word from the pidgin language. 'Awoof' means freebie or a service without charge. The word was used by the brand influencer to whet the appetite of the audience as a way to introduce them to the service of the brand being marketed with the intention of convincing the audience to patronise the brand. The word could also be seen as a kind of 'bait' to get the attention of the audience and also to keep them engaged on the post so they could get the necessary information been passed because based on the indication in the last sentence '...to enjoy 25% discount...', it is evident that 'Awoof' as intimated by the influencer at the beginning of the caption is not actually a freebie, but a discount on the actual price. Words like 'shakara' and 'ehen' in the caption are also cases of borrowing from the pidgin language. 'Shakara' means showing off, while 'ehen' is an expression that signifies content. 'Ehen' could mean different expressions in different contexts, but in this case, the brand influencer is trying to assure the audience that the brand being marketed can be banked on. Meanwhile, 'shakara'-which means showing off- as used by the influencer is to induce humour in the process of marketing, which is a strategy employed by the influencer to further gain the attention and trust of the audience, which could translate to her marketing success. Just like the borrowed word 'Shakara', the expression 'laptop don crash' which means 'laptop has stopped functioning' is a result of code switching from English to pidgin which is also used to induce humour by the influencer to make light of the situation so that the audience could have a good laugh while her message is being passed. The influencer also makes use of the laughing emoji in the last sentence of the extract to signify her physical facial expression of laughter, which is expected as humour has been introduced during the course of marketing.

In extract 11, the use of capitalisation was employed by the influencer for the purpose of emphasis. Capitalisation often represents raising the tone of one's voice during physical

conversation. This could be due to different reasons, which include emphasizing what is been said to signify its importance. 'ANYONE CAN LEARN HOW TO COOK LIKE A PRO...' is a statement made by the influencer to assure her audience that anything is possible, which is a way of motivating them to register for the service of the brand being marketed, which could in turn translate to the success of the marketing. 'Oyaaaaa!!!' an expression borrowed by the influencer at the end of the caption is used to inform urgency. 'Oya' is a Yoruba word which has found its way into the lexicon of the Nigerian Pidgin. It means hurry. The exclamation marks tripled at the end of the word is also done by the influencer to register the urgency in her voice, which would be evident in a physical conversation.

In extract 12, the usage of the word 'pere' is a result of borrowing from the lexicon of the Yoruba language. 'Pere' means 'only', and in this context -15k pere!!!-, is used by the influencer to communicate that the price mentioned is very affordable while comparing with other brands. This is a marketing strategy often used by brand influencers. Giving the impression that a brand's service is quite affordable as opposed to other brands often prompts the audience to patronise the brand, as it is only natural that people go for low prices. The concept of mutually shared cultural belief and situational belief between the influencer and her audience affords the influencer the freedom to borrow certain words, use certain characters to register the unspoken undertones, and code-switch to other languages – Pidgin English in this case.

Conclusion

The study investigated the context and discourse features in the language of Nigerian online marketing by brand influencers. From the data, five contexts were discovered to have marked online marketing, these include: fashion, culinary art, property procurement, drop shipping, importation, and exportation. The

influencers relied on inference in these contexts to draw the audience into their messages. Discourse features employed by brand influencers in Nigerian online marketing include: literal translation, code switching, capitalisation, stress, and borrowing. These features were employed owing to the familiarity between the brand influencers and their audience. The features are utilised by the influencers as strategy to inspire a positive purchase reaction from their audience.

References

- Arzaghi, S., & Holm, M. (2020). Does influencer marketing lead to purchase: A study from the consumer's perspective. *Högskolan i Borås*.
- Baker, D. S. (2018). The impact of social media influencers as an advertising source in the beauty industry from an Irish female millennial's perspective. National College of Ireland.
- Biaudet, S. (2017). Influencer marketing as a marketing tool: The process of creating an influencer marketing campaign on Instagram. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/134139/Biaudet_Sofie.pdf
- Burns, K. S. (2016). How the top social media brands use influencer and brand advocacy campaigns to engage fans (1st ed.). Routledge.
- Chafe, W. L. (1976). Givenness, contrastiveness, definiteness, subjects, topics, and point of view. In C. N. Li (Ed.), *Subject and topic* (pp. 25–55). Academic Press.
- Fetzer, A. (2004). *Recontextualizing context*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Gundel, J. K. (2012). Pragmatics and information structure. In K. Allan & K. M. Jaszczolt (Eds.), *The Cambridge handbook of pragmatics* (pp. 585–598). Cambridge University Press.

- Gumperz, J. J. (1982). *Discourse strategies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hanifa, D., Natsir, S., & Nurditasari, S. (2021). Pragmatic analysis on social media (Instagram). *Randwick International of Education and Linguistic Science Journal*, 2(1), 96–104.
- Hermanda, A., Sumarwan, U., & Tinaprillia, N. (2019). The effect of social media influencers on brand image, self-concept, and purchase intention. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, 4(2), 76–89.
- Huddleston, R., & Pullum, G. K. (2002). *The Cambridge grammar of the English language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Inna, M. (2020). *Linguistic means of persuasion in social media platforms*. Yerevan State University.
- Iwu, C. G. (2009). Impact of product development and innovation on market share. *African Journal of Business Management*, 4(13), 2659–2667.
- Janda, L. A. (2006). *Cognitive linguistics*. Glossos, 8.
- Johann, M. (2015). *Service marketing*. Agencja Reklamowa TOP.
- Kumari, N. (2015). A survey of studies on sociopragmatic use of linguistic politeness with special focus on Hindi and Japanese. *International Journal of Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, 1(4), 267–274.
- Lim, X. J., Mohd Radzol, A. R. B., Cheah, J. H., & Wong, M. W. (2017). The impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and the mediating effect of customer attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 7(2), 19–36.
- Odebunmi, A. (2006). *Meaning in English: An introduction*. Critical Sphere.
- Odebunmi, A. (2016). Language, context and society: A theoretical anchorage. In A. Odebunmi & K. Ayoola (Eds.), *Language, context and society: A festschrift for Wale Adebite* (pp. 3–33). Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Topalova, N. (2021). *The impact of marketing through Instagram influencers on consumer behavior in the fashion industry: Comparison of millennials and generation Z in Russia*. Geneva Business School.
- Ugolnikova, N., & Yurchenko, O. (2021). Linguistic methods in social media marketing. In *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Computational Linguistics and Intelligent Systems*.
- Van Dijk, T. A. (1977). *Text and context: Explorations in the semantics and pragmatics of discourse*. Longman.