

USING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE IN TELECOM ADVERTISEMENTS: COMMUNICATIVE EFFECTS OF CIGOGO IN TTCL 4G LAUNCH CAMPAIGN IN TANZANIA

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Abstract: In 2017, TTCL, one of the leading providers of telecommunication services in Tanzania, launched an unusual advertising campaign. Its content was culturally and linguistically localised targeting large ethnic groups of Tanzania (the Wasukuma, Wagogo, Wanyakyusa, Waluguru people). Billboards were placed in major cities where these ethnic groups are found. The billboards showed traditional and modern-day activities typical for the regions, accompanied by greetings in the respective indigenous languages. In this way, TTCL planned to create an awareness of their services, to acquire new customers, and to link the use of their services and patriotic feelings. This study analyses the ways 48 Wagogo persons decoded the information from the billboards found across the capital city, Dodoma, and interpreted the intended message. It measures the effectiveness of the advertisement and estimates the effects that the use of Cigogo had on native speakers. The methods used are a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview with subsequent statistical analyses of the data (1-sample proportion test with continuity correction and Pearson's chi-squared test).

Key words: Bantu, Cigogo, modernisation, language of advertisement, language policy, indigenous languages, African languages

1. Introduction

1.1. Linguistic profile of Tanzania

The patterns of language use in Tanzania are typical for African countries. They can be summarised in the so-called trifocal model proposed by Herman Batibo (2005: 18; see Figure 1).

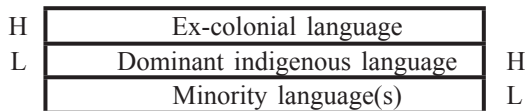


Figure 1. Trifocal pattern of language use in Africa

The trifocal model consists of three types of languages used within a country. These are ex-colonial, dominant indigenous and minority languages. They enjoy unequal levels of prestige. The ex-colonial languages enjoy high (H) prestige because they are used for international (business) communication and in highly formal settings (parliament sessions and court hearings). Dominant indigenous languages enjoy lower (L) prestige than ex-colonial languages but higher prestige than minority languages. They are the lingua franca in multilingual societies. Often dominant indigenous languages are national languages, they are used as the second language by the majority of the population in their everyday activities, in education, and in the media. Minority languages enjoy low prestige, if any. Their usage is limited to family life and traditional ritual activities. Very often minority languages become endangered and even disappear within a short period of time because native speakers often have a negative attitude to them and refuse to pass them on to the next generation.

The linguistic profile of Tanzania consists of one ex-colonial language, English, one dominant indigenous language, Swahili, and at about 120 minority languages that belong to four African language families and are dispersed across the whole range of the endangerment levels – from vigorous (Sukuma) to critically endangered (Aasax).

In Tanzania, minority languages “exist in a hostile political environment. [...] They are not permitted in the schools, in the media, or politics” (Muzale & Rugemalira 2008: 69) because they are seen as a threat to the national unity successfully achieved through the use of the national language Swahili.

1.2. Problem statement

2017 the state telecommunication provider TTCL launched an unusual advertising campaign and broke the unspoken taboo on the use of minority languages in the media. It placed advertising billboards in major cities where large homogenous ethnic groups are found (Wasukuma in Mwanza, Wagogo in Dodoma, Wanyakyusa in Iringa, Waluguru in Morogoro). The billboards showed traditional and modern-day activities typical for the regions accompanied by greetings in the respective indigenous languages (Cigogo, Sukuma, Nyakyusa, Luguru). Guided by curiosity, the author of this paper interviewed the TTCL manager of the Dodoma branch on this topic and found that the campaign had three aims: 1) to acquire new customers; 2) to create awareness of a new service – 4G internet; and 3) to link the use of their services and patriotic feelings. Having been introduced to the idea of the campaign, the author decided to conduct a study about its effects on the main ethnic group of the Dodoma region – the Wagogo people.

1.3. Research questions

The study evaluates the communicative effect of the messages from billboards concerning the use of a minority language (Cigogo). The study was guided by three questions.

1. Are the messages decoded in the intended (expected) way by Cigogo speakers?
2. If not, in what (other) ways are they decoded by Cigogo speakers?
3. What are the consequences of the use of Cigogo in the messages?

1.4. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on the linguistics of advertising (Leech 1966; Geis 1982; Vestergaard & Schröder 1985; Mencher 1990) which defines advertising as “any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods or services” (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 12). In other words, every advertisement is a persuasive text. According to Leech, a persuasive text should fulfil four criteria (Leech 1966: 27–31): 1) attention value; 2) listenability/readability; 3) memorability; and 4) selling power. A successful persuasive text should capture the attention of the target reader. Often this criterion is achieved through the unconventional usage of language (in our case the use of Cigogo). It should be pleasant and easy to read or to listen to. This criterion is fulfilled through the elaborated use of language items. A persuasive text must be recognisable (through rhythms, symbols, pictures, and other suggestive devices) and it should inspire customers to buy and promote the advertised item to other potential buyers.

Besides this, advertising is becoming more involved in the creation of social values and attitudes; it is less concerned with the communication of essential information about goods and services (Dyer 1982: 28). In other words, advertising is also a tool for the creation and dissemination of social norms and values. In our data, this function is enabled to cultivate patriotism among (potential) customers. However, considering the complex sociolinguistic situation in Tanzania, it is necessary to differentiate local patriotism (positive attitude to one’s ethnic background) and national patriotism (positive attitude to one’s national background).

1.5. Methodology

The criteria (1), (2), (4) and creation of social norms (patriotism) are relevant for this study and are treated as nominal variables whose statistic (expected answers vs. other answers) is measured based on the following questions:

- Selling power of the advertisement is assessed with the question (C2) “Do you know what service TTCL advertises with these posters?” (Expected answer: Internet.)
- Attention value of the advertisement is assessed with the question (C5) “Did these ads inspire you to become a client of TTCL?” (Expected answer: Yes.)
- Listenability/readability of the advertisement is assessed with the question (C7) “Is it more appropriate for this phrase to be expressed in two languages?” (Expected answer: No.)
- Attitude to the indigenous language use in the advertisement is assessed with the question (C8) “Is the phrase in your mother tongue appropriate in this ad?” (Expected answer: No.)
- The level of local patriotism invoked by this advertisement is assessed with the questions (C10) “How do you feel about your ethnic background when you are looking at these ads?” (Expected answer: Negative)
- The level of national patriotism invoked by this advertisement is assessed with the questions (C14) “Does using your mother tongue make you feel less Tanzanian?” (Expected answer: Yes.)

The expected answers reflect the target communicative effects of the advertisement (C2, C5, C7, C10, and C14) as well as the linguistic ideology (C8, C10, C14) implied by the trifocal model of language use introduced above. It is worth mentioning that the “patriotic” goal of the advertisement conflicts with the linguistic ideology which downplays the importance of minority languages. To answer research questions (1) and (2), the distribution of expected vs. other answers is analysed through the 1-sample proportion test with continuity correction in the R programming environment [`prop.test()`] to identify the pattern of distribution. The distribution is normal when its probability value $p \leq 0.05$. Otherwise it is random (Levitsky 2007: 167–168). The random nature of distribution suggests that the advertisement does not fulfil the corresponding function.

Further, to answer the research question (3), the hypothesis is tested: “the use of Cigogo in the advertisements influences the

fulfilment of the criteria mentioned above”. For doing so, the respondents are divided into two groups: ad hoc taboo supporters (who find using Cigogo in the advertisement inappropriate) and taboo opponents (who find using Cigogo in the advertisement appropriate). For these groups, other statistics (answers to questions C2, C5, C7, C10, and C14) are summarised in contingency tables which are used to perform the Pearson’s chi-squared test. It consists in the calculation of the chi-square statistic, which at $p \leq 0.05$ indicates that the two categorical variables are related to each other, otherwise they are not related. For calculations, a fourfold contingency table is created for every question (see Table 1).

Table 1

Sample fourfold contingency table

C8 \ C_n	Expected outcomes	Other outcomes	Totally
Taboo opponents	a	b	a + b
Taboo supporters	c	d	c + d
Totally	a + c	b + d	a + b + c + d

The chi-squared coefficient χ^2 is calculated in the R programming environment via the `chisq.test()` function (if one of the cells contains a frequency value less than 10, Yates’ correction is applied).

Data came from 48 questionnaires and interviews with Cigogo speakers based on 6 picture stimuli – photographs of the billboards (see Appendix A). Totally 48 respondents (24 males, 24 females) took part in the interviews conducted in June-July 2018 in Dodoma city and the neighbouring Hombolo village. The respondents are dispersed across the following age groups: under 20 years – 11, 20–29 years – 27, between 30–39 years – 7, between 40–49 years 2, above 50 years – 1. Their level of education varies in the following way: no education – 2, primary school – 29, secondary school – 13, university degree – 4. Occupation: students – 1, farmers – 8, employees – 30, businessmen – 9.

2. Findings

2.1. Answer summary

The answers to the diagnostic questions are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of the answers

Question	Variable	Expected answers	Other answers
C2) Do you know what service TTCL advertises with these posters?	Selling power	Internet – 2	SMS – 4, in-country calls – 38, international calls – 4
C5) Did these ads inspire you to become a client of TTCL?	Attention value	yes – 28	no – 20
C7) Is it more appropriate for this phrase to be expressed in two languages?	Listenability/readability	no – 21	yes – 27
C8) Is the phrase in your mother tongue appropriate in this ad? C9) If yes/no, why?	Attitude to the indigenous language use	no – 14: it is discrimination – 1, Cigogo is more practical than Swahili – 1, mixing languages is a bad habit – 3, it is not practical – 8, because of the positive attitude to Swahili – 1	yes – 34: because of the positive attitude – 11, because it is practical – 23

Table 2 (end)

Question	Variable	Expected answers	Other answers
C10) How do you feel about your ethnic background when you are looking at these ads? C11) Please indicate the reasons for your answers to the previous question.	Local patriotism	ashamed – 1: Swahili is the only national language; not emotional – 3: using mother tongue is a usual practice	proud – 44: language is being advertised – 13, language is being maintained / developed – 6, because of the positive attitude to the language – 25
C14) Does using your mother tongue make you feel less Tanzanian?	National patriotism	yes – 8	no – 40

At first glance it seems that the expected answers are outnumbered by the other answers, except for the question C5. However, the observed proportions need to go through a significance test before drawing any conclusions from these data.

2.2. Proportion test

The results of 1-sample proportion test with continuity correction, performed in the R programming environment [`prop.test()`], are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3

Proportion test with p-value

Question \ Answer	C2	C5	C7	C8	C10	C14
Expected	2	28	21	14	4	8
Other	46	20	27	34	44	40
$p \leq 0.05$	V	X	X	V	V	V

The statistical analyses of the proportions of expected vs. other answers to the diagnostic questions reveal their distribution patterns. The calculated p-value suggests that answers to questions C5 and C7 are distributed randomly ($p > 0.05$), the advertisement does not catch the attention in the intended way (C5) and does not stand out with its listenability/readability (C7). The distribution of the answers to the questions C2, C8, C10, and C14 is not random ($p < 0.05$). The nature of the answers suggests that the selling power of this advertisement is insignificant (C2) concerning the advertised service (Internet) however it is significant concerning an associated service – in-country calls. 38 out of 48 respondents perceived telephony as the promoted service ($p < 0.05$). Moreover, the campaign boosted positive attitudes to the mother tongue (C8) and indigenous identity (C10) which is perceived as a part of the national identity (C14). Therefore, only one criterion out of four was achieved, the advertising campaign did not promote the target service but raised both local and national patriotism. Further statistical analyses address the question whether the use of the indigenous language influenced the communicative effects of the advertisement.

2.3. Tests on contingency tables

The chi-square statistic of the variable “selling power” (C2) by the variable “attitude to the language use” (C8) is calculated based on Table 4 exhibiting the observed frequencies of the answers.

Table 4

**Crosstabulation of the variable
“selling power” by attitude to the language use**

C8 \ C2	Exp.	Other	Total
Taboo opponents	1	33	34
Taboo supporters	1	13	14
Total	2	46	48

With Yates' continuity correction, for this table $\chi^2 = 0.018$ and $p = 0.895$ (> 0.05). Therefore, there is no contingency between the two variables.

The chi-square statistic of the variable "attention value" (C5) by the variable "attitude to the language use" (C8) is calculated based on Table 5 exhibiting the observed frequencies of answers.

Table 5

**Crosstabulation of the variable
"attention value" by attitude to the language use**

C8 \ C5	Exp.	Other	Total
Taboo opponents	21	13	34
Taboo supporters	7	7	14
Total	28	20	48

With Yates' correction, for this table $\chi^2 = 0.184$ and $p = 0.668$ (> 0.05). Therefore, there is no contingency between the two variables.

The chi-square statistic of the variable "listenability/readability" (C7) by the variable "attitude to the language use" (C8) is calculated based on Table 6 exhibiting the observed frequencies of answers.

Table 6

**Crosstabulation of the variable
"listenability/readability" by attitude to the language use**

C8 \ C7	Exp.	Other	Total
Taboo opponents	14	20	34
Taboo supporters	7	7	14
Total	21	27	48

With Yates' correction, for this table $\chi^2 = 0.058$ and $p = 0.811$ (> 0.05). Therefore, there is no contingency between the two variables.

The chi-square statistic of the variable "patriotism" (C10) by the variable "attitude to the language use" (C8) is calculated based on Table 7 exhibiting the observed frequencies of answers.

Table 7

**Crosstabulation of the variable
“local patriotism” by attitude to the language use**

C8 \ C10	Exp.	Other	Total
Taboo opponents	2	32	34
Taboo supporters	2	12	14
Total	4	44	48

With Yates' correction, for this table $\chi^2 = 0.147$ and $p = 0.702$ (> 0.05). Therefore, there is no contingency between the two variables.

The chi-square statistic of the variable “national patriotism” (C14) by the variable “attitude to the language use” (C8) is calculated based on Table 8 exhibiting the observed frequencies of answers.

Table 8

**Crosstabulation of the variable
“national patriotism” by attitude to the language use**

C8 \ C14	Exp.	Other	Total
Taboo opponents	6	28	34
Taboo supporters	2	12	14
Total	8	40	48

With Yates' continuity correction, for this table $\chi^2 = 0.020$ and $p = 0.888$ (> 0.05). Therefore, there is no contingency between the two variables.

Tests on the contingency tables show that the variables (attention value, listenability/readability, selling power, local patriotism, and national patriotism) do not depend on the variable “attitude to the language use” (the fact that the advertisement ignores the taboo on using indigenous languages in public spheres).

3. Conclusion

The analyses of the data show that TTCL's 4G Launch Campaign partially satisfies the criteria of a successful persuasive text. The campaign was successful in raising patriotism and in the promotion of in-country call service although the advertisement focused on the Internet service. Other goals of the campaign (attention value and listenability/readability) were not achieved. In other words, the messages of the campaign were decoded only partially. Pearson's chi-squared test showed that these results were not influenced by the respondents' negative or positive attitude to the use of the an indigenous language in the public sphere. In other words, the use of Cigogo in the advertisements did not block (although maybe did not contribute to) the decoding of the intended messages. However, the analyses of the qualitative data suggest that the use of Cigogo significantly contributed to the high level of patriotism that the campaign generated among the speakers of Cigogo who perceive their indigenous identity as a part of the national identity.

The qualitative data also show that the campaign had a positive effect on the speakers' attitude to their mother tongue. They believe that the use of Cigogo in advertisements links the language to the development agenda and turns it into the advertised object.

Appendix. Picture stimuli used in the study

home

4G
LTE

**Mbukwenyi Idodomya,
Tumefanikisha.**

Welcome to Generation T. Solved

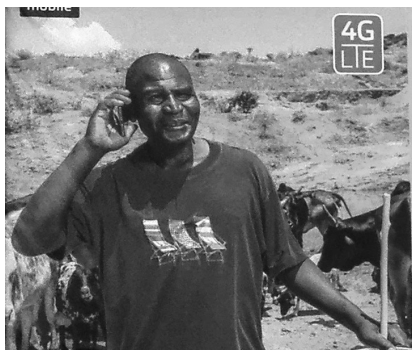
TTCL

4G
LTE

**Mbukwenyi
Idodomya,
Tumefanikisha.**

Welcome to Generation T. Solved

TTCL




mobile

4G
LTE

Mbukwenyi
Idodomya,
Tumefanikisha.

Welcome to Generation T. Solved



business



4G
LTE

Mbukwenyi Idodomya,
Tumefanikisha.

Welcome to Generation T. Solved





mobile

4G
LTE

**Mbukwenyi Idodomya,
Tumefanikisha.**

Welcome to Generation T. Solved





mobile

4G
LTE

**Mbukwenyi Idodomya,
Tumefanikisha.**

Welcome to Generation T. Solveid



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