

## Research Article

# AN ANALYSIS OF TESTIMONIAL DISCOURSE ASA PERSUASIVE STRATEGY IN THE MARKETING OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN CAMEROON

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### ABSTRACT

It is a common practice nowadays in Cameroon for marketers to utilise people who have used their products to tell the world how good and effective they are. This phenomenon is gaining ground in newspapers and journals, on the radio, television and social media applications such as Phoenix and social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram just to mention but these. This paper examines language categories used in testimonies by some Cameroonians in the promotion of their goods or services. It also explores the role they play in the commercial world. This study uses descriptive qualitative design. This is because, the focus is on messages that were identified from the testimonies of people who used the products of these marketers. Data was collected on the social media application Phoenix and the social media platform WhatsApp. Furthermore, data was also culled from messages that were sent to this researcher by Mobile Telephone Network,(MTN) Cameroon. Random sampling technique was used to select 50 testimonies used by some of these marketers in the promotion of their goods and services. This exercise was conducted in the month of June, July and August, 2024. Insights were drawn from document analysis. The analysis revealed that three types of testimonies were used. They are quote, video and influencer testimonials. They were used to market health products especially fertility products, goods and the services of some multinationals such as MTN. The analysis further disclosed that marketers in Cameroon made use of language resources in their testimonies such as verbs, adjectives, adverbs, nouns, conjunctions, tenses, sentences, voice, capitalisation, tone and mood to convince the public to go in for what they are selling. These language features made the testimonies of the users of these products and services to be credible to the public, thus making the messages appealing to the public.

**Keywords:** analysis, testimonial discourse, persuasive strategy, marketing, goods and services.

### INTRODUCTION

There are so many business men and women in Cameroon today. They range from the one-man business to multinationals. These business people produce a variety of goods or render a variety of services to their target customers. This explains why in Cameroonian markets one can see locally made products or imported products. In fact, Cameroonian towns, cities and markets are inundated with different types of goods and services. These goods and services are made known to the target consumer through advertising. According to Dominick (2007:321), advertising is any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services, usually paid for, by an identified sponsor. To Stanton (1991:452), "advertising consists of all the activities involved in presenting to a group, a non-personal, oral or visual, openly sponsored message regarding a product, service or idea. This message is disseminated through one or more media and is paid for by an identified sponsor". Advertising is the structured communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about products, services and ideas by identified sponsors, through various mass media (Arens, 2008, p. 7). To Asemah (2011:14), the essence of advertising is to make known, in order to sell or buy goods and services. The power of advertising depends on the use of creative and planning skills to achieve its objectives. According to Douglas (1985:3), the purpose of advertising is to inform and make known or make an effort to persuade a heterogeneous audience about a variety of things through different ways. Advertising in this paper is seen as the use of language, whether verbal or non-verbal to convince a cross section of a people to go in for what a merchant is commercialising.

It should be noted that goods and services are made known to Cameroonians either on radio, television, in newspapers, journals and on billboard posters through language. Language is part of human life and plays an important role in a social environment. Language is a tool to interact with social beings and a way to express their feelings in daily life. Language as a means of communication plays a very important role in social relationships among human beings (Fuh & Nouhou, 2023: 1). People use language for different reasons. For example, doctors use language in hospitals to consult and prescribe drugs to their patients. Teachers use language to instruct their pupils and students at primary, secondary and university. Similarly, these learners also use language to ask their instructors questions when they have not understood what has been taught. Lawyers and magistrates use language in law courts to either sentence someone for a crime committed or to exonerate the accused person. In the same vein, the clergy also use language to instruct their congregations about the word of God so that people can be saved from their sinful lives. Artists use language to entertain their audience through music. Comedians also use language to amuse their audience too. Football coaches use language to communicate with players during a football match (Fuh, 2024c). Language may be used to establish or maintain friendly relations (Mbagwana, 2002, p.99). We can go on and on and on. This is to show how vital language is in the lives of human beings. Marketers in Cameroon use various techniques to carry out advertising campaigns, with a view to persuade consumers to buy goods and services. Some use words, phrases, clauses, sentences and celebrities. In the context of this study, one of such technique used by the business community is testimonials. Testimonials are a powerful tool for businesses seeking to attract new customers and increase sales. They provide an effective way for marketers to showcase their products or services in the most advantageous light, while also providing potential buyers

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with the assurance that they will receive quality goods from reliable sources. As such, recommendations have become increasingly important for the marketing of goods and services.

The word testimonial means different things to some critics and researchers. According to Asemah (2011, p. 3), testimonial is when a product is sold by using words from famous people or an authority figure. It is a propaganda technique that uses words of an expert or a famous person to promote a particular idea. For example, a sports person is shown recommending a brand of sport shoes. Generally, people idealise celebrated figures. Testimonials are defined as customer feedback or reviews that can be used to promote a product, service, or brand (Wilson, 2023). From a legal perspective, testimony is the transmittal of information for use in prosecution (Friedman, 2005). Coady (1992), sees testimony as a reliable source of knowledge. The term "testimony" in everyday usage in English is confined to reports by witnesses or by experts given in a courtroom, or other formal setting (Fricker, 2004). Testimony in the context of this study means reliable information provided by potential customers who have used a product for one reason or the other and it helped them. For this reason, these people tend to encourage the public by providing witnesses of how they used this product for these reasons and it was a panacea for their issues that had been a torn to their flesh. There are three types of testimonies according to Potel (2022), used in the promotion of goods or services as discussed below.

### Types of Testimonies used in the Promotion of Goods and Services

The following are some types of testimonies used by some marketers in Cameroon in the promotion of their goods and services.

#### ✓ Quote testimonials

Quote or text testimonials are a common type of testimonial advertising as they are quick, easy to receive, and cost effective. Quote testimonials can be acquired via emails and quickly added to one's testimonial page, homepage, or product page. The form may range from just one sentence to a short paragraph and can add extra credibility to one's marketing. It is often a good idea to accompany a quote testimonial with the customer's name, link to their website or social media, and photo.

#### ✓ Video testimonials

Video content is rapidly overtaking written advertising content and creates the most authentic and engaging type of testimonial. Viewers can retain as much as 95% of information seen in a video compared to 10% when reading. Video testimonials offer a powerful way to share a person's brand or product experiences, and they can be used on a number of different marketing channels including brand websites and social media channels. Given that many people have smartphones now, customers can quickly and easily share their thoughts and recommendations. Viewers can also see that the testimonials are genuine and created by real customers like them. In Cameroon, traders sent messages to people through their smartphones to inform them of the need and urgency of securing a particular good or service.

#### ✓ Influencer testimonials

The term influencer has gone from just being a marketing buzz word to describing a key role in a brand's marketing and advertising strategy. Influencer testimonials are effective because their names are already known and trusted. When you share a great review from

a well-known influencer, it demonstrates to your audience that you are credible and trustworthy. Influencer testimonials are a powerful way to promote one's business. Up to 49% of people rely on influencer recommendations to know what product to buy. In the context of this paper, traders in Cameroon make use of influencer testimonials such as footballers, musicians and comedians through language to influence the public to buy what they are selling as seen in the picture below.

Picture 1

Showing Samuel Eto'o a football celebrity, testifying about the services of MTN Cameroon



Picture taken at Ndokoti on the 25<sup>th</sup> of June, 2024

Tributes are beneficial to the business world because they offer many advantages that make them an essential part of any successful marketing plan. Wilson (2023), identifies the following as benefits of declarations:

- **Authenticity**

Testimonials give potential buyers genuine feedback from real people who have used the product or service. Hearing first-hand accounts helps establish credibility, providing evidence about how well the product works for others.

- **Trustworthiness**

People tend to trust recommendations from their friends more than adverts or other sales material. This is especially true when it comes to online purchases; reviews from previous customers can help reassure those considering making a purchase decision.

- **Personalisation**

Reading testimonials gives prospects a chance to get personal stories about how someone has benefited from using one's product or service, which adds an extra level of emotionality to one's message. It also allows you to target different types of consumers by selecting specific stories that relate best to their needs and interests.

- **Enhanced credibility**

Having multiple witnesses reinforces your brand image as reliable and trustworthy; building confidence in both new and existing clients that they have made the right choice when investing in you.

The aim of this paper is to examine language features used in testimonies by marketers in Cameroon in the promotion of small and large scale businesses. It also explores the role they play in the marketing domain. This study is guided by three research questions:

- ❖ What are the types of testimonies used by Cameroonians in the propagation of their businesses?
- ❖ What are the linguistic features used by business people in Cameroon in testimonies when selling their goods or services?
- ❖ What role do they play in the commercial world?

This work would be useful to scholars since it could enlarge and widen their knowledge of the relevant use of testimonial language in the marketing milieu.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many studies have been conducted on the use of testimonies in the promotion of goods especially in the western world. This situation is different in Cameroon as studies in this area of research are lacking or completely absent. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research on the topic in order to complete and update the established linguistic studies. Asemah (2011) examines the relationship between testimonial advertising and its effects on consumer behaviour in terms of product patronage with the aim to identify why celebrity endorsement is regarded as the most effective form of advertising for certain products. Findings indicate that advertising plays some functions in an organisation, such as helping organisations to win more customers for their goods and services. Findings further demonstrate that testimonial adverts help organisations to win more customers, because they believe that when celebrities endorse the product or service, it is alleged that the product is good. Rollinsetal. (2021) looked at the effects of different types of endorsers (expert vs consumer vs. credibility) in testimonials vs. non-testimonial message contexts on consumers' responses toward direct-to-consumer advertising and found that perceived source credibility and similarity was significantly different across the endorser types, and the expert endorser (a doctor) generated the highest mean level of source credibility, while consumer endorsers generate the highest mean source similarity. The interaction of endorser type and message type significantly impacted advert believability and skepticism. The endorser type factor had a significant impact on the dependent variables only in the testimonial advert condition. Shimp et al., (2007) also explore testimonial writing as a path to enhance brand evaluations and focus on whether consumers' natural tendencies to exaggerate their testimonials might mitigate these evaluations. The study indicated that indeed, brand evaluations suffer when consumers exaggerate their testimonial statements. Martin et al., (2008) in two experiments, show how a consumer's susceptibility to normative influence (SNI) offers useful insights into the effectiveness of two types of testimonials: a typical person endorsement (Study 1) and a celebrity endorsement (Study 2). Findings indicate that in forming their evaluations, high -SNI consumers place a greater emphasis on the testimonial than on the attribute information. In contrast, low-SNI consumers are more influenced by attribute information. A mediation analysis shows that advertising attitudes for high-SNI consumers are mediated by testimonial thoughts, whereas the attitudes for low-SNI consumers are mediated by their attribute thoughts. Meei (2016) looks at how the legal systems in Taiwan, the U.S., Canada, Mainland China, and Germany stipulate endorsement and testimonial advertising, including the principle for disclosure of material connections, whether the material connections are reasonably expected by the general public, the regulations of disclosure methods, definitions and identifiability of endorsement and testimonial advertising, and online endorsement and testimonial advertising. The study found that the latest case of endorsement and testimonial advertising in Taiwan currently deemed a violation of Fair Trade Act is a sanction case of unfair competition formed through online word-of-mouth marketing by a foreign company.

Holden et al., (2021) in their study reported how commercial advertising helped them to understand the health services available to them and the influence that marketing had upon their choices. The results revealed certain consumer beliefs, for example; the title of 'Dr.' was believed to indicate skill and high levels of training (81.0%), with 80.3% agreeing incorrectly that the use of the title was strictly regulated. Participants reported to have a higher confidence in their own abilities (71.2%) than the public (52.8%) in assessing health advertising. The level of self-confidence increased with higher education level and decreased by age ( $p < 0.05$ ). Testimonials were reported to be lacking in reliability (67.7%) and that they should not be used in healthcare in the same manner as they are used in other industries. Only 44.8% of participants reported that they felt confident to spot a review that was not written by a genuine user of a service.

Sela (2022) delved into why advertisers use testimonials in the marketing realm and found that they do so for these reasons. First, research has shown that testimonials are an effective way to build trust and credibility with potential buyers. Second, they serve as social proof, proving that others have had success with the product. Third, they help build confidence by assuring potential customers that others like them have had success with the product. Hafez (2021) scrutinised how social media marketing (SMM) initiatives affected Bangladesh's banking industry's brand equity (BE). Moreover, brand loyalty and brand trust are looked at as a possible mediator between SMM activities and BE. A structured questionnaire was used to gather information from 289 banking clients in Bangladesh, and structural equation modelling was used to test the hypotheses (SEM). The outcomes confirmed that SMM activities have little direct impact on BE. In addition, brand love completely mediates the connection between SMM efforts and BE. Also, it was discovered that brand trust had a partly mediating effect on SMM activities and BE. Shin et al. (2023) explored the impact of the positivity of testimonial reviews on consumers' decision-making to address conflicting views about testimonial review strategy of a hospitality business. The business needs to display (1) moderately positive reviews to decrease potential customers' skepticism or (2) extremely positive ones to provide them with a push. The analysis showed that extremely positive reviews are a more strategic choice for testimonial review strategy, indicating that a hospitality business needs to focus on showcasing its strength through testimonial review.

Many studies have been conducted on advertising discourse in Cameroon from different postures. Some researchers have investigated advertising discourse in Cameroon from a stylistic perspective (Foneng, 1994, Foncho, 1997, Tchhoffouo, 2004, & Fomukong, 2016), others from a pragmatic viewpoint (Epie, 2016), from a semiotic analysis (Eka' Aban, 2009, & Gemo, 1998), from a lexical stance (Acha, 2007 & Ngum, 1989), from a symbolic perspective (Emvana, 2000), from a persuasive angle (Mbe, 2001, Fuh, 2004, 2011, 2018, Atemba, 2007, & Ekane, 2007), from a bilingual perspective, (Ngu, 1990, Ngo, 2006), from a communicative stand point (Jean, 2013), from a marketing perspective (Kuoh, 2014, Zonese, 2014, Raisa, 2012, Ajasse, 2004, Agiam, 1998, Andong, 2004, Wouodjom, 1998, Ekellem, 1992 & Ghaila, 1998), from the language that is used in advertising (Fuh, 2023) from the viewpoint of linguistic inequalities in terms of language (Nkamta & Ngwenya, 2017) and from a deictic perspective (Fuh, 2024c). From the above information, it could be said that a lot has been documented on the language of advertisement from countless perspectives, however no study has delved into the language of testimonials used as a persuasive tool in the promotion of goods and services either out of Cameroon or in Cameroon, although it has been observed that in Cameroon marketers always make use of language devices in testimonies on television, radio and on social media platforms

especially with the advent of the social media to name but these so that they can convince their target customers to buy their goods and services.

## METHODOLOGY AND ANALYSIS

This paper used document analysis as a qualitative research method to investigate the motivations, the content, and the effects of the language of testimonies used by Cameroonians in the promotion of their goods or services in Cameroon, be it on billboard posters or social media applications such as Phoenix and social media platforms such as WhatsApp. In qualitative research, data analysis allows researchers to delve into and understand the behaviours, experiences, and meanings that people associate with the phenomenon being studied. Armel and Shizhou (2022) as cited in Creswell (2009) state that several scholars (Cohen *et al.*, 2017; Creswell, 2012; Herrera & Merceron, 2013; Snape & Spencer, 2003) have identified interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisuals as data sources in qualitative research. Documents are a type of data that a researcher can use to back up his or her research. Electronic or printed documents are both acceptable (Bowen, 2009). The pieces of information provided in documents are usually not created by the researcher, but rather result from the collection and compilation of images and texts that documents issue, experiences, and regulations, activities among other things (Bowen, 2009; Ingleby, 2012). Documents can be primary or secondary. Primary documents consist of field notes from participant observations, interview transcripts, and photographs, to name but a few, while secondary documents include demographic data, records, surveys, database information, and much more (Schensul *et al.*, 1999). According to O'Leary (2014), documents come in three varieties: public records, personal documents, and physical evidence. Personal documents comprise emails, blogs, individual websites, journals, and so on; public records consist of reports, handbooks, institutional/company websites, and syllabi, just to mention but these; and physical evidence comprises photographs, artifacts and posters (Taylor *et al.*, 2015). The researcher in this paper mostly used primary data obtained on Phoenix as a document testifying the goodness of a product used by some customers, text messages sent to the phone of this writer testifying why he should continue to use the services of MTN Cameroon and video messages sent on some WhatsApp platforms by some Cameroonians who market health products, computers and household items among others. Document analysis is considered a systematic examination and interpretation of documents to gain insight and knowledge, Bowen (*ibid*) and Taylor (*ibid*). Analysing documents entails coding data to create themes from which realistic conclusions or meanings can be drawn. From Bowen's (*ibid*) perspective, document analysis is frequently used to corroborate findings from other data sources, such as interviews, in a process known as triangulation. This paper examines language resources that emerge from the data, be it documents, texts or photos and class them according to themes and the role they play in the advertising industry following the document analysis method. It should be pointed out here that errors in terms of graphology are from the texters of the messages and not from this researcher. The analysis is conducted as follows:

### A. Adjectives

One device commonly used by marketers in the promotion of their goods and services so as to easily attract the attention of their potential customers is adjectives. According to Maciver (1986), an adjective is a word which qualifies or adds to the meaning of a noun. According to research on words in the 1960s by Leech (1966), the most frequently used 20 (adjectives) words in advertising are: new,

good/better/best, free, fresh, delicious, full, sure, clean, wonderful, special, crisp, fine, big, great, real, easy, bright, extra, safe, fresh. The collected corpus exhibits the use of some adjectives as indicated in the bold words in the sentences below.

1. This tea contains **natural** ingredients that provide you with energy and vitality, helping you feel like the man you're meant to be.
2. 200MegaNjoh  
Dear VICTOR FUH, It's your LAST DAY to enjoy your 200 MB **free** data offered by MTN. Open Ayoba to enjoy <https://i.ayo.ba/YgBb/i>. Saturday, June 29, 2024 at 8:35 AM
3. 200MegaNjoh  
You received 200MB, because at MTN we don't change **good** habits. Open Ayoba and activate your bonus <https://i.ayo.ba/YgBb/i>. Thursday, July 4, 2024 at 8:45 AM
4. 200MegaNjoh  
Take advantage of the hundreds of games **available** on AYOBAMA GAMES FOR **FREE**. Click <https://i.ayo.ba/YgBb/games> and win 200MB. Monday, July 15, 2024 at 8:42 AM
5. 200MegaNjoh  
Open your Ayoba App receive all the sports news in **real** time and get your 200MB internet. Go on <https://i.ayo.ba/YgBb/games> and win 200MB. Thursday, July 18, 2024 at 8:41 AM
6. 200MegaNjoh  
You don't know what you're missing! **Unlimited** gaming and chat without data and only on AYOBAMA. Click <https://i.ayo.ba/YgBb/chat> and win 200MB. Monday July 29, 2024 at 8:33AM
7. 8799  
For 237674831259. The rewards are **amazing!** 20, 000F/d, 200, 000F/w, Suzuki Spresso/month! Simply send "OK" to 8799 (2n free then 200U/d). July 19, 2024 at 5:10 PM

These adjectives are used to demonstrate that what is being sold is good, see sentence 1 and the advantages one shall derive from buying the product or service, see sentences 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

### B. Verbs

To make the information accessible to the audience effectively, the advertiser is very conscious and skillful with the choice of words he/she uses. The aim of the advertiser is quite specific. He/she wishes to capture the attention of the members of a mass audience and by means of persuasive words to persuade his/her customers buy the product. He/she wishes to make the public behave in a particular way such as "MTN the better connection." Both linguistic and psychological aspects are taken into consideration in the choice of words by the advertiser. Psychologists have been extremely interested in the persuasion techniques used by advertisers. The school of psychoanalysis founded by Sigmund Freud, has been particularly active in studying advertising. The main contribution of this field is that it has exposed how persuasion techniques by advertisers are directed to the unconscious region of the human mind. This region contains our hidden wishes, memories, fears, feelings, and images that are prevented from gaining expression by the conscious part of the mind. In addition, this unconscious region as the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung suggested, can be divided into two regions: a personal unconscious, containing the feelings and thoughts developed by an individual that are directive of his/her life schemes and a collective unconscious, containing the feelings and thoughts developed cumulatively by the species that are directive of its overall life pattern (Beasley & Danesi, 2002, p.32).

In the context of this paper, advertisers in Cameroon are very selective when it comes to the use of verbs when marketing their wares. The collected corpus indicates that these marketers mostly

use action verbs to illustrate the efficacy of the products or services they are vending as demonstrated in the bold words in the sentences below. Furthermore, they also use these linguistic categories to inform the public of the advantages they shall derive if they subscribe to their service. See sentence 2 and 3 below. It is believed that these verbs shall motivate the audience to go in for the goods and services advertised.

1. Rapid Credit  
**Keep** the conversations going with MTN PROLONGATION You can **borrow** your calls and internet bundles now and payback when you want Dial \*121#. Monday June 17, 2024 at 8:47 AM
2. Rapid Credit  
Do you need Airtime urgently? Don't **worry** we've got you. With MTN Prolongation, you can Borrow airtime, **enjoy** and payback later dial \*121# now. Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 9:37 AM
3. Prizes to **win**.
4. FAYA-FAYA Man Power Tea is a powerful herbal tea designed to **boost** your sperm count, **enhance** your manpower, and **improve** your performance in bed.
5. Your capacity and ability to **perform** well in bed is what defines you as a man not the millions in your account.
6. This tea contains natural ingredients that **provide** you with energy and vitality, **helping** you feel like the man you're meant to be.

### C. Nouns

To make the discourse appealing to the public, advertisers often make use of nouns. These nouns mostly target the product or service sold, see the bold words in sentences 1 and 7 below, they demonstrate that what is being sold is not expensive, see sentence 6, that the product is powerful, see sentence 5 and that the product is a solution to the problem the patient is facing, see sentences 2, 3 and 4.

1. **FAYA-FAYA Man Power Tea** is a powerful herbal tea designed to boost your **sperm count**, enhance your manpower, and improve your performance in bed.
2. This tea contains **natural ingredients** that provide you with **energy** and **vitality**, helping you feel like the man you're meant to be.
3. All the ingredients are made from **God-given natural herbs** that boost the body and help increase **sexual performance**.
4. This product offers a **permanent solution** because it tackles **erection issues** from the **root** and your body system would have adapted to the curing process, making the cure permanent in your body.
5. And in less than 5 days from today, your woman will praise you because you would have become a **sex-machine**.
6. **Promo** lololo Bye Bye to fast pouring and Small Size.
7. With **MTN Prolongation**, you can Borrow airtime, enjoy and payback later.

### D. Adverbs

Vendors also make use of adverbs to win customers' interest to what they are selling as seen in the bold words in the sentences below. It should be understood that an adverb is a word which modifies or adds to the meaning of a verb, an adjective or another adverb. The adverbs used here reveal that the product is very good. For example, see the adverbs really and very in sentences 2, 3 and 4. In the same vein, regularly is also used to show that the product is working wonders in the life of this person. This explains why the person uses it all the time. On the other hand, before and from today in sentence 1 is equally used to showcase the goodness of this product as the

consumer of the good shall get the expected results on the spot. He/she does not have to wait for a month or two.

1. You don't have to wait for 30 or 60 days **before** you start seeing results. Starting **from today**, you will notice the effect of this product on you.
2. My brother this item **really** works oooo, I am about to take the second pack.
3. This product is **very** helpful.
4. I am 53 and am **very** sexually active with my wife.
5. I use it **regularly**.

### E. Pronouns

Pronouns constitute another linguistic feature in the testimonies of marketers. Pronouns of the first and second person: "I, you, we and your" outnumber the other pronouns as used by these traders in their adverts. This is because "I, you, and we" help to create a friend-like intimate atmosphere between the seller and the buyer. Besides, such pronouns help move and persuade the audience. They make the public to believe in what these advertisers are selling. Advertisements with lots of pronouns of the first and second person are called gossip advertisements. Here, gossip has not the least derogative meaning. It originated from old English *god sib*, meaning friendly chat between women. Advertisements in form of talking with friends, closely link the advertisement and the audience. The audience will easily accept a product, a service or an idea as if a good friend recommended them. The use of second addresses "you" tends to shorten the distance between the product or the producer and consumer, as if the fabricator or the publicist is speaking to you face to face, making sincere promises and honest recommendations. By doing so, the advert slogans stand a better chance to move the receiver or customer to action, because the receiver feels that he/ she is being thought of and taken care of and that he/ she is the centre point of the product. Commenting on the use of words in alcohol advertisements, Fuh (2024d) as cited in Gonzalez et al., (2002) portrayed that the use of pronouns such as "you" in advertisements is important in that it addresses the reader, it creates a direct connection between reader and advertiser and appeals to the reader's emotions. In the context of this work, words especially "I, you, your, we" as used in the sentences below appeal to the emotions of the public in relation to the products sold and the services offered by these people as indicated in the bold words in the sentences below.

1. This product offers a permanent solution because it tackles erection issues from the root and **your** body system would have adapted to the curing process, making the cure permanent in **your** body.
2. And in less than 5 days from today, **your** woman will praise **you** because **you** would have become a sex-machine.
3. This tea contains natural ingredients that provide **you** with energy and vitality, helping **you** feel like the man you're meant to be.
4. **You** received 200MB, because at MTN **we** don't change good habits.
5. Open **your** Ayoba App receive all the sports news in real time and get **your** 200MB internet.
6. **You** don't know what **you're** missing!
7. I am 53 and am **very** sexually active with my wife.
8. I use it regularly.

### F. Conjunctions

Conjunctions are another grammatical item used by salespersons in the promotion of their goods and services. According to Carter et al. (2005) conjunction means joining. Halliday and Hasan (1976: 239-40)

identified four categories of conjunctions. They include additive such as and, causal, for example, so, temporal, for example, then and adversative such as yet. This paper has used additive, adversative and causal conjunctions as seen in the bold words in the sentences below.

1. This product offers a permanent solution **because** it tackles erection issues from the root and your body system would have adapted to the curing process, making the cure permanent in your body.
2. And in less than 5 days from today, your woman will praise you **because** you would have become a sex-machine.
3. You received 200MB, **because** at MTN we don't change good habits
4. Other similar products out there will only drain your money monthly, **but** when you use this product, it solves the problem once and for all.
5. My partner hasn't enjoyed me in a very long while **but** your product has given me confidence and happiness.
6. Your capacity **and** ability to perform well in bed is what defines you as a man not the millions in your account.
7. "She Go Respect You **And** You Will Be A PROUD MAN" (She will respect you and you will be a proud man).

The vender in sentence 1 uses the causal conjunction because to justify why the public should go in for what he/she is selling. For example, the product shall tackle the consumer's erection issues from the root and also make the cure permanent. In the same line of thought, the same expression in sentence 2 explain why the wife shall praise him. She shall acclaim the husband because he has become the type of man that she has always desired-a sex-machine. Furthermore, because in sentence 3 is used to elucidate why this potential customer received 200MB. He/she did so because with MTN, they do not change good habits. The purveyor uses adversative conjunction but in sentence 4 to validate that this product is different from the other ones. This is because, it resolves the issue once and for all unlike others that shall only drain the resources of this person. Similarly, this same item is used in sentence 5 to show how efficient it is. The partner has not enjoyed the wife for a long time, but after using this product, it has healed him and reestablish the confidence and happiness of this woman. The additive conjunction and in sentence 6 is used to determine who a real man is. To this seller, a real man is someone who has these two things: ability and capacity to satisfy his wife in bed and not the amount of money he has in his account. In other words, someone who lacks these two things is not a man. It could be averred that this merchant is calling on those who are not yet men to buy this product so that they can become who they are supposed to be. The adversative conjunction in sentence 7 is used to reveal that this man lacks two things from the spouse. They are respect and his pride. It could be suggested that this man was not respected by the consort in the past because he was not performing his duty as a man in the bedroom. However, after consuming this medication, the wife is going to respect and be proud of him.

## G. Tenses

A more productive way of making a product known in marketing is through tense aspect. Tense indicates whether an action is happening at the moment, whether it has already happened, or is still to happen. The collected corpus indicates that testimonial discourse uses the following tenses:

### A. The Present Tense

According to Azar (1992, p. 3), the simple present tense expresses daily habits or usual activities, as in 1 and 2.

1. He reads the Holy Bible every day.
2. I usually eat lunch at the cafeteria.

Furthermore, the simple present tense expresses general statements of facts as in 3 and 4.

3. Babies cry.
4. The earth revolves around the sun.

In sum, the simple present tense is used for events or situations that exist always, usually or habitually in the past, present and future. Marketers in Cameroon deploy the present tense in testimonies to show the concordance and the concomitance between the propositional content and their utterance. It is the tense of timelessness, of performance and the tense of truth. Salespersons use this tense to convey their messages, to actualise facts and also to make the product appealing to the target buyer. The following are sentences from the corpus used in the present tense.

1. Other similar products out there will only drain your money monthly, but when you use this product, it solves the problem once and for all.
2. Your capacity and ability to perform well in bed is what defines you as a man not the millions in your account.
3. FAYA-FAYA Man Power Tea is a powerful herbal tea designed to boost your sperm count, enhance your manpower, and improve your performance in bed.
4. Prizes to win.
5. With MTN Prolongation, you can Borrow airtime, **enjoy** and payback later dial \*121# now.

Markers such as "drain, solves, perform, boost, enhance, improve, win, and enjoy" encourage the public to buy what the advertiser is selling.

## H. Syntactic Features

Syntactic features in this paper mean types of sentences used in testimonies by sellers in Cameroon in the promotion of their goods or services. According to Mbangwana (2002, p. 125), sentences could be studied in the light of their rhetorical functions, as to whether they are issuing instructions (imperative mood), raising questions (interrogative mood), making statements (declarative mood), expressing imagination or wish (subjunctive mood). The following are types of sentences identified from the collected data.

### A. Declarative Sentences

To show that what they are selling is the best, marketers always position declarative sentences in their adverts to attract the attention of the target buyer. A declarative sentence makes a statement. We have these examples from the collected data.

1. Please my sister, I need that item again, it's really helped me [...]
2. It worked like magic.
3. My brother this item really works ooo, I am about to take the second packet.
4. This product helps you get back your spark in the bedroom, no matter how long you have been battling with erectile dysfunction issue or how it is, or the number of products you have tried in the past without getting any results.
5. You have received 200MB valid up to midnight.

The user of this product in sentence 1 and 2 is declaring to the public how the product was of immense help to them. It worked like magic. For this reason, the person wants to go in for a second packet as indicated in sentence 3. This presupposes that the product is the magic solution to the problem this person has faced for a very long

time. On the other hand, the marketer tells the customer in sentence 5 that he/she has received 200MB. This means that if one is a potential patron of MTN, that person shall be receiving 200MB each time. So, MTN is inviting those who have not yet subscribed to their services to do so, so that they can also be receiving 200MB each time and other bonuses.

## B. Exclamatory sentences

To illustrate that what they are selling is the best and that there can be no other good as compared to what they are selling, advertisers often use exclamatory sentences to persuade the target population buy what they are selling. An exclamation expresses surprise. The following are exclamatory sentences used in the testimonies of some customers.

1. Promo !o!o!o Bye Bye to fast pouring and Small Size.
2. The rewards are amazing! 20, 000F/d, 200, 000F/w, Suzuki Spresso/month!
3. You don't know what you're missing! [...]
4. Don't Worry Anymore!
5. "Na you be the next Lucky man!" (You are the next lucky man!)

The sentences above denote a mood of surprise. For example, the speaker in sentence one is surprised that the product being sold is on promotion. They are promoting the product to men who are suffering from premature ejaculation and whose penis is not big. This presupposes that the product which is being sold is not expensive. Similarly, sentence two which also denotes a mood of astonishment urges the population to make use of the opportunities that are at their disposal by gaining the amazing rewards as shown in the advert. Following the same pattern of thought, the marketer in sentence three wants to exemplify how good the product he/she is selling is. By using this expression, the seller encourages the buyer to buy what he/she is selling. The speaker in sentence four is shocked that this person is still worried when the solution to his problem is just near him, instead of grabbing it with both hands. He is therefore calling on him to go in for the product.

## C. Negative sentences

Advertisers often use negative words such as: no, none, nothing, never and not to show the uniqueness and unparalleled quality of their products. Similarly, Cameroonians also make use of these linguistic features in their testaments to demonstrate the uniqueness and unparalleled quality of their goods and services as exemplified in the sentences below.

1. You don't have to wait for 30 or 60 days before you start seeing results.
2. He won't even let me rest again.
3. He went on for 3 rounds yesterday, he hasn't done that before.
4. Not being able to meet this obligation can lead to problems in your relation, like losing one's respect, losing self-confidence, and worse off, losing your woman to another man.
5. Your capacity and ability to perform well in bed is what defines you as a man not the millions in your account.

From the sentences above, these marketers urge their audience via these language features to buy what they are selling. For example, in sentence 1, don't is used to indicate how efficacious the product is. This is because as you start using the product, you will have immediate positive results. In the same vein, won't in sentence 2 validates that the product is doing wonders to this person. At first, he will allow the wife to rest as much as she can. However, the situation has changed because he does not allow the helpmeet to rest again

after using this product, reason why he went on for 3 rounds the previous day, something he has not done before as shown in sentence 3. Not as used in sentence 4 reveals what shall happen to that man who cannot satisfy the spouse in bed: he shall lose his respect, self-confidence and the worst thing is that he shall miss his companion to another man since he cannot satisfy her in bed. Not is equally used to exemplify that in marriage satisfying a partner sexually is what makes someone a man and not the amount of money one has in a bank account. In other words, if you are rich and cannot make your mate happy in bed so that she sings your praises, then you are not a man. You are a woman.

## I. Voice

One cannot discuss forms of advertisements to the exclusion of voice. Voice indicates whether the subject is acting or being acted upon. The collected data divulges the use of active voice. Active voice establishes that the subject of the verb is acting or doing something. The following are examples of sentences from the corpus which are in the active voice.

1. You don't have to wait for 30 or 60 days before you start seeing results.
2. Your capacity and ability to perform well in bed is what defines you as a man not the millions in your account.
3. The rewards are amazing! 20, 000F/d, 200, 000F/w, Suzuki Spresso/month!
4. Keep the conversations going with MTN PROLONGATION.

An advert like "The rewards are amazing! 20, 000F/d, 200, 000F/w, Suzuki Spresso/month!" suggests that users of such a product shall gain something positive and relevant. The same applies to sentence one, two and four.

## J. Tone and Mood

Another form of advertisement is tone. Tone is the quality of a writer or a speaker's attitude and feeling towards the subject matter or audience (Protus, 2007, p. 503). On its part, mood is the feeling a piece of writing arouses in the reader. Different types of moods include: happy, sad, warning, peaceful, advisable, surprise, loving, optimistic, excited, serious, objective, etc. To detect the tone of these testimonies, we shall consider the choice of words. Tone and mood are very important in advertisements because the messages provide comments and advice on the type of subscription people should go in for, they invite people to buy what they are selling and they illustrate that what they are marketing is the best as validated in the sentences below.

1. You don't have to wait for 30 or 60 days before you start seeing results.
2. Your capacity and ability to perform well in bed is what defines you as a man not the millions in your account.
3. FAYA-FAYA Man Power Tea is a powerful herbal tea designed to boost your sperm count, enhance your manpower, and improve your performance in bed.
4. Win every day 1 plot of land.
5. The rewards are amazing! 20, 000F/d, 200, 000F/w, Suzuki Spresso/month!
6. Keep the conversations going with MTN PROLONGATION.

The tone in the above adverts is soft and appealing, and is textually inscribed by italics. The advertisers do not oblige people to buy what they are selling as seen in the words *powerful*, *boost your sperm count*, *enhance your manpower*, *win every day*, *the rewards are amazing*. This suggests that freedom of choice is allowed. The use of

language here is more than persuasive to influence the emotions of people to go in for what the publicists are selling.

## K. Capitalisation

Another feature of testimonial discourse in advertising language in Cameroon is the use of capital letters as exemplified in the sentences below.

1. Keep the conversations going with MTN PROLONGATION.
2. DISCOVER THE SECRET THOUSANDS OF CAMEROONIAN MEN ARE USING TO BOOST THEIR BEDROOM PERFORMANCE.
3. YOU CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO PERFORM WELL IN BED IS WHAT DEFINES YOU AS A MAN NOT THE MILLIONS IN YOUR ACCOUNT.

Capitalisation is used for various reasons. First, to attract the attention of the public to the product sold in question. Second, to illustrate the benefits of using the product. For example, with MTN PROLONGATION, the discussion goes on and on, see sentence one above. Also, by using this product, it shall make you the man that you are meant to be, even if you are poor but can perform well in the bedroom.

## DISCUSSION

As a reminder, this paper conducted an analysis of testimonial discourse as a persuasive strategy in the marketing of goods and services in Cameroon in the month of June, July and August, 2024. Hinged on document analysis, the study indicated that three types of testimonies were used by marketers in the marketing domain. They are quote, video and influencer testimonials. The investigation further confirmed that merchants in Cameroon make use of a variety of language categories in the evidences they dish out to the public. These language sets include: adjectives, adverbs, verbs, nouns, pronouns, conjunctions, tenses, syntactic features such as declarative, exclamatory and negative sentences, voice, capitalisation, tone and mood. These linguistic features were used to attract the attention of the public, to advise them why they need to procure the good or service and the advantages they shall obtain from using the product or service, to warn the public not to go in for fake products or services when they are offering quality products and services, because they shall only be draining their resources, to show that what they selling is not expensive and that there is no other good or service that can be equated to what they are marketing, just to mention but these. Anaeto et al., (2008), note that "when you select a credible source to speak for your idea or product, there is likely to be more response from your audience." In line with this quote, it could be averred that the above language resources helped in convincing the public to go in for what these retailers are selling thus, an increase in sales as attested in this testimony: "My brother this item really works ooo, I am about to take the second packet."

This study is similar to that of Martin and Vincent (2014) in that they both examine the notion of testimonies in the promotion of goods. However, the two piloted studies differ in terms of results. For example, while the above study identified linguistic features used in the selling of goods and services, Martin and Vincent (ibid) found that consumer knowledge interacts with two aspects of advertising-testimonial expertise and advertising copy-to influence purchase intentions towards a cruise. They further revealed that expert consumers have more favourable attitudes than novice consumers towards cruise advertising. This study also differs from that of Arief el al., (2023), Deshwal, (2015) and Majeed et al., (2020). For example,

Arief el al., (ibid) in their investigation found that influencer marketing and online customer reviews have an impact on online purchase decision, meanwhile advertising attractiveness does not show any influence on purchase decision.

Deshwal (ibid) also found that celebrity endorsers are used by companies for increasing sales. Furthermore, consumers think that celebrity endorsed advertisement are reliable and they have the knowledge. They are able to recall and retain the name of the product. Lastly, Majeed et al., (ibid) also found the important role of choosing a celebrity that possesses trust, expertise, attractive and overall credibility. The study concludes that celebrity endorsement is an effective tool for advertising.

## CONCLUSION

This paper explored linguistic features in testimonies used by Cameroonians in the marketing of goods and services from June to August, 2024. The study also looked at the role they play in the marketing domain. Using content analysis to investigate this phenomenon, this paper has established that the language of testimonials in advertising in Cameroon is characterised by the use of adjectives, action verbs, adverbs, nouns, pronouns, conjunctions, tenses, sentences, tone and mood, voice and capitalisation. These language categories were used to advise the target audience to buy the product or service, to warn them, to tell them of the pluses that they shall reap from using the goods or services and that what they are selling is not expensive. These devices helped in convincing them to go in for the goods and services. This researcher is encouraging the business community in Cameroon, Africa and the world at large to use the language structures identified here in testimonies in the promotion of goods and services so that they can gain a market share and also stay in business.

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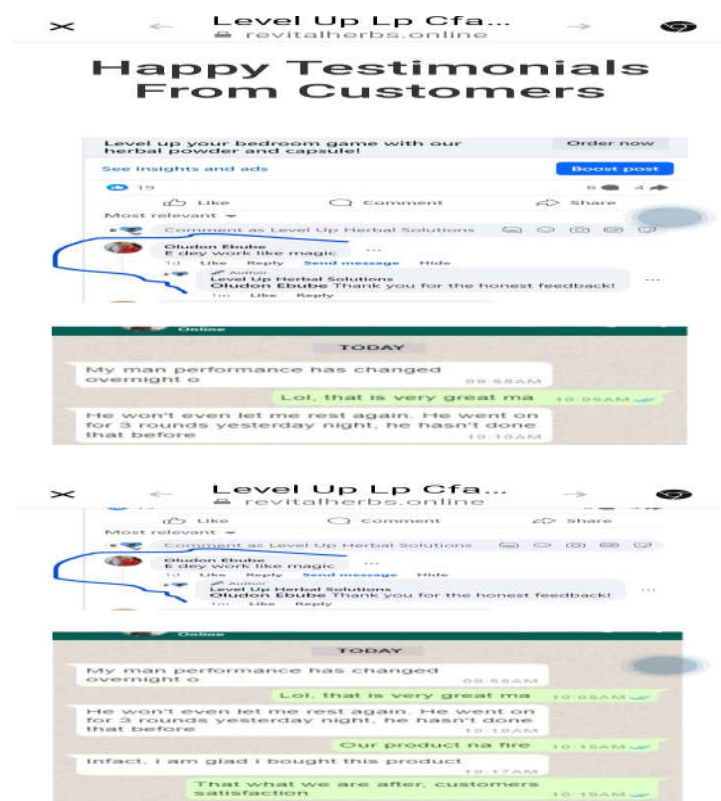
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## APPENDIX



man power - M...  
anyhub.site

**Unlock Your True Man Potential with our FAYA-FAYA Herbal Tea**

**Man Power & Sperm Booster Tea**



**BUY NOW**

man power - M...  
anyhub.site

**Don't Worry Anymore! She will sing your praises tonight - You Are About To Get Proven And Safest Method To End The Issue of LOW SPERM COUNT and take charge in the order room!**

**She Go Respect You And You Will Be A PROUD MAN**



man power - M...  
anyhub.site

**YOUR CAPACITY AND ABILITY TO PERFORM WELL IN BED IS WHAT DEFINES YOU AS A MAN NOT THE MILLIONS IN YOUR ACCOUNT**

**NOT BEING ABLE TO MEET THIS OBLIGATION CAN LEAD TO PROBLEMS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP, LIKE LOSING ONE'S RESPECT, LOSING SELF-CONFIDENCE, AND WORSE OFF, LOSING YOUR WOMAN TO ANOTHER MAN.**

**AND THIS IS WHY FAYA-FAYA TEA WAS MANUFACTURED TO HELP PUT AN END TO WEAK ERECTION, QUICK EJACULATION, LOW LIBIDO, AND ANY OTHER ERECTILE ISSUES**

man power - M...  
anyhub.site

**GET A PERMANENT RESULT**

**THIS PRODUCT OFFERS A PERMANENT SOLUTION BECAUSE IT TACKLES ERECTION ISSUES FROM THE ROOT AND YOUR BODY SYSTEM WOULD HAVE ADAPTED TO THE CURING PROCESS, MAKING THE CURE PERMANENT IN YOUR BODY.**

**OTHER SIMILAR PRODUCTS OUT THERE WILL ONLY DRAIN YOUR MONEY MONTHLY, BUT WHEN YOU USE THIS PRODUCT, IT SOLVES THE PROBLEM ONCE AND FOR ALL.**

man power - M...  
anyhub.site

**SEE WHAT SOME OF OUR CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING**



My brother this item really works oooo, I am about to take the second pack. I dey faya dey go oooo. Thank you abeg 13:45

You are welcome, thank you for the positive feedback back. 13:46

man power - M...  
anyhub.site

Alex  
★★★★★ Verified Purchase  
It gets the job done  
Reviewed in the United States on December 1, 2023  
Def works without you noticing

Helpful Share Report

dagoboy  
★★★★★ Verified Purchase  
**HORNY GOAT WEED**  
Reviewed in the United States on November 20, 2018  
**THIS PRODUCT IS VERY HELPFUL! I AM 53 AND AM VERY SEXUALLY ACTIVE WITH MY WIFE. THIS HORNY GOAT WEED HAS HELPED ME IN THAT DEPARTMENT IN MAKING ME GET MORE HORNY AND INCREASING MY STAMINA. I USE IT REGULARLY. I WILL CONTINUE TO BUY IT AND HAVE USED IT FOR YEARS.**  
13 people found this helpful

Good afternoon  
I am very happy to reach you  
Thank you very much for introducing me to your product.  
It worked like magic 🙌  
My partner hasn't enjoyed me in a very long while but your product has given me confidence and happiness.  
Thank you oooo 13:38

You are welcome, 13:39

man power - M...  
anyhub.site

Please my sister, I need that item again, it's really helped me, please I will be buying 3 more packs, I did not believe at first, but now I am happy. Please give me discount 13:41

Thank you for the positive feedback, concerning your new order, our customer care will call you for a possible discount. Thanks for the patronage. 13:44

Ed p  
★★★★★ Verified Purchase  
Just as described , would buy again  
Reviewed in the United States on June 14, 2023  
Just as described , would buy again  
2 people found this helpful

Helpful Share Report

Larry Clark  
★★★★★ Verified Purchase  
Great  
Reviewed in the United States on August 27, 2023  
It works

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