

## ***Akèrègbè*, Resourcing the Past, Communicating the Present in Shared Cultural Knowledge: A Case Study of GTB Advertising**

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**Abstract:** A communication strategy in advertising can take any shape provided it meets both intentions of manufacturers and demands of recipients. That is why the study focused the bottle gourd (*Akèrègbè*) as a communicating device utilized in a Guaranteed Trust Bank® (GTB) advertisement. The study considered a GTB advertisement that propagates \*737# and the image of a palm wine tapper as a device of influencing consumers. The advertisement, collected from the GTB branch of the University of Lagos, Nigeria was processed through the application of denotative and connotative terminologies from the Barthesian perspective. The advertisement constructed a relationship between the past culture (bottle gourd) and present culture (computerization) as a means of persuasion. The investigation demonstrated the application of the alphanumeric code, *Bank\*737#* as the motif of the advert with bottle gourd playing a supportive role of communicating a consistent service and protection to customers. The study concluded that campaigning of a product with the blend of the past and the present resources can increase sales. Besides, such a socio-cultural merger has the capacity to stimulate knowledge not only in the advertising industry but also in the exploration of the Yorùbá cultural past to the entire world.

**Keywords:** Advertising communication; below the clause; Denotation; Connotation; Ideology

### **1. Introduction**

The enthusiasm of the means of kindling individuals to purchase goods and services seem to have made advertising campaigns fascinating. The captivation, experienced in the world of advertising, is owing to the adoption of Feyerabend's principle of "anything goes". (Feyerabend, 1970, p. 10; Halliday & Fawcett, 1987, p. 4) That approach has become a masterpiece of the business of publicity, perhaps, for its resourcefulness in the theory of persuasion. By "anything goes", the author refers to the haphazard utilization of social resources recklessly shamelessly without checkpoints of constraints. That is, the employability of social devices that have the

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capacity to influence readers to consumption. However, advertising experts use those inventive facilities, as communicative infrastructures, within the permissive purview of the dictates of the law of the land. The advertising industry is organized in such a manner that practitioners source useful materials from all domains of terrestrial planets and aquatic habitations in order to meet the demand of convincing the public. Also, that desire motivates experts in the field of communication excitements to sometimes flashback to events of the past as well as phenomena of the present in search of resources to deploy as means of persuasion. (Ogilvy, 1983 & 2013; Nixon, 1996; Hermerén, 1999) As if those were not sufficient, advertising professionals make several attempts to project the future through resources that portray fertile imaginations. The business of convincing the audience to buy advertised goods and services has not only made advertising a captivating enterprise; the commercial occupation has made advertising a fun fair industry where creativity governs. Particularly, in Goffman's (1987) illumination, creativity is the order of the day in advertising. Those who are watchdogs of advertising, as demonstrated in Dalamu (2017b), ought to commend its operations for one thing: advertising communicators source materials from any domains or spheres as long as such materials, as earlier stated, can sensitize the target audience. And the characteristics of those resources meet the intention and the need of manufacturers and advertisers.

One of such occasions is the perception of advertising as the resourcing of the past in the Nigerian context in order to shape the thoughts of the present consumers. To this end, *the past* as part of the title is a necessity because the gourd is hardly seen in the city these days. Most elites, in the Nigerian society, live in the city and not in the village where the cultivation of the farm produce is a norm. In respect of that, most people in the city may not identify what the gourd is and its usefulness. Even the writer saw the gourd the last time about twenty-eight years ago while living in the village, *Araromi*, Ogun State. Recipients of the present culture, perhaps, are not aware of the materials of the past. At this point in time, advertisers tend to create a sort of logical reasoning for the present audience. There is, therefore, a need for individuals to interpret the materials of the past in a particular advertising conceptual structure. It is in such a behavior that the goal of the inspiration in advertising begins to emanate. Advertising has not only, at that juncture, attracted readers; it has rather succeeded in compelling individuals to translate the message into meaning. To reiterate, such an occasion is the demonstration of the gourd (*Akèrègbè*) in the advertising framework of Guarantee Trust Bank (*henceforth: GTB<sup>®</sup>*). *Akèrègbè* is a lexeme in the Yorùbá language; and in replica, it is simply *the gourd* in English. The

choice of *Akèrègbè* as a concept rather than *bottle gourd* zeroes down to the following reasons:

- To elucidate the concealed meaning(s) of *Akèrègbè* in the GTB's advertisement (henceforth: ad) and in relation to other entities;
- To propagate *Akèrègbè* from a Yoruba worldview as a communicative device in the province of advertising; and how this onomatopoeic object sells the Yoruba culture to the entire world;
- It is a way, in the author's perspective, of propagating the richness of the language, Yorùbá, from a socio-cultural perspective to the global world where the non-native can understand, enjoy, and appreciate its semantic "nutrients".

Furthermore, Stephens (1994) laments that varieties of gourds 'are known through West Africa, where the bottle gourd has been grown for containers, but these cultivars are largely unrecorded in terms of name and characteristics' (p. 2). That sense could have sensitized Ellert and Ellert (2005) to say that there are always something novel research-wise in Africa (p. 8). The comment of Stephens' (1994) facilitates the deploying of *Akèrègbè* as a communicative device in the metaphorical sagacity. The reason is that the concept has a number of independent meanings and in symmetric relation with other social hardware. For instance, *Akèrègbè* is a major contributor to the production of a musical instrument known as *Sèkèrè*. Even at that, *Akèrègbè* becomes a communicator of several messages in celebrating social activities. It is in that wise, as expatiated later, that the concept has turned to a relevant object of study in the field of communication. In the real sense of the GTB ad shown later in Figure 4, someone may love to inquire the relationship operating between *Akèrègbè* and a financial institution. Given such curiosity, this effort has described *Akèrègbè* as a communicative facility as well as propagating the local device's pertinence to the banking industry. These are gaps that the study has filled. In other words, the study is a lens unveiling some occupations encapsulated in *Akèrègbè*, the bottle gourd.

## **2. *Akèrègbè*, an Embodiment of Messages and Functions**

*Akèrègbè* (bottle gourd) is vigorous. The cultivar is an object naturally trailing; and specifically, it is a climbing vine with large leaves and of a pair of tendrils long stems/stalks that produce fruits. The produce has a hard rind (or shell) that develops like a balloon while growing into the final stage of maturity. That is, the bottle gourd

produces a hard and tough outer layer that is green in color when it is premature, and the cultivar turns light brown when it is mature for harvest. The light brown color becomes more obvious when finally detaches from the stalk of the pumpkin plant. From a scientific perspective, the gourd belongs to the botanical family of *Lagenaria* and *Cucurbita* (i.e. *Cucurbitaceae*). Historical reports state that the genus *Lagenaria* comes from *lagena*, the Latin name for a narrow-necked flask from the Italian city of Florence. The specific name *Siceraria* is from the word *siccus*, which means dry. The two names refer to a fruit, which is dried before use. (Warrier, Nambiar & Ramakutty, 1995; Xaba & Croeser, 2011, p. 131; Rahman, 2003) The particular specie in the discourse on the GTB ad is known as *Lagenaria Siceraria*. (Britannia Encyclopedia, 2016; Wikipedia, 2016) Besides the popularized name of *bottle gourd*, people still label it as *maracas*, *calabash*, and *dudi* (see Stephens, 1994, p. 1 for details).

A spectacular posture of distinction of the bottle gourd (*Akèrègbè*) from the other species of a similar family is the hollow that demarcates the upper region which is always small from the lower region that specifies the always-big portion. That “Holloway” does not only point out the upper and lower chambers; the cavity serves as an indicator of the portion at which the gourd must be handled for a convenience’s sake or suitability. The later is the reason for Yorùbá to metaphorically state that *Akèrègbè ló máa so ibi tí wón máa so okùn sí l’òrùn rẹ*. This translates to mean that it is the gourd that determines the portion in which a rope should be tied on its part, that is, its neck. The hollowly depression or recess formed is an indicator of that claim. The local aphorism has a particular meaning potential implication to humanity at large. That is, an individual – most especially a person who is disobedient or wayward – will determine the way that the individual should be handled or managed.

Although archaeological activities show the remains of the bottle gourd in Asia, America, and Africa (Ellert & Ellert, 2005), it is probable that Africa is its origin. As Stephens particularly argues that,

The bottle gourd probably originated from Africa and from there was widely distributed Pre-Columbian time, perhaps by floating on the seas. It travelled to India, where it has evolved into numerous local varieties, and from India to China, Indonesia and as far as New Zealand. Archaeological remains show that the bottle gourd was used in Egypt about 3500-3300 BC. (1994, p. 1)

The Stephens’ (1994) claim demonstrates the bottle gourd as phenomenal as it appears propagated in most parts of the continents of the world. The cultivar has,

perhaps, been with man from pre-historical period, because of the many utilitarian functions that the object performs. In the village, for instance, the author can remember vividly how Aminat Aduke had used the bottle gourd as domestic utensils – for collecting water from the river, as a container for serving food, and for storing liquids. Some other villagers were using the bottle gourd for calabashes and tapping of palm wine because of its waterproof characteristics even as Garden Organic (n.d.) attests. For durability purposes, the bottle gourd usually passes through local treatments. The age of science which we are has restricted the uses of the household device to the domains of food (Milind & Satbir, 2011), medicine (Rahman, 2003), etc. The production of plastics has taken over the many functions of the bottle gourd. However, science has failed to relegate to the background the uses of *Akèrègbè* as a fantastic musical instrument. It is seemingly deducible that advanced/computerized musical instruments may not produce the perfect kind of sound that the bottle gourd, in conjunction with other hardware, produces. In the Yorùbá world, the facility is referred to as *sèkèrè* and perhaps, *maracas* in the Latin-America at a point in time that the gourd operates as a musical instrument. The musical instrument can appear as the bottle gourd having beads with the assistance of twines fastened in zigzagged forms around the device as shown in Figure 1 below.



**Figure 1: Sèkèrè**

Nevertheless, the cultivar can appear ordinarily on its own. At that point the player of the instrument will put some rings in the right and left fingers. The beating of the *Akèrègbè* produces the sound desired to create peculiar tunes that inform eccentric

dancing steps.

These forms project the bottle gourd as a communicating instrument to mankind. While serving these purposes, the player demonstrates skills by using the musical instrument to communicate some messages to watcher, spectators, listeners, and dancers. One essential feature of *Sèkèrè* is that *kò kìn ñ lo sóde ibànújé*. It means that *Sèkèrè* does not function in places of mourning. As a musical instrument, it operates successfully in domains of celebration – birthday party, naming ceremony, house warming ceremony, graduation ceremony, marriage ceremony, and parties.

### 3. Advertising Communication

The task of convincing the public to patronize goods and services could be great. The difficulty seems obvious because of the unwilling nature of consumers to buy products outside their needs. Individuals, more often than not, ration their financial resources in order to facilitate necessities of life. Among others, the affordability of products is also a considerable factor because most consumers have limited purchasing power. On that plane, industries employ so many tactics to convince the public to patronize their products. One of such strategies is the circulation of ads on goods and services with identified sponsors to proclaim and promote the brand. Bogart argues that;

Advertising is inevitably a powerful economic force in any complex industrial society where production capacity exceeds effective consumer demand. But advertising is more than economic force. It is also a profound influence on culture, value and quality of life. (Bogart, 1996, p. xiii)

Describing advertising as an ‘economic force’ points to the fact that the communication is entwined with what one can call a triangular cash flow. One, its propagation is capital intensive. Two, advertising assists organizations (e.g. companies) to generate funds. And three, it contributes to a nation’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Assuredly, the entire social system, in a cyclical way, profits from “the industry of public noise”. (Mattetart, 1991, p. x) It is on that ground that advertising has indirectly obtained a licence as an enterprise of persuasion, which arrests attentions, and stimulates the curiosity of consumers. In Scott’s (1994) argument, these are possible through seduction, encouragement of readers, and clarification of services by illustrating human lifestyles within socio-cultural norms. In addition, the features of goods and services along with the benefits of the

advertised product are demonstrated in the frame. (Massaris, 1994 & 1997; Hoffman, 2002) Most times, the presence of images and texts tends to overwhelm advertising communications but in an organized format (Foss, 2005; Sells & Gonzalez, 2002, p. 4) in order to enliven readers. Readers, in Brierley's (2002) point of view, do not have interest in reading ads. And if they do at all, recipients spend about two seconds to view ads that come their ways (p. 178). That attitude fuels advertising campaigns in verbal and non-verbal interactions.

In this case, the study classifies verbal and non-verbal communications in order to reveal that advertising frameworks contain texts and visuals. For an ad to attract the attention of readers, verbal and non-verbal resources are essential commodities. The non-verbal communications are wordless messages disseminating through visuals produced in colorful modes. They appeal, Myer (1986) argues, as well as communicate faster to human senses of the sight, thought and imagination because images are processed as fast as possible in the brain and subconscious. (Kaplan, 2005; Harima & Lucaites, 2007) Advantages of visual campaigns include communicating to the physically challenged persons and easy assimilation of the messages. Foreigners who do not share similar cultural values with a particular society might also benefit from images in advertising. As the picture saves time, it also assists in illustrating the message of the ad to the illiterate. Nonetheless, images alone may be misinterpreted or ambiguous due to multiple interpretations that can accord it. Thus, communicators accomplish the framework with texts are injected in order to avoid sending wrong information to the public. Texts, playing a supportive role, reveal to the audience the intention of the images in the plate. The natural partnership of verbal and non-verbal norms necessitates the announcement of the excellence of the product (Barthes, 1988, p. 174; *also in* Williamson, 1978) to the target audience.

## **4. Theoretical Survey**

### **4.1 Semiotics and Ideology**

The knowledge that a reader has about a particular sign seems to inform the interpretation that the individual provides for it. Advertising schemata are not excluded from this assertion. What the reader understands is at the mercy of his/her knowledge. Barry (1997) builds a connection in that regard to exclaim that memory and emotion assist every preceptor of a semiotic entity to generate a distinct meaning

potential.<sup>1</sup> Based on that, one can then submit that the knowledge of a particular socio-cultural environment determines meaning deductions of ad plates of a domain. This proposition constructs an association between semiotics and ideology. Semiotics which studies sign systems has its fingers touching Saussure, Pierce, and Morris as fathers of the discipline. Apart from the differentiated concepts of *la langue* and *parole*; *iconic*, *symbolic* and *indexical*; and *syntactic*, *semantics*, and *pragmatics*; Saussure, Pierce, and Morris expound semiotics from the signifiers' and signifieds' approaches. (Chandler, 2012) The physical appearance of an object, Myers (1994) explains, is called the signifier while the meaning potential embedded in an entity is known as the signified.<sup>2</sup>

Ideology is much more an abstraction of interdisciplinary notions as semiotics is. This could be a reason for one to experience what van Dijk (1988) refers to as 'fuzzy life' in ideological elucidations. In van Dijk's point of view, ideological notions defy precise definitions. The terminology probably happily lives the nebulous life inherent in such catch-all forms that denote complex sets of phenomena. This conceptual attitude, in van Dijk's (1988) perspective, makes ideology a preferred toy of philosophers and scholars in the humanities and social sciences. The complex webs of concepts that ideology catches, as van Dijk asserts, pile the pressure of many disciplines to characterize the term at will. In a whole, perceiving ideology as a belief on a collection of organization of phenomena may be ideal. For Johnstone (2008, p. 66) suggests ideology as exploring the ways in which an entity is conceived of and thought to construct a relationship with other aspects of the social life. By extension, one can sometimes attempt to compare such conception across other socio-cultural lines of thoughts. Having commented that ideology must be approached from multidisciplinary perspectives, van Dijk (1988) further places the concept within the covers of triangular domains of cognition, society, and discourse (p. 5). These contextual lexemes operate within system of ideas (Lenski, 1966; Jones, 1984), socio-cultural symbolism (Hofstede, 1980; Giroux, 1981; Wodak, 1996), and linguistic affiliations. (Halliday, 1973; Bourdieu, 1988) In relation to advertising, Wicke (1988) constructs a remarkable position by saying that;

Advertising does not serve as a simple message-boy of ideology, if only because ideology does not exist in some place apart before it is channelled through advertisements. The richness of advertisement as a cultural structure – and this is in

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<sup>1</sup> See also (Arnheim, 1969; Messaris, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> See also (Geiszinger, 2001, pp. 253-268; Fairclough, 1992, pp. 42, 60; Tam, 2008, p. 5).



spite of advertising industry's own claims to positivist efficiency, psychological control, and logical management. Its roots in myriad discourses afford it too much cultural nourishment; its plenitude as a lexicon, an idiom, a site for reading of our culture, guarantees this (p. 16).

Advertising promotes ideology, Dalamu's (2018a) sense, for the fact that it involves itself in multifaceted cultural values of the readers. That uncommon behavior, in Wicke's sight, projects ideology as a beneficiary of advertising etiquettes. In that light, one can articulate that ideology and advertising walk as associates in a given society.

#### **4.2. Denotation and Connotation**

As the relationship of signs and socio-cultural inclinations is an unbroken one, even in advertising, the study has utilized the concepts of denotation and connotation, and linguistic text as tools of analysis. This paper recognizes the conceptual configuration based on the Barthesian three levels of meaning abstraction from advertising plates made up of images and texts.

Among the sub-concepts driving semiotics, denotation and connotation seem to be fundamental besides the primacy of iconic, symbolic, and indexical applications on signs. The paramount position of denotation and connotation is as a result of the dual levels of meaning that the terminologies explain. Barthes (1967) recognizes these by glossing that denotation is the signifier of a sign system expressed in a plane form. That is, it provides meaning in a way that does not pose any ambiguity. Moreover, a description of an entity (e.g. advertising), Barthes asserts, does not need any cultural knowledge for its proper explanation. In another point of view, Eco (1976, p. 191) does not argue in favour of that claim. According to Eco, the meaning that a sign denotes may be abstracted through the path of the culture of society. However, the connotative description of an entity attracts the understanding of a society's cultural treasures on the side of the target audience. Barthes approaches connotation as "made up of signs of denoted system". (Barthes 1967, p. 91) This constructs an association between a signifier (object) and signifieds (meaning potential) in symbolic forms within the purview of cultural codes. The argument receives a spice from Cook (1992) when he subjects the two concepts under determinate and indeterminate meanings. On the one hand, Cook characterizes denotation (determinate) in the form of a scientific text that has a straitjacketed meaning. Such a meaning is not only fixed but also freely shared in whatever context it is applied. On the other hand, connotation (indeterminate) to Guy Cook is a predilection for strategy, which

distracts the target audience from or adds to the literal meaning of an object. In that case, the entity can appear in any form in order to perform the function assigned to it. (Cook, 1992, pp. 103-123) Dyer (2005) recapitulates these assumptions by saying that;

Denotation and connotation refer to first and second levels of meaning in a sign. The term denotation refers to the literal meaning of a sign; to what 'objectivity' present and easily recognized or identified. Connotation is a term used to refer to meanings which lie beyond denotation but are dependent on it. Connotative readings of signs are introduced by an audience/viewer/reader beyond the literal meaning of a sign activated by the means of conventions or codes (p. 128).

The ambiguity in connotation can be endless unlike denotation. The reasons are these: one, what is conventional in a particular society may constitute a challenge of meaning to actors of another society; and two, the meaning that an individual gives to a sign may be different from another individual's due to age, education, sex, profession, etc. in the same society. Furthermore, connotation sometimes operates in metaphors. This problem of concise meaning exemplifications may recur more often in pictorial images, which can be a motif for Barthes to accommodate images in the domains of denotation and connotation. And by extension, he elaborates the meaning of an image (sign) by introducing the linguistic text which 'fixes the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs' (Barthes 1977, p. 37,<sup>1</sup>) In consonance with Barthesian propositions, there are two models of function, Vestergaard and Schroder (1985, p. 34) pinpoint, that the text (which is monosemic) performs in an ad plate in order to explain the image (which is polysemic). In Barthes' (1967) categorization, the textual function as either anchorage or relay. The picture-text relationship reveals the text as pre-dominating the image in the anchorage function. Text, in this case, provides a meaningful supportive role to the image that serves, perhaps, as an eye-catching object. Textual components position the object in terms of space and time. In the relay function, both the text and the image play a role of reciprocity, as explained above concerning ideology and advertising in society. The text and the image contribute meanings to the recipients' understanding in mutuality but in different capacities. (Dyer, 2005, p. 130; Forceville, 1996, pp. 71-81) The collaboration of these communicative concepts integrates plausible meanings to readers-cum-analysts.

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<sup>1</sup> See also (Bogart, 1996, p. 96).

### 4.3 Below the Clause

The terminology of “below the clause” is Hallidayan. Better still, one might stress that “below the clause” is purely systemic. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1997) These emphatic statements owe to the hierarchical organization of language structures, which in Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2014) gradation run along below the clause’, “around the clause”, and “above the clause”. Although, the researcher has mentioned the three models or cadres of embodiment in the Syntagmatic arrangement of language, the concern here is “below the clause”. The groups, as Thompson (2014) elucidates, represent “below the clause” because of their partial contributions to meaning potential of the clause. Besides, Dalamu (2017a) explicates that the group exhibits a degree of difference between it and the clause in the systematic contribution to the construct of a syntagm. The group, Bloor and Bloor (2013) recapitulate, appears and functions in all interactional operations, whereas the clause is a combination of groups, or perhaps, a single group. For instance, a process, *go*, might sometimes fulfil dual purposes of being a group (verbal) and a clause. Following the remarks of Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), the classification of the group are: nominal group (NG); verbal group (VG); adverbial group (Adv G); and prepositional group (Prep G). Conjunction group (Conj G) is also part of the Halliday and Matthiessen’s (2004) taxonomy. Useful resources are in Dalamu (2018b). Most of the times, these groups split ideational components into segments in order to realize experiential and logical semantic spheres of the clause. Such divisions are solely that of the communicator, who organizes the repertoires as the individual wants in order to achieve a functional goal. As the experiential shares meaning organization in the clause, the logical identifies and defines relations in the clause complex. (Martin & Rose, 2013) In sum, Fontaine (2013), and Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) pinpoint that NG realizes Subject and Complement to perform participating functions; VG acts as Finite and Predicator, initiating the process-cum-content of the clause. Adv G represents Adjunct to perform a circumstantial role; Conj G is textual in nature by serving a rich purpose of logical connectivity in the clause complexity. (*also in* Martin & Rose, 2005)

## 5. Methodology

Actually, the interest of this exploration became a concern out of the group discussion that the analyst had with a technician in *Igbesa*, Ogun State in June, 2016. The craftsman, the name withheld, emphatically stated that ‘*Sèkèrè kìn ñ lo sóde*

*ìbànújé/ekún'*, meaning, *Sèkèrè*, a musical instrument, is usually found and functioned in a domain of joyful atmosphere. From that moment the author began to ruminate on the aphorism as an interesting euphemism with certain communicative and influential capacities. The investigator's expertise in advertising etiquettes suggested to the analyst's subconscious that meaning potential could be constructed from the *Akèrègbè*'s characteristic of entertainment. As that concern persisted, it then struck the writer's mind of the *Akèrègbè/ Sèkèrè* inclined ad observed in Ibadan some years back. That piece of information stimulated the author to initiate a travel to Ibadan, Oyo state in search of an ad affiliated with the cultivar, *Akèrègbè*. Unfortunately, that effort was fruitless because the ad had been removed, portraying an ad as being ephemeral. This informs readers of ads' transient traits.

Significantly, the writer travelled to *Ikirun*, Osun state in February, 2016 for a burial ceremony; and behold, *Sèkèrè*, a local musical instrument in Yorùbá-land, dominated the scenes. The investigator quickly swiftly seized that rare opportunity to take the picture of the image with Samsung W50F model as earlier demonstrated in Figure 1. For granting the investigator that permission, the writer compensated the owner of the *Sèkèrè* with ₦2, 000.00. Still on the same quest, the writer went to deposit some funds at the University of Lagos (UNILAG) GTB<sup>®</sup>, and fortunately, the ad shown in Figure 4 was displayed in both the interior and exterior realms of the banking hall. Thus, the author collected the ad from the GTB branch of the UNILAG, Nigeria with permission from the security manager for a purpose of the academic analysis and publications. The ad underwent a process through Barthesian denotation and connotation concepts after which Hallidayan approach of 'below the clause' assisted in analyzing the textual components as demonstrated in Figure 2. The idea of elliptical disjunction, as expounded in Leech (1966) and Cook (2001), also support the grammatical analysis of the advertising plate. A combination of quantitative procedure (as illustrated in Table 1 and Figure 3), and qualitative approach (as expressed in the discussions) governed the investigation, as displayed in Dalamu (2018c). The application also creates a link entwined around signs and cultural treasures. As a necessity, the analyst took the picture in Figure 5 from *Ilaro*, Ogun State as an indicator of the function of the rope on the shoulder of the bicycle rider/palm-wine tapper, as shown in Figure 4 later in the study.

### 5.1. Data Presentation

TEXT 1: Guaranteed Trust Bank

TEXT 2: Bank \*737#

TEXT 3: Simple banking for every Nigerian

TEXT 4: Just dial \*737# to start and set your gourds

TEXT 5: For more information, kindly visit [www.gtbank.com/737](http://www.gtbank.com/737)

**5.2. Data Analysis**

TEXT 1	Guaranteed Trust Bank NG	TEXT 2	Bank *737# NG	TEXT 3	Simple banking NG	for everyone Prep G	
TEXT 4	Just Adv G	dial VG	*737# NG	to start Prep G	and Conj G	set Prep G	your gourds NG
TEXT 5	For more information Prep G	kindly Adv G	visit VG	<a href="http://www.gtbank.com/737">www.gtbank.com/737</a> NG			

**Figure 2. Analysis of GTB textual devices**

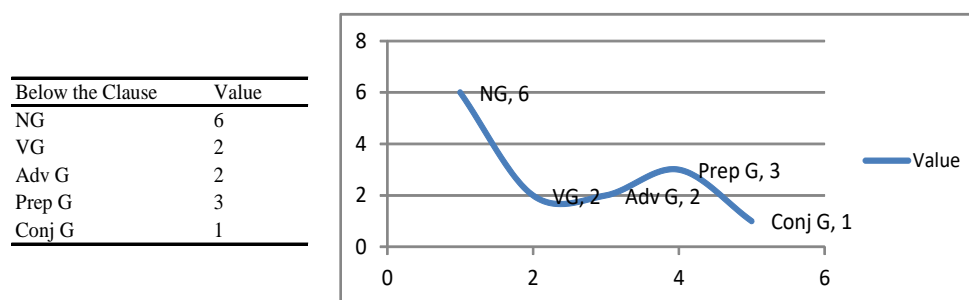
**6. Results**

Table 1 and Figure 3 illuminate the recurrent kind of the nuances of the NG, VG, Adv G, Prep G, and Conj G as facilities of ‘below the clause.’

**Table 1. Recurrence of ‘below the clause’**

Below the Clause	TEXT 1	TEXT 2	TEXT 3	TEXT 4	TEXT 5	Total
NG	1	1	1	2	1	6
VG	0	0	0	1	1	2
Adv G	0	0	0	1	1	2
Prep G	0	0	1	1	1	3
Conj G	0	0	0	1	0	1

The research recapitulates the computation in Table 1 into Figure 3 to display the degree of functions of the groups.



**Figure 3. Graphical flow of “below the clause”**

Figure 3 reveals NG with six points as the most prominent functional element of

“below the clause” in the GTB ad. Prep G occupies the second operational slot, expressing three points. The common ground of VG and Adv G is illustrated with two points respectively, while Conj G is the least functional device, exhibiting a point. These frequencies, as demonstrated in the chart and semantic slots, situate NG at the highest domain of operation, meaning that Subject and Complement are the major focus of the communicator to persuade recipients. Instead of concentrating on the process as an element of motivation, the publicity expert prefers inspiring the target audience with additional information. One features the augmentation through the deployment of circumstantial instruments that direct readers towards the GTB service patronization. Nevertheless, observations show the fabrication of a link (i.e. a logical connection, *and*), in a Prep G, exemplified in TEXT 4, providing an opportunity for a group complex in the imperative clause.

## 7. Discussion

The study characterizes the description of the GTB<sup>®</sup> ad, illustrated in Figure 4 below, into three domains of textual patterns, image appearances, and textual fragmental segmentations for following reasons. The ad exclusively contains texts and images. In the knowledge-based enterprise, there have been discussions in separate forms representing texts and images. Scholars (e.g. Leech, 1966, 1969 & 1971; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Dalamu, 2018b) have examined texts from different ramifications.



Figure 4. GTB Ad

The concept of images, in seemingly most of the sides, has undergone critical windows of analyses of Barthes (1988), Eco (1976), Kress and van Lueween (1996), etc. There are also considerations on the combinations of texts and images from the schools of Vestergaard and Schroder (1985), Forceville (1996), Dyer (2005), etc. In line with these perspectives, the text of the GTB ad has been considered first and followed with the images exemplified within Yorùbá cultural undertones. The study also draws explanation from the texts and images of the ad before drawing a conclusion. This discursive strategy is meant to create some connections existing between the texts and images of the framework. Nevertheless, there appears at the end of the paragraphs the fragmentation sequence of the clauses labeled as (FS), where ED = elliptical declarative; FD = full declarative; and Ø = deleted point (empty set).

The GTB ad plate, as illustrated in Figure 4, contains four clauses apart from the structural label of the sponsor, *Guaranteed Trust Bank*, located at the upper side of the right hand corner. TEXT 2 and TEXT 3, *Bank \*737# simple banking for every Nigerian* are not only alphanumeric; the texts are also elliptical linguistic structures. For the purpose of economy, simplicity and clarity (Cook, 1992), the publicity expert fragments the clauses. The suggested structure is *Bank \*737# [is a] simple banking [system] for every Nigerian*. The goal of the text is not to exemplify sentential accrument; but the principle is to propagate a campaign in an attractive way. The sensitization comes to the fore with the application of the alphanumeric code of *Bank\*737#*. The lexeme, *Bank* is a modifier of the number 737 bounded with codes \* and #. The face value of \*737# denotes Arabic numeral of 7-3-7 bounded with two distinct codes of \* and #. However, the sign, \*737#, connotes a number of hidden information that enhances banking operations. That preference presents \*737# as the reason for the ad in its totality, accomplished with texts and images. These are reasons for \*737# to appear four times in the framework. The computerization code functions in three clauses as well as in the face of the image of the handset. Aside the code, neither on the side of the texts nor on the hemisphere of the images has any entity recurs about four times. The object that recurs next to the code is the *Akèrègbè* (bottle gourd) that appears two times. So, \*737# operates in every aspect of the ad. Another salient point is that the website <http://www.gtbank.com/737> introduces *Bank \*737#* as an amazing experience, for Nigerian of all classes, in the banking industry. (also in GTB, 2016, pp. 1-5)

**FS TEXT 1:** Guaranteed Trust Bank (NG) – ED;

**FS TEXT 2:** Bank \*737#Ø (NG) – ED;

**FS TEXT 3:** Simple banking Ø for every Nigerian (NG + Prep G) – ED

Further reports show that it is actually a *simple banking* system that assists customers in the following ways. The financial product makes an opening of a fresh banking account very easy as it also simplifies money transfer system and other enquiries. A customer who is a subscriber of a telecommunications operator can load airtime (recharged card or credit card) as well as instantly constantly checking the account balance. A GTB customer, according to the advertising professionals, can also generate password for the bank account and at the same time make payment as subscription to relevant organizations. (Reviewcious, 2016) One can actually agree that \*737# is an amazing experience because of the personalization of the customer's account details that permits an individual to retrieve some financial details through a mobile telephone facility. The feeling of \*737# wonders extends to a situation where the installation of any banking application is not needed. There is no need, the advertiser accentuates, for any Internet connections. A customer does not need to subscribe before the person can enjoy the package. In addition, the menu does not need a sophisticated telephone for its operations. The communicator lays emphasis on being a GTB account holder, which operates within the Nigerian geographical circumference. (GTB, 2016, p. 3) It is very important to state that \*737# is an arbitrary business coinage. This submits to the notion of language being an arbitrary enterprise. (Adetugbo, 1997, p. 5) The choice of the bank could have been another digit apart from the present format. For example, it could be \*777# and the novel code would still perform the function assigned to it for the system is 'gig-in gig-out' in operations. A computer system seems to obey the linguistic parameters 'imputed' into its software. Another implication of this is that language is systemic and the making of a choice out of the numerous available options. (Fontaine, O'Grady & Bartlett, 2013; Halliday, 2013)

**FS TEXT 4:** Just dial \*737# to start and set your gourds (Adv G + VG + NG + Adv G + Conj G +NG) – FD

TEXT 4 and TEXT 5 are imperative structures unlike TEXT 1 and TEXT 2 which are disjunctive declaratives (Leech, 1966, p. 90-97). The clauses read thus: *Just dial \*737# to start and set up your gourds; For more information, kindly visit [www.gtbank.com/737](http://www.gtbank.com/737)*. The structural organization of TEXT 4 begins with an adjunct, *Just*. This reveals the simplicity of the operation. In a simple term, the \*737# concept is user-friendly. The commanding clause signals two things at a time to customers: (i) *to start* and (ii) *to set up* the package introduced for their comfort, convenience, and enjoyment. The product and the bank, in the demonstration of the



ad, replicate the gourds. The study explains the relationships of the gourd with other parameters in the framework later. The constructs, *Dial, to start, and set up*, are the content elements of the clause functioning as processes and some parts seemingly operating in the interaction as the prepositional enhancers. As TEXT 4 starts with circumstantial adjunct so also is TEXT 5. The first circumstance is *For more information*; the second is *kindly*, deployed to adequately augment the communication. The thematic devices are sensitizers that foreground the clause to dragging customers to the real message. The core of the clause is the active content, *visit*. The advertiser creates a sort of inspiration for readers before elucidating the main object of the discourse. Having been the last clause, the communicative component creates a glide of encouragement for the public from all the other elements of the framework to the location of the menu, that is, *http://www.gtbank.com/737*. Significantly, the fonts of the three clauses are indicators of their degrees of informative prominence. The font of TEXT 2, *Bank \*738#*, though fragmented, is big. The fonts of the other clauses of the plate are relatively small. One hardly notices their structural elements in exception of TEXT 3.

**FS TEXT 5:** For more information, kindly visit [www.gtbank.com/737](http://www.gtbank.com/737) (Prep G+Adv G+VG + NG) – FD.

The ad demonstrates two separate images, which also in-turn communicate two different messages. The first is the handset; the second is a palm wine tapper. Nonetheless, the motif for propagating the devices in the frame is to seek the reader's adequate attention. The writer considers the handset first because the electronic device is an element that delivers and authenticates the message. The image of the palm wine tapper seems to appear for a purpose of attraction as discussed later. The handset is an iconic object that functions within the dual cultures of both telecommunications and computerization. The telecommunications domain connects consumers with GTB through the application of *\*737#*, a connotative. For easy accessibility, *\*737#*, as shown on the face of the handset, signals a direction in which customers should go. The sensitization becomes a necessity because not all bank customers are elites. So, the code *\*737#* simplifies the operation of transaction connectivity in order to inspire customers to appreciate the system as user-friendly. For instance, the handset does not contain too many information that can bore the user. The communicative appearance contains just three important things: (i) digits 0-9, (ii) the calling activating button, and (iii) the code *\*737#*. Perhaps, the simplification is to encourage GTB customers to use the product and to get

fraternized with the marketed online banking system. At the face value, the handset denotes a communicative device between two or more communicators or interactants. However, between GTB and the customer, the electronic device connotes a facility that makes possible and simplifies banking transaction through the application of \*737#. Thus, the framework ideologically-promotes a culture of present world, that is, the golden age of computerization dominion.

The second image is also an iconic object because the posture completely resembles a palm wine tapper. The preference of tagging the image in that form is owing to other images that surround the man on top of a bicycle. Actually, anyone can ride a bicycle but the rope on the shoulder of the man and the hat on his head distinguish him from an ordinary person riding a bicycle. Besides, the two bottle gourds (*Akèrègbè*), tied to the front and the back of the bicycle, serve as a distinction of a palm wine tapper appearance. The bicycle, the rope, and the bottle gourds project the individual with connotative implications. In the olden days, and in some rural areas at present, the rope has been serving as a ladder for climbing the palm tree. Although, not everyone can climb the palm tree with the rope, experts in the field do that. The farm tool is not an ordinary rope. The implement is rather a fortified rope material that can withstand the weight of a palm wine tapper. The rope is constructed according to the weight of the user. An expert achieves the climbing process by tying the rope on the palm tree and shifting the device from one position to another, as shown below in Figure 5. The operation continues until the climber gets to the desired destination. The rope popularly known as *ìgbà* (Yorùbá) has another type with an appearance of figure '8' (major part), and subordinate pedal-like device (minor part). However, it is important to sensitize readers that if the tone mark is absent from the local lexeme, *igba*, it can yield five different semantic treasures. In that light, the variants of the word are *ìgbá* (calabash), *ìgbà* (time), *igba* (200), *ìgbà* (a palm tree climbing rope, *as relevant to this study*), and *ìgbá* (garden egg). Others variant domains are outside the scope of the study. The bicycle provides transportation support for the palm wine tapper to various destinations. In sum, one could recap that the posture of the man, the appearances of the bottle gourd, the rope, and the bicycle represent an ideology of a palm-wine tapper in my village, *Araromi*, as earlier mentioned.



**Figure 3. The climbing rope (*igbà*) used by the palm wine tapper**

The image of the punctuated palm-wine tapper in Figure 4 is accompanied with two bottle gourds which is one of the reasons for making the gourd (*Akèrègbè*) the focus of the study. The other influencing factor is that the second clause, *Just dial \*737# to start and set your gourds*, although the command is not so much legible in the frame, points to and references the palm-wine container. The researcher can also add that the cultural implications of the gourd in the Yorùbá world are salient in considering (*Akèrègbè*) as a point of departure with core values. (Kress & van Leuween, 1996) If one could remove the two gourds from the iconic image of the palm wine tapper the exercise will betray the image from showcasing the semiotic implications that it produces at present. Another interpretation could be accredited to the device outside the palm-wine tapper. The gourd contributes immensely to the advertising communication, informing readers to accept the image as being a palm wine tapper. The justification is that, aside the gourd, in the past, nothing else was used for tapping palm-wine from the palm tree within the Nigerian context. Nevertheless, a crucial question that comes to one's mind is that "What is the relationship between GTB (or a financial institution) and the gourd?"

At this juncture, it is significant to recall some fundamental functions of the bottle gourds, as earlier pinpointed. Apart from being domesticated as utensils, the bottle gourds function as musical instruments the in celebration galore. Garden Organic (n.d.) elaborates that the bottle gourds have waterproof quality. That characteristic permitted the people of the old to keep money in *Akèrègbè*. This means that the bottle

gourds, besides serving as containers for storing liquids, the local facilities were also very useful for keeping, protecting, and saving money when the regime of banking institution had not come on board. One can also imply that the appearance of the bottle gourd in the text as well as the image is owing to the role that the cultivar plays in tapping palm wine from the palm tree. It is the gourd that receives the consistent flow of the wine from the palm tree. The gourd accommodates the liquid, known as palm-wine, and preserves the natural alcoholic drink for human consumption. Though arguable, *Akèrègbè* adds palatability to the palm wine. GTB, perhaps, adopts these two senses to propagate persuasion to customers. Therefore, apart from these factors, one can suggest that the application of the bottle gourd (*Akèrègbè*) in the ad serves a mere attractive goal. Consequently, the analyst might characterize that cash saving function as being connotative regarding the present world of great civilization. This is because the monetary management-cum-security currently depends on fortified safes empowered through computerization of equipment.

## 8. Conclusion

The GTB ad portrays advertising as an industry that attracts, informs, and convinces the public to patronize goods and services. The investigation shows these features by characterizing the alphanumeric code of *Bank\*737#* and the image of a palm wine tapper as denotative and connotative devices of communication. The code *\*737#* represents Arabic numerals from an ordinary face value whereas the same code has embedded meanings. *\*737#* signals to GTB customers the modus operandi of managing a bank account, allowing a transfer system of cash from one bank to another, and acting as a means of loading recharge cards of telecommunications operators. Besides, the code also assists customers to check their account details, generate passwords as well as the payment of subscriptions to relevant organizations. *\*737#* also functions in the retrieval of both customers' mobile and internet banking details. Contextually, the author observes alphanumeric codes, as earlier mentioned, in a repetitive form in the ad plate along with disjunctive structures in the form of elliptical declaratives. The clauses serve as facilities of demanding goods-&-services from readers, constructing certain thoughts in a certain direction. There is also a socio-cultural affiliation as a means of connecting the past to achieve the needed persuasive target of the present.

The image of a palm wine tapper plays a subordinate role in the ad for the interpretation can be subjective, in one way or another. However, the attachment of

the bottle gourd and the rope that serves as a ladder sensitizes the readers about the past agrarian society and the about-to-be-forgotten culture. In all, the text anchors the image without which the connotative meaning potential of the image will be difficult for consumers to understand. The author appreciates GTB for compelling the readers to flashback to their roots. The communication is awakening at the same time a welcoming idea. Therefore, the study suggests that advertising professionals should concentrate on the resources of the past in order to communicate meanings to the present generation of consumers. Such behavior has the capacity to (i) inspire the public about the past, (ii) advance the degree of knowledge of the people, and (iii) assist researchers to expatiate meanings in different veins. Utilizing primitive materials for advertising goals is also a means of selling our culture, a Yorùbá culture, to the entire world. The ad is educative; it is as well as influencing language development in the Nigerian society. Nonetheless, advertisers need to ensure that acculturation of advertising resources is regionally-exemplified in parallel with the cultural treasures of consumers as different from one community to another. Communicative practices, in the immediate environment of the target audience, could not only be fascinating, but also could augment products' patronization. It is nice to communicate in the system of signs that readers can understand as quickly as possible.

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