

# Lexico-Semantic Features in the Language of Religion and Advertising

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## Abstract

This paper examined the lexico-semantic features of language of religion and advertising. The framework for this work is drawn from linguistic theories of Hutchinson and Waters, Dudley-Evans and St John and Stevrens on English for Specific Purpose (ESP). Investigation reveals complexities that could cause semantic inconsistencies. The study used relevant data from these two disciplines to show the lexical complexities and semantic inconsistencies or difficulties. Through this study, it has been discovered that both the language of religion and advertising have certain features in common such as being informative, eulogistic and persuasive, figurative, employing unusual collocation and deviant forms, employing emotive, adjectives and ungrammatical structures. The study also revealed that the language of religion and advertising differ from each other in that, religion still retains archaic forms while advertising employs simple words. Moreover, religion is wordy and dignified in nature while advertising is brief and casual. It is also observed that religion does not admit fragmentation and deviant spelling patterns but this is observed commonly in advertising. The study further shows that lexical and semantic features of language of religion and advertising distinguish them from everyday use of English language. Hence, features of language of religion and advertising are worth studying and are qualified for unique variety of the English language.

## Key words:

### 1.0 Introduction

The use of English depends largely on the field of discourse. It is therefore to be expected that there should be peculiarity in the applicability of language in the disciplines. This linguistic variation based on field of discourse has generated interest in an area of English referred to as English for Specific Purposes, (ESP). Of particular relevance to this paper, is the revolution in linguistics after the World War II. This revolution occurred in the sense that traditional linguists set out to describe the features of the English language. Those who pioneered the revolution in linguistics began to focus on the ways in which language is used in real communication. The most important word emphasized was 'context' (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: 7); this reveals that language use depends on the context and varies in different contexts. The primary implication of the above is that language is shaped by variety and function. Therefore, in this paper, the language of religion and that of advertising shall be discussed, compared and contrasted after the characteristics of both, as affecting words and meaning in context will have been stated.

Religious language is so removed from everyday conversation as to be almost unintelligible, except to an initiated minority. Religion itself is often emotive, lofty, serious and spiritual, not addressing the mundane but the grand. Its language therefore reveals grave, sober, solemn, serious and spiritual discourse. The text in the original language is a restriction on one's choice of English which does not normally apply to other varieties. Similarly, there are traditional formulations of belief of doctrinal significance, which are difficult to alter without an accusation of inconsistency or heresy being levelled. This accounts for the rigid character of religious language. Moreover, religious English is bent to suit the phenomenon and personality of that which is referred to. The language is figurative in nature and most often, embellished with metaphors and paradox. Words which in other situation would seem meaningless, absurd or self-contradictory are accepted as potentially meaningful in a religious setting. Again, language of religion is sometimes ambiguous. This means, it has more meanings or interpretations than the surface meaning. This statement is confirmed in Etim's assertion (2006: 27):

Religious language is meaningful but only within a context. The meaning of religious words then can best be understood not abstractly but within the context in which it is used.

Besides the fact that the language of religion may have several readings, it is also metaphoric and figurative. Meanings are derived only when placed in context. Karl Marx's observation that 'man is driven to religious feelings by exploitation' suggests the exploitative and oppressive nature of the language of religion. The *eternal bliss*, *eternal condemnation*, *second death* etc. captured by religious language prove man's consolidation in religion. Thus, language of religion, like any other profession, could be manipulated to appeal to the psychology of the oppressed. It is worthy of note that religious English is characterized by Latin words. This is because Christianity originated in the Roman Empire in AD33, and Latin was the religious language. Words like, *Amen*, *alleluia*, *pastor*, etc. are all Latin words in the structure of religious English. Going by its etymological derivation, religion is from the Latin word *Ligare* (meaning to bind), *Relegere* (meaning to unite or to link) and Religion (meaning relationship). This definition captures the bi-polar nature of religion which involves a relationship between man and a supernatural being (Etim 2006). And this proves the language 'sacred', of what is being expressed. Again, religious language combines archaism (old forms) with modern English. Such words as *thou*, *thine*, *ye*, *prodigal*, *whosoever*, *verily*, *cometh*, *howbeit*, *hither*, *henceforth*, etc. are examples of such archaic words frequently used. This language also comprises some theological jargon and complex constructions, especially in liturgical situation. Examples of such jargons include *multitude*, *parable*, *prophecy*, *disciple*, *kingdom*, etc. The language is eulogistic and persuasive in some occasions. For example, in Mathew 11:28 Jesus pleads, 'come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest'. Also, in Isaiah 55:1-3:

Ho, every one that is thirsty, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price... hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Again, 'today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts... (Hebrews 3:7-8). In the case of eulogy, the Book of Songs of Solomon is replete with it and can also be found in Proverbs and Psalms. For example, '... thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold... behold, thou art fair, my beloved, yea, pleasant: also our bed is green' (Song of Song 1:10-16). The semantic relationship between words in sentences or texts is referred to as lexico-semantics. These are predominant in the language of religion such as: *Born again*, *Old serpent*, *widow's mite*, *New Adam*, *Good Samaritan*, *prodigal son*, *Lamb of God*, *Lion of Judah*, *Only begotten son*, *the True vine*, *Bread of life*, *blessing of Abraham*, *curse of law*, *speaking in tongue*, etc. These allusions and metaphors, etc. are only peculiar to Christianity and the word meaning in context would be vague to the non-initiates.

The language of advertising is a language of its own. Mostly, it does not follow the logical rules of everyday conversation. It deviates from the norms because the purpose is brevity and attention driven. It might even be used in a negative way to captivate the audience. Advertising is defined by Ekah (2008: 203) as 'a marketing strategy to make products and services available to the consumers through subtle persuasion' while Dennis (1998: 318) sees it as a 'sale propelling power of a business'. For Wright et al (1998: 10), 'advertising is controlled identifiable information and persuasion by means of communication media'. The term advertising comes from Latin *ad vertere*, meaning 'to turn the mind toward'. Thus, it is a message paid for by an identified sponsor and delivered through some medium of mass communication. The point in all this definitions is the fact that advertising primarily serves as a marketing strategy. The effectiveness of advertising is strongly determined by language, since the choice of words has a crucial meaning in the world of advertising. It is a tool to persuade people to buy a particular product. The language of advertising is replete with brevity, mostly laconic; it thrives on metaphors and idioms, neologisms or creative use of words. It is made up of superlatives, ellipsis, parallelism, repetition, etc. This is because this language is designed to 'grab and hold attention', 'stamp a message on the mind', create image that will forage a link between emotion and the product on offer (Russell, 1996: 176). Besides, it makes use of adjectives, verbs, patterned sounds such as alliteration and assonance etc. In advertising, the verbal group is commonly consists of only one word' and is doled with simplicity (Leech 1972: 121). According to Leech, passive voice occurs very sporadically and so does the application of auxiliary verbs. Two auxiliary verbs often used in advertising are the future auxiliary 'will', because it evokes the impression of 'promise' and the modal 'can'. Thus, the consumer is told that the product gives him the ability to do this or that. If an inanimate subject (in most cases the brand name – Nivea Peeling can...) precedes 'can' the consumer is told what 'possibilities' the product offers (Leech 1972: 125).

On the whole, the language is vague but often emphatic and wholesome in the expression of product content and value. Often, brand names are marked by deviant spellings. For example, 'Peau Claire', a brand of cream, is obviously a pun of the English word 'pure clear'. This, of course, can hinder the appropriate meaning of the product. Equally noteworthy is the fact that advertising often envelops the meaning of words with exaggeration about a product. This is achieved through the use of emotive adjectives, as in the words, 'soothing, fantastic, fabulous', etc. For example, *Union Bank... Big, strong, Reliable!*

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The language of religion and advertising, like every other field of discipline, have registers of their own; very often they do not follow the grammar or logical rules of the everyday language. They are a kind of language that function and familiarize with the contexts in which they are used. Religion and advertising have kinds of languages peculiar to them such that the linguistic features employed help to identify the field that such language use belong. Hence, the choice of language affects the way messages are composed and conveyed. This study, therefore, examines and compares the language of religion and advertising in order to solve the problem of meaning in the language use.

### 1.3 Significance of the Study

The beauty of language and its utilitarian functions deserves attention that is why the study takes an evaluative assessment of the lexical and semantic features of the language of religion and advertising. It examines compares and contrasts distinctive linguistic features of the two fields of discipline and the nature of language they employ. Considering how elaborate and relevant this discourse is, it is believed that this study will certainly aid students to appreciate those peculiar lexical and semantic features that characterize the language of religion and advertising. Also, it would enhance scholarship as it would be a valuable contribution to the study of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). In addition, it unravels the distinction between language use in religion and in advertising and ultimately, serves as a reference material to researchers in this area.

### 1.4 Theoretical Framework

Since the language of religion and advertising belong, to an aspect of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it would be natural to employ ESP as the theoretical framework for this study. English for Specific Purposes or simply ESP can be defined as the study of registers or varieties of specialized English usage. It is a discipline in which linguists focus attention on the language of specific disciplines and how its main function as a means of communication is performed. Ike (2002) observes that both the clothes we wear and chameleon change colours to suit specific contexts and environments. He states that 'like a chameleon with its innumerable colours, English does not only have regional, social and functional varieties but it also has varieties for law, engineering, business, journalism, science and technology, religion etc'. Thus, ESP studies the nature of communication in the various disciplines and professions. In doing this, it focus attention on two concepts which are of interest to this study – registers and jargon. Hutchinson and Waters (1987: 19) argue that 'English for specific purposes is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learners' reason for learning'.

A few other scholars describe it as the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. Others describe it as the teaching of English used in academic studies or the teaching of English for vocational or professional purposes. (Ufot, 2013: 2) Lorenzo (2005: 23) posits that English for Specific Purposes concentrates more on language in context than on teaching grammar and language structure'. In almost all the definitions of ESP, scholars seem to agree that ESP studies varieties of English which are – though standard for the most part – in slight contrast to general English. This can be seen in, especially, the definitions of ESP proffered by scholars such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Strevens (1988) and Dudley-Evans and St. John (1989) of which we shall get more in-depths as this study progresses.

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) arose as a term in the 1960s as it became increasingly aware that general English courses frequently did not meet learners' or employers' wants. This view is supported by Hutchinson and Waters (1987), Robinson (1980), Coffey (1985), Strevens (1977). Their definitions buttress's the ever increasing need of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) over the decades as a result of market forces and a greater awareness among the academic and business community and the learners' need. This prompts Betcher (2006) to write that 'ESP now encompasses an ever-diversifying and expanding range of purposes'. This submission is however in response to Dudley-Evans' (2001) appeal that 'the demand for English for Specific Purposes continues to increase and expand throughout the world'. However, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) view it as 'an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learners' reason for learning'. Suffice it to say that, ESP is designed for different communicative purposes, as well as

environments, professions, etc. this is why no definition can capture its entire component. In this regard, Ike (2002) observes that ‘as the clothes we wear and chameleon change colours to suit specific contexts and environments so are the varieties of English’.

Thus, religious and advertising, being based on ESP, have their peculiar varieties of specialized English usage different from general English usage. This prompted Etim (2006) who was earlier quoted, to state that ‘religious language is meaningful but only within a context’. (:72). Also, advertising English, according to Ekah (2008), Wright (1998), makes use of simple words but in a peculiar persuasive way as a marketing strategy, and does not follow the grammatical rule of everyday English. For Broom (1978), ‘the language of advertising is audience oriented’ (:28). In all, the review shows that language is used to meet the specific need and in context. Thus, religion and advertising employ language in order to suit their respective fields.

One of the current or modern definitions of jargon is given by Ike (2002: 8) that, it is ‘a technical language of a particular profession, group or trade’. In other words, it is a collective term for words, expressions, technical terms, etc. which are intelligible only to the members of a specific group, social circle or profession; but not the general public. The recurring problem with jargon is that only a few people may understand the actual terminology used by different groups. This explains its originating from ‘twittering’; thus, remaining unintelligible to the non-initiates. Against this backdrop, religion as well as advertising has their respective peculiar jargon. Hence, this shall be investigated in the subsequent chapters.

### 1.5 Relevant Literature

Semantics, the study of meaning; it deals basically with the mind to give appropriate meaning to a word or an expression. According to McGregor (2009: 129), ‘the notion of meaning in linguistics concerns that which is expressed by sentence, utterance and their components by language. The message or thought in the mind of a speaker is encoded in a way that sends a signal to the hearer also in a way that the message can be got. He further explains that the context which is being communicated in a language is meaning which makes the language effective. McGregor’s view about meaning points out that both the speaker and the hearer contribute in giving the appropriate meaning to a word or an expression in a language.

Udofot (1999: 6) suggests that ‘it is necessary for semantics to draw a distinction between the usual meaning of a word or an utterance and the meaning it has in a specific circumstance’, she goes on to say that ‘a semantic analysis or study must take into consideration shared knowledge and belief, the society where the utterance is made and the subject that is being discussed’. Hence, religious adherents employ rich lexico-semantic items such as words, phrases, jargon and registers in their vocabulary which distinguish it from ordinary usage and at the same time, restrict it to an initiated minority while upholding its dignity. In other words, it has a rich register which is peculiar to only its converts. One of such usages is the use of archaic phrases and words in their vocabulary. This perhaps informs Ekpo (1991) to write:

The language of religion in general has a wide range of vocabulary which is different from other varieties of language use. The words help to build up a different system of lexicon in the language through the use of archaic words.

Religious language is often poetic, with such literary devices as antithesis, paradox, inversion and metaphor. Such expressions could be found mainly in the biblical books of proverbs and the Psalms. For example, in John 11:25 Jesus says ‘... He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall be live’. This is a paradox. Again, in John 1:16 there is the use of inversion in ‘of his fullness have we all received...’ rather than the direct form ‘we have all received of his fullness’. More so, formal religious English is characterized by a certain deviation from the expected order of elements within sentence and clause structure. For instance, Mathew 13:13 states: ‘therefore speak I unto them...’ thus, the proper subject-verb order is reversed in ‘speak I’ which should read ‘I speak’. The language also employs unusual collocation; there are such combinations as ‘drink and blood’, ‘eat and flesh’, ‘precious death’, etc. which must be understood only in context.

The language is eulogistic and persuasive in some occasions. For example, in Mathew 11:28 Jesus pleads, ‘come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest’. Also, in Isaiah 55:1-3:

Ho, every one thirsty, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price... hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

Again, 'today if ye will hear voice, harden not your hearts...' (Hebrews 3:7-8). In the case of eulogy, the Book of Songs of Solomon is replete with it and can also be found in Proverbs and Psalms. For example, '... thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels, thy neck with chains of gold... behold, thou art fair, my beloved, year, pleasant: also our bed is green' (song of song 1:10-16).

Often, the language involves deviant forms and employs structure that is extremely ungrammatical. For instance, a certain Christian Hymn read:

Give us to drink of very thee  
And all we pray shall answer be

All the above contain semantic inconsistencies which only Christians will give the appropriate meaning and interpretation.

Lexico-semantic features involve questions of larger chunks of meaning than those of the individual lexical items. That is to say, the semantic relationship between words in sentences or texts is referred to as lexico-semantic relationship between words in sentences or texts is referred to as lexico-semantics. These are predominant in the language of religion such as: 'Born again', 'Old serpent', 'widow's mite', 'New Adam', 'Good Samaritan', 'prodigal son', 'Lamb of God', 'Lion of Judah', 'Only begotten son', 'the True vine', 'Bread of life', 'blessing of Abraham', 'curse of law', 'speaking in tongue', etc. These allusions and metaphors, etc. are only peculiar to Christianity and the word meaning in context would be vague to the non-initiates.

At the lexical level, the language of advertising has a rich and colourful vocabulary. Its major lexical features are the use of monosyllabic verbs, favourable words, personal pronouns, neologisms and collocations. Advertisers usually employ simple words, especially monosyllabic verbs in order to make the advertised information understood and remembered, such words as: 'take, try, run, come, grab, see', etc. Again, since the purpose of advertising is to introduce and describe the quality of the product and performance, positive modifiers, especially favourable adjectives as well as comparative and superlative degrees are mostly employed to illustrate the function and nature of the advertised item. Positive adjectives such as: 'big, fabulous, great, amazing, fantastic, unique, special, rich, superb, classic', etc are often used in advertising as Leech (1966) observes: 'Advertising language is marked by a wealth of adjective vocabulary'. These adjectives confirm the desirable quality the product has; also, the consumer establishes an affirmative attitude towards the product.

Besides, comparative and superlative degrees are frequently employed in advertising to indicate the excellent quality of the product or services. However, since it is illegal for advertisers to discredit or unfairly attack other product, they avoid specific comparison between their products and others by naming or referring to their rivals. For example, instead of saying 'X washes whiter than Y', a washing-powder manufacturer would likely say 'X washes whiter' (Goddard 1998). Superlative degree is also employed, besides comparative superiority of the products, to describe the uniqueness of the products, such as: greatest, best, highest, fastest, etc. The use of personal pronoun is predominant in advertising, especially 'yours' and 'we'. Such pronoun makes the language sound warm and friendly, helps to narrow the gap between the advertisers and the consumer and makes the advertising more appealing. Hence, the advertisers try to convince the consumer that all the products and services they offer are out of consideration of his particular needs and benefits, thereby persuade the consumer to buy.

Compounds in English are easy to form and their forms are many and varied. Sometimes, a compound consisting of a number of simple words may convey unusual meaning and so arouse consumer's interest. For example in the advertisement:

'you can lose twice the weight  
With slimfast plan' (Ekah, 2008).

The compound 'slimfast' is used to modify 'plan', meaning 'which makes you slim fast'. But for the sake of expressiveness and brevity, compounds are often used in advertising. This may pose a problem of meaning to some people.

The creativity of advertising language is best seen in its extensive use of neologism. Generally, neologisms can be categorized as coinage, anagrammatic spellings and borrowed words for example, coinages such as 'superslim', 'ultracare', 'kleenex', etc. This act of inventing new words that are not in the English lexicon can confuse some people in getting the expected meaning. Anagrammatic spelling such as Beanz, Meanz, 'WW r u WN4?' (Text message) meaning 'what are you waiting for?' 'What so Naiz n 9ja?' meaning 'what is so nice in Nigeria? (mine). This may be used by those who advertise for foreign education example, studying in Ghana, Canada, Asia etc. The unusual spelling draws the attention of the readers and also indicates

the content of the advert. Yet, it may pose a serious problem of meaning to many readers, as this may be vague to them to interpret.

According to Jowitt (1991: 42), ‘predictable co-occurrences of two or more words can be referred to collocation’. Fowler (1976, p. 143) identifies two basic kinds of collocations which are ‘habitual and unusual’. He refers to habitual collocation as predictable elements while unusual refers to collocational deviation. Advertising mostly thrives on collocational deviation which reveals the product in an unfamiliar way (Ekah, 2008: 210). For example, ‘... more good reason to insist on’... shows a deviation. ‘More’ and ‘good’ are different classes of adjectives placed together for stylistic effect (Ekah, 2008: 210). ‘More’ is in the comparative degree while ‘good’ is in the positive degree. Again, collocational deviation could include orthographic deviations such as ‘Xpress Urself’, used by Express Bank. There could also be unusual combination of letters and symbols. An example is ‘millionNaire’ which UBA formerly used for its advert.

In advertising, ‘verbal groups are mostly of maximum simplicity, consisting of only one word’ (Leech 1972: 12). According to Leech, passive voice occurs very sporadically and so does the application of auxiliary verbs. Two auxiliary verbs often used in advertising are the future auxiliary ‘will’, because it evokes the impression of ‘promise’ and the modal ‘can’. Thus, the consumer is told that the product gives him/her the ability to do this or that. If an inanimate subject (in most cases the brand name – Nivea Peeling can...’) precedes ‘can’; the consumer is told what ‘possibilities’ the product offers (Leech 1972: 125).

On the whole, the language is vague but often emphatic and wholesome in the expression of product content and value. Often, brand names are marked by deviant spellings. For example, ‘Peau Claire’, a brand of cream, is obviously a pun of the English word ‘pure clear’. This, of course, can hinder the appropriate meaning of the product. Equally noteworthy is the fact that advertising often envelops the meaning of words with exaggeration about a product. This is achieved through the use of emotive adjectives, as in the words, ‘soothing, fantastic, fabulous’, etc. For example, ‘Union Ban... Big, strong, Reliable!’

### 1.6 Methodology

The research methodology adopted in this study reflects the theoretical framework mentioned in the introduction. Resources would be drawn from textbooks, library, journals, internet, newspapers as well as *The Holy Bible* (King James Version). Data drawn from these sources would be analysed under lexical and semantic features. Under the lexical category, figurative expressions, eulogy and persuasion as well as informative expressions and use of emotive adjectives would be isolated specifically for discussion. On the other hand, semantic features such as unusual collocation/ deviant forms, ungrammatical structures/ archaisms, compounds and neologisms would also be isolated for discussion.

### 2.1 Analysis of Lexical Features of Language Use

The study reveals that both religion and advertising use figurative expressions, emotive adjectives, informative expressions, eulogy and persuasion.

#### 2.1.1 The Use of Figurative Expressions

Figurative expressions constitute one of the unique characteristics of the language of religion and advertising in passing their messages. This can be found in the Bible or in any advertised item. In order to understand how figurative expressions feature in religion and advertising, it is important to present data collected from these sources, respectively.

**Table 1: Presentation of Data Showing the Use of Figurative Expression**

	Figurative Expressions	Source	Date
Religion	- Behold the lamb of God (Metaphor)	John 1:29	-
	- Behold I come like a thief (simile)	Revelation 16:15	-
	- ... and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb (Paradox)	Revelation 7:14	-
Advertising	- Honda cares (Personification)	The Guardian Newspaper	February 6, 2014 p.45
	- The Pioneer ...reaching HIGHER hEIGHTS (Hyperbole)	Pioneer Newspaper	February 5, 2014 p.11

From the data above, some instances of figurative expressions that characterize religion and advertising may be analysed thus ‘Behold the lamb of God...’ (John 1:29). This expression is a metaphor. This is because ‘lamb’

here does not refer to a young sheep but Jesus. There is a direct comparison of the meekness and innocence of a lamb to Jesus who is also meek and innocent.

Moreover, ‘behold I come like a thief’ is a simile used in Rev 16; 15. This is an indirect comparison of a thief with Jesus who will have to come for his people without a notice. A thief visits uninvited and unexpectedly and that is how Jesus will come. Again, in John 11: 25, Jesus says ‘... He that believe in me though he were dead, yet shall he live’. This statement is a paradox. Another example is ‘... washed their robes and made white in the blood...’ is a paradox used in religion. This would mean impossible or folly literally because blood is red and the white robe would be stained with blood. But there is an underlining meaning to this expression which refers to redemption of the soul.

Accordingly, the advert, ‘Honda cares...’ is personification. This is because human attribute is given to Honda which is an inanimate object. It is only human that can care and not a non-living object. The advertiser is using this to captivate the consumers as everyone needs care. Again the advert, reaching HiGHER HEiGHTS,’ is hyperbole which is used to advertise *The Pioneer Newspaper*. This is an excessive exaggeration. The advertiser is employing words to make the product big and huge. This in another sense suggests that there is no equality with any other newspaper.

**Table 2: Presentation of Data Showing the Use of Eulogy and Persuasion**

	Eulogy and Persuasion	Source	Date
Religion	- ... thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels...’	SOS 1:10	-
	- ‘Ho, everyone that is thirsty, come to the waters’	Isa. 55:1	-
Advertising	- Binatone, brilliantly simple... simply brilliant	The Guardian Newspaper	February 6, 2014 p.24
	- Special subscription offer... Make the right choice now... Beat the Rush! Subscribe today.	Newswatch Magazine	February 7, 2011

From the data presented, analyses of eulogistic and persuasive expression in both religion and advertising are done thus, the expression ‘... thy cheeks are comely with rows of jewels...’ (SOS 1:10) is eulogistic. King Solomon is eulogizing and praising the shullamite woman he is in love with for to be happy. This kind of expression is predominant in Psalms Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs in the Holy Bible. Again, the statement, ‘Ho, everyone that is thirsty, come to the waters’; is persuasive. This is prophet Isaiah persuading the people of Judah to return to God, who is the fountain of the living water. Hence, he is almost begging them in tears to come. Religious leaders today are using this feature to invite members to their churches. Also, eulogy is indicated in the advert: ‘Binatone, brilliantly simple... simply brilliant’. The advertiser is eulogizing and adoring the product, Binatone as brilliant and simple and so presenting it before the consumers. In the same vein, ‘special subscription offer... make the right choice now... Beat the Rush! Subscribe today’ is persuasive in nature. Here the advertiser is persuading the customer to make haste and subscribe as this service is special and the right choice.

### 2.1.2 The Use of Informative Expressions

Both the language of religion and advertising carry information as one of their characteristics. The major objective or religious language and advertising is to pass a message across to clients/consumers and this message is to inform them. This is found in the data presented below.

**Table 3: Presentation of Data Showing the Use of Informative Expressions**

	Informative Expression	Source	Date
Religion	- For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son.	John 3:16	-
Advert	- ...y pay more? Marble staircase Bricks now available	The Guardian Newspaper	February 5, 2014, p.4

From the data above, these informative expressions used in religion and advertising may be analysed thus: ‘for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son’ is informative that God loves the people that he created (the world). Moreover, to show His love for mankind, He gave His only son, Jesus, who died in place of

the people. Information derived in this statement is that Jesus is the only son of God. In the advert, ‘... y pay more? Marble staircase’, is a piece of information that bricks are available in the company; ‘Marble Staircase’ is not costly.

### 2.1.3 The Use of Emotive Adjectives

The emotive of adjectives is common in both the language of religion and advertising. This is evident in Bible and advertising texts. The data presented below illustrate the point.

**Table 4: Presentation of Data Showing the Use of Emotive Adjectives**

	Emotive Adjectives
Religion	- Excellent, omnipotent, mighty, wonderful, good, faithful, Holy.
Advertising	- Fantastic, unique, fabulous, classic, fresh, rich

From the data presented, some instances of the use of emotive adjectives in religion as well as advertising are analysed thus: in religion, emotive adjectives such as Excellent, Omnipotent, Mighty, Wonderful, Good, Faithful, Holy, Marvellous, etc are commonly employed to refer to God/Jesus. These lexical items are carefully chosen as the attributes of God/Jesus and when these are used in religious circle, they are understood by the initiated minority. *Excellent* simply means *above all* in quality, *omnipotent* means above in power, in might (*Mighty*), etc. Also, advertising is replete with emotive adjectives such as *fantastic, unique, fabulous, classic, fresh, rich*, etc and all these showcase the quality of the advertised products or services.

### 3.0 Analysis of Semantic Features of Language Use

Investigations show that both religion and advertising employ features such as unusual collocations, often involving deviant forms as well as ungrammatical structures in their use of English. Furthermore, religion, in particular, employs archaisms while advertising specifically uses compounds and neologisms.

#### 3.1 The Use of Unusual Collocations/Deviant Forms

To understand how unusual collocations/deviant forms are put to use, it is important to see the data presented below.

**Table 5: Presentation of Data Showing the Use of Unusual Collocations/Deviant Forms**

	Unusual Collocation/Deviant forms	Source	Date
Religion	- Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints	Ps. 116:15	-
	- Very, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.	John 6:53	-
	- Therefore speak I unto them	Mathew 13:13	-
Advertising	- More good reason to insist on...	Ekah, 2008, p.210.	2008, p.20

From the data presented ‘precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints’ used in religion shows unusual collocation. Death is never precious; it is painful, heart-breaking, ugly, yet it is said to be precious in religion. This may be vague to the non-initiates. But it means going to be with God after death. Again, ‘verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood; ye have no life in you’. This poses another semantic problem to the non-initiates of Christianity because it is unusually collocated. This expression simply refers to the Lord’s Supper or Holy Communion taken by Christians; it does not suggest cannibalism as non-initiates would think. There are such combinations as *drinks and blood, eat and flesh, previous death*, etc which must be understood only in context. Also, ‘therefore speak I unto them’ shows a deviant form in modern English structure. Thus, the proper subject-verb order is reversed in speak I which should read *I speak*. However, formal religious English is characterized by certain deviation from the expected order of elements within sentence and clause structure. There is also the use of inversion in ‘of his fullness have we all received (John 1:16) rather than the direct form ‘we have all received of his fullness’. Advertising also thrives on collocational deviation which reveals the product in an unfamiliar way (Ekah, 2008, p.210). For example, ‘...more good reason to insist on...’ shows a deviation. *More and good* are different classes of



adjectives placed together for stylistic effect (Ekah, 2008, p.210). ‘More’ is in the comparative degree while ‘good’ is in the positive degree. Moreover, collocational deviation could include orthographic deviations such as *Xpress Urself*, used by Express Bank. There could also be unusual combination of letters and symbols. An example is *millionaire* which UBA formerly used for its advert.

### 3.1.2 The Use of Ungrammatical Structure

Both religion and advertising sometimes employ structures that are extremely ungrammatical, often involving archaism, especially with particular reference to religion. The data below give examples of such structures.

**Table 6: Presentation of Data Showing the use of Ungrammatical Structures/Archaisms**

	Ungrammatical structures/Archaisms	Source	Date
Religion	- Give us to drink of very thee and all we pray shall answer be.	Christian Hymn	-
	- Mala bala saten dele mali ko ro se nte le baro seli mbre momo bolo sentele mbre li nda menda... hete dododede... etc	Michael, M. I. 2011, p.43	2011, p.43
	- Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither.	Job 1:21	-
Advertising	Isuzu... powerful, purposeful, dutiful!	Ekah, 2008, p.199	2008, p.20

Give us to drink of very thee  
 And all we pray shall answer be

As seen from the data, this expression is extremely ungrammatical in modern English structure and contains semantic inconsistencies which only Christians will give the appropriate meaning and interpretation. Here the expected order of elements are deviated totally, the form is distorted. For instance, ‘Give us to drink of very thee’ is vague and meaningless to non-initiates of Christianity, but it makes sense to Christians thus: Jesus is the water of life and his subjects are pleading him to quench their thirst with this water which is Jesus himself. Another problematic occurrence in religion particularly, in Pentecostalism which is one of the most common practices, is ‘speaking in tongues’. From the data presented, quoted in Mary Jane Innocent Michael:

Mama bala saten dele mali ka ro se nte le baro seli mbre  
 Momo bolo sentele mbre li nda mende bra san to ye  
 Ndele ka san bi sento lo nda ie me du bra san ma kan  
 Ndu li nen to ye hete dododede... etc (43).

This excerpt has no grammatical structure at all, and it makes no meaning to the non-initiates or to other Christian sects except the Pentecostlists. Its structure is fast, rhythmic and does not pay attention to grammatical mechanics such as full stops, commas, ellipses, and so on.

In addition, there are elements of archaism found in the data above like, ‘Naked came I out of my mother’s womb and naked shall I return thither’. Thus, the lexical item ‘thither’ proves archaic in religious English. This word is an old form, that is, it is no longer used in the modern English. Advertising often makes constructions that are totally verbless and sometimes made up of adjectives only as in *ISUZU... Powerful, Purposeful, Dutiful*, and *Union Bank... Big, Strong, Reliable!* These are ungrammatical expressions because they contain no verbs that will make them sentences in English structure.

### 3.2 The Use of Compounds/Neologisms

Compounds in English are easy to form and their forms are many and varied. Sometimes, a compound consisting of a number of simple words may convey unusual meaning and so arouse consumers' interest. To understand this see data presented below.

**Table 7: Presentation of Data Showing the Use of Compound/Neologisms**

	Compounds/Neologisms	Source	Date
Advertising	You can lose twice the weight with slimfast plan.	Ekah, 2008	2008
	EXTRA SOFT finetx 2 ply toilet tissue	Moji And Lekan	2005

From the data above, the compound 'slimfast' is used to modify 'plan' meaning 'which makes you slim fast'. But for the sake of expressiveness and brevity, compounds are often used in advertising. Also, the creativity of advertising language is best seen in its extensive use of neologism. Generally, neologisms can be categorized as coinage, anagrammatic spellings and borrowed words. For example, coinage is an act of inventing new words that are not in the English lexicon thus, 'finetex' is a coinage which describes the softness and smoothness of the advertised tissue paper.

#### **EXTRA SOFT**

#### **Fintex**

#### **2 ply toilet tissue**

The advertiser is intimating the consumer that the toilet tissue has fine texture. '2 ply' simply means it has a double layer. That is, the toilet tissue has fine texture and is also thick and comfortable to use.

### 4.0 Discussion of findings

From the discourse, both varieties of language and analysis of the data presentation illustrating them, some similarities as well as differences are revealed between the language of religion and advertising. For instance, both varieties employ figurative expressions in passing their messages. When religion and advertising are considered figuratively, it is discovered that meanings are not derived from individual words but the combination or inter-relatedness of one lexical item to another. That is, a figure cannot be understood outside the context of usage. For example *Lamb of God, come like a thief, washed robes white in blood, Honda cares*, etc used both in religion and advert are figurative. An attempt to isolate individual words will not give the desired meaning.

Another point of convergence discovered from this study is that both varieties of language are eulogistic and persuasive in nature. It is discovered also that, owing to the eulogistic and persuasive nature of both varieties of language, the language of religion and that of advert are sometimes audience oriented. The message they pass across is for the audience, therefore, they select simple and soothing words for better understanding. Another point of convergence between the two varieties is their informativeness. Both language of religion and advertising are informative. The primary aim of preaching and advertising is to disseminate information. They also serve as a reminder and create awareness. Through advert, the consumer may know the price of the product and its relevance; and through religion, the client may know the deep things of God.

Again, it is discovered from the study that by using emotive adjectives, both the language of religion and advertising tend to be exaggerated and hyperbolic. Language of religion, in particular, is bent to suit the phenomenon and personality of that which is referred to. The attempt to capture the awesome nature of God makes for the exaggerated and hyperbolic use of language. For instance, *I Am That I Am, The Lord of host, Most Excellent, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, Greater than the greatest, higher than the highest* and more, are the attributes given to God. Since the purpose of advertising is to introduce and describe the quality of the product and performance, emotive adjectives as well as comparative and superlative degree are mostly employed to illustrate the function and the nature of the advertised item. For instance, *big, fabulous, great, fantastic amazing*, etc. are often used in advert. These adjectives confirm the desirable quality of the product; also, the consumers establish an affirmative attitude towards the product. Also, comparative and superlative degrees are frequently employed in advertising to indicate excellent quality of the products or services. However, since it is illegal for advertisers to discredit or unfairly attack other products, they avoid specific comparison between their products and others by naming or referring to their rivals. For example, instead of saying 'X washes whither than Y', a washing-powder manufacturer would likely say 'X washes whiter' (Goddard, 1998). Superlative degree is also used, besides comparative superiority of the products, to describe the uniqueness of the products, such as: *greatest, best, highest, fastest*, etc.

It has also been discovered from the study that both religion and advertising use both conventional and unusual collocations, often involving deviant forms. Also discovered is that formal religious language is characterized by certain deviation from the expected order of elements within sentence and clause structure. And this poses a problem of meaning to non-initiates as this is vague. This is seen in the data presentation and analyses. There is nothing as deviant as the structures noted in the authorized version of the Holy Bible as found in the data. Through the study, it is noticed that both religion and advertising sometimes use structures that are extremely ungrammatical as in Table 6 of the data. Example in the language of religion is the tongue speaking which is peculiar to Pentecostalism. It has no grammatical structure at all and pays no attention to grammatical mechanisms. But as far as it is used in religious circle, it remains religious language. It is therefore discovered that by virtue of the language of religion and advertising sometimes making use of unconventional constructions, both varieties can be vague in communicating meaning.

At the lexical level, advertising has a rich and colourful vocabulary. Its major lexical items are monosyllabic verbs, favourable words, personal pronouns, etc. thus, advertising employ, monosyllabic verbs in order to make the advertised information understood and remembered, as evident in such words as *take, try, run, grab, get, come, see*, etc. The use of personal pronoun is predominant in advertising, especially, *you and we*. Such pronouns make the language sound warm and friendly, helps to narrow the gap between the advertisers and the consumer and make the advertising more appealing. Advertisers try to convince the consumer that all the products and services they offer are out of consideration of this particular needs and benefits. Hence, persuade the consumer to buy.

Conversely, religion and advertising comprise reasonable divergences in their use of language. First, it is observed that while the language of religion still retains archaic words such as *thou, thine, whosoever, howbeit, yea, verily*, etc., such usages are uncommon in advertising. Also, the language of religion comprises some theological jargon especially, in liturgical situations e.g. *multitude, parable, prophecy, disciple, kingdom* etc. Besides, religion thrives on wordy expressions laden with parallelism, such as:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters... surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life... (Psalms 23).

While advertising uses brief but compelling expressions like,

Enjoy Honda,  
Honda cares  
Best of the best!  
Everybody's bike! (The Guardian, February 6, 2014, p.45)

Again, owing to the sublime and sombre nature of religious language, it often appears dignified and noble, example: 'But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him', (Habakkuk 2:20). While that of advertising is casual and mundane in tone as in Vava furniture advert:

Comfortable like your home...  
...organized like your work (Punch Newspaper, February 7, 2014, p.25).

Moreover, religious language is comparatively more grammatical than that of advertising which is often characterized by fragments. For example, MALDINI Marbles advert:

...y pay more? Marble staircase  
Bricks now available (The Guardian, February 5, 2014, p.4).

Again, unlike advertising, which sometimes uses deviant spellings; religious language uses conventional spelling patterns. For example in advert: 'Xpress urself' for 'Express yourself', no such expression is in religion. Besides, there is no combination of letters and symbols in the orthography of religious language whereas this is found in advertising. Example 'millionaire' formerly used by UBA for its advert. There is also a noticeable rigidity in religious language as opposed to the flexibility in the language of advertising. For example, JIK and PEPSI advert.

Jik it out

Do not say bleach, say Jik (Moji and Lekan, 2005).

PEPSI

GENERATIONEXT (Moji and Lekan, 2005)

Such are not found in religious language. Advertising often makes constructions that are totally verbless and sometimes made up only of adjectives as in *ISUZU... Powerful, Purposeful, Dutiful!*, and *Union Bank... Big, Strong, Reliable!* It is however implied here that the deep structure contains a verb hidden in the ellipsis, which the consumer is constrained to find out, such is absent in religious language. In addition, it is shown through this study that the use of compounds and neologisms is peculiar only to advertising. It is not acceptable in religion, which thrives on conventional spelling patterns. It is discovered that the unusual spelling draws the attention of the reader and also indicates the content of the advert, yet it may cause breakdown in meaning interpretation.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION

In studying the lexico-semantic features of the language of professions such as religion and advertising, it has been noticed that the study is built on the background of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Besides using ESP as its conceptual framework, the paper begins with an explication of the concept of ESP, as it focuses attention on the concept of registers and jargon, within whose purview the study operates. Therefore, it has been observed that, there is a consideration of distinctive linguistic features in both religious English and advertising which prevail at the various levels of language that could be vague or cause semantic inconsistencies.

It has also been observed through analysis of data presentation that Religious English employs established jargon made up of items from Latin, Greek and Hebrew which only the initiated minority would decipher and decode the meaning for appropriate interpretation. The reason being that religious English still retains archaic words and phrases, which make the language dignified and noble. The study reveals that religious English is wordy in nature and also uses conventional spelling patterns. It does not admit fragmentation and deviant spellings. It is observed too that religious language is replete with unusual collocation, sometimes employs ungrammatical structure and is also characterized by certain deviation from the expected order of elements within sentence and clause structure. All these pose a serious semantic breakdown to the non-initiates except the initiated minority.

It has also been discovered that advertising English, although makes use of simple and common words, does not follow the rules of everyday conversation; it deviates from the norms because the targeted intention is more important. It is unravelled that advertisers employ mostly positive modifiers, especially, favourable adjectives as well as, comparative and superlative degrees in order to illustrate the function and nature of the advertised item. This is to confirm the desirable quality of the product and also galvanize the consumer to establish an affirmative attitude toward the product. Also, the study reveals that advertisers often thrive on neologisms, anagrammatic spellings and collocational deviation as well, in order to captivate and attract attention of the audience and for the sake of brevity. But this could also cause a breakdown in meaning interpretation. Since the purpose of language use in advertising is to bring the message content to the consumers, it has been observed that the language is strategically and significantly used in a way that it appeals to the consumers. Consequently, it is safe to conclude that having considered all these distinctive linguistic features together with illustrated exemplification of convergences and divergences involved in religion and advertising, the study avers that the basic fact of language is the tool for general human communication. And its use is dependent largely on the field of discourse and context situation.

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