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Rhetorical Strategies in Secondary News Presentation by Radio Stations in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Secondary gatekeeping—a practice where a news medium selects and broadcasts fragments of the contents of another, primary media—is a novel, but prevalent phenomenon especially in the Nigerian broadcast media. The practice, unlike primary gatekeeping, is yet to receive copious scholarly attention. This study, through a combination of In-depth Interviews and Documentary (Content) Analysis, explored the rationale for newspaper reviews as performed by Radio O-Y-O, Premier FM, and Splash FM, Ibadan, Oyo State, and the delivery strategies employed by presenters of the radio stations. The study is anchored on Monroe's Motivated Sequence (MMS) as its theoretical framework. Findings show that the radio stations' rationale for reviewing news contents of newspapers was to achieve increased audience base, gain improved market value, and earn financial profits. Major devices of delivery, aimed at sustaining audience interest, include dramatisation, paraphrasing and suspense, translations, and voice modulation and mimicking.

Key words: Monroe's Motivated Sequence, Nigerian Broadcast Media, Radio Stations in Nigeria, Rhetorical Devices, Secondary Gatekeeping,

1. Introduction

Prior to the full deregulation of the broadcast industry in Nigeria in 1992, the broadcast media were owned and controlled either by the National, Regional or State Governments. This monopoly continued until the promulgation of Decree 38 of 1992 by the military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. The decree established the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and charged it with the responsibility of regulating and deregulating broadcasting in Nigeria (Akingbulu & Bussiek, 2010; *National Broadcasting Commission,* 2009). The law also empowered the NBC to license stations, regulate content and, generally, set standards for quality broadcasting across the country. This development compelled Government to really take a decisive step to discontinue with its perennial monopoly of the broadcast sector.

The emergence of the new regulatory framework has significantly changed the broadcast landscape in Nigeria: It has allowed private ownership of radio and television in the country, and has intensified the spate of competition in the broadcast industry (Ojebode, 2009; Moemeka, 2009). If gatekeeper X refuses to publish or broadcast certain information that the audience need, they (the audience) have the option of switching to gatekeeper Y or Z. The mass media—radio, television, newspapers, and the Internet— co-exist and compete with one another (Thorburn & Jenkins, 2003). They are all operating probably in the same market segment. And ultimately, each of these competing media organisations must ensure that it remains perpetually afloat by offering what the numerous market forces demand. All these are instances of individual, cultural and societal forces that potentially influence gatekeepers' decisions (Barzilai-Nahon, 2008; Donohew, 2001; Lyons, 2002; McManus, 1995; McManus, 2005; Sang, 2008).

Given this trend of growing competition occasioned by liberalisation of the broadcast media and communications industries (Olorunnisola, 2009), and the emergence of new media, the media audience now have greater freedom and a wider range of alternatives from which to get information about events that affect their lives (Morrisett, 2004; Thorburn & Jenkins, 2003). Multiplication of broadcast stations means that the media organisations must be more sensitive to their roles and their audience than before; they must transmit what the audience really want and what the audience can get from other competing media (Fog, 2004; Lyons, 2002). This phenomenon and other forces have modified or complicated the process of traditional gatekeeping as some media organisations (radio and television in particular) now monitor others, reproduce and report to the audience, contents of other competing media. This practice is described as *secondary gatekeeping* (Ojebuyi, 2012; Riedel, 2008).

The broadcast media in Nigeria (especially radio) in addition to their primary gatekeeping and agenda-setting functions, monitor, select and broadcast some portions of the contents of the print media. This trend—especially in terms of the motive and presentation style—is yet to receive intensive attention of media scholars, particularly in Nigeria. Therefore, our focus in this study is primarily to investigate the rationale for reviewing contents of newspapers, and the presentation style and devices employed by radio anchors to present the gate-kept content matters. These core objectives are explored through the following research questions: (1) why do the radio stations review news

contents of newspapers? (2) what are the persuasive/rhetorical devices employed by news anchors of selected radio stations to present the secondary news contents?

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2. Relevance of Persuasion and Rhetoric in Radio Broadcasting

Unlike the "golden age of radio"—1930-1950—when people gathered around, or sat in front of, the parlour radio console in the evening or morning and listened attentively to the big box talk to them (Fang, 1991), the modern radio permits the listener to put the radio on his shoulder or hands, or tuck it into his back pocket with the earpiece firmly plugged into his ears, while he actively engages in other activities simultaneously as he listens to a radio programme. He can read, engage in argument, watch a football match and drive a car as he listens to radio. This is not possible while watching the television or reading a newspaper which relies on graphics and images to transmit their messages. However, one of the major implications of the freedom that the radio permits is that the listener can become passive and in the process miss the real message on radio. Therefore, in realisation of this peculiarity, radio presenters basically centre radio programming on music, news, and talks (Dominick and Messere, 2004). Given the fact the by switching on the radio, the listeners are inviting the presenter into their rooms (Ingram & Henshall, 2008), the radio presenter must always interact with their, respond to them, and employ effective rhetorical strategies and persuasive styles (Hasan, 2013; Mclnelly & Perry, 2007;) that would perpetually stimulate and sustain the listeners' interest in the radio programme, otherwise, the radio presenter becomes an irrelevant guest.

Since radio is purely an auditory medium, the presenter must use words and sound effects that can create appropriate emotional response (Mclnelly & Perry, 2007) and appeal to listeners' imaginative instinct through the sense of hearing. This is what Hasan, (2013, p. 392), citing T.S. Eliot, tagged the *auditory imagination*. Some of the rhetorical devices that the radio presenter can use to persuade or appeal to the listeners include allusion, irony, metaphor, simile, imagery, overstatement, understatement, personification, humour, rhetorical question, mimicking, comic relief, euphemism, and allegorical imagery (Abrams & Harphram, 2012; Mclnelly & Perry, 2007). The voice quality (Hasan, 2013) and the way these rhetorical devices are used by the presenter constitute the diction of the radio presentation, and contribute to the general effect that the message would have on the audience. Because of the peculiar manner in which these devices are used, they are turned into a figurative language that contributes to the overall persuasive force of the radio broadcast and enables radio presenters to make their points in particularly memorable and meaningful ways (Mclnelly & Perry, 2007) that compel the audience to be active and imprint the message in their minds.

3. Theoretical Framework

We used Monroe's Motivated Sequence Model and as the theoretical anchor for this study. The model is briefly discussed as follows:

3.1. Monroe's Motivated Sequence

Monroe's Motivated Sequence (MMS), a five-step organisational process used to stimulate the listening audience, was developed in the 1930s by Alan Monroe, a speech professor at Purdue University. It is a persuasive strategy employed primarily to arouse a sense

of need in the listeners, satisfy that need, and help the audience get motivated about the usefulness of the central message in the speech (Berry, 2013; Nordquist, 2013). The model is a psychologically based format that echoes and anticipates the mental stages through which the listeners progress as they listen to the speech; it motivates an audience to respond affirmatively to the speaker's purpose (Geiger, 2004; Sprague, Stuart & Bodary, 2010). The model comprises five stages, namely, (1) attention; (2) need; (3) satisfaction; (4) visualisation; and (5) action. Berry (2013) summarises the five steps as shown in fig I.

Fig 1: Monroe's Motivated Sequence--The Five Steps

STEP	FUNCTION	IDEAL AUDIENCE RESPONSE
Attention	To get audience to listen	"I want to hear what you have to say."
Need	To get audience to feel a need or want	"I agree. I have that need/want."
Satisfaction	To tell audience how to fill need or want	"I see your solution will work."
Visualisation	To get audience to see benefits of solution	"This is a great idea."
Action	To get audience to take action	"I want it."

Source: Berry, M. (2013). *Monroe's Motivated Sequence.* California: San Juan USD.

The first step—*attention*—is the stage where the speaker has to establish a motivating atmosphere to attract the listeners' favourable attention to the message of the speech. Listeners' attention can be secured through various rhetorical strategies (attention getting devices) such as using a relevant and famous quotation, asking a rhetorical question and sharing a humorous anecdote or illustration. This stage is very crucial because its success determines the overall effect that the message would have on the listeners. The second stage is *need*. At this stage, the speaker must lead the audience to feel and appreciate the need to listen to the message. The speaker must make the audience become clearly aware of a compelling, personalised problem or need through examples, statistical data, illustrations, or explanations (Geiger, 2004; Sprague, Stuart & Bodary, 2010).

In step three—*satisfaction*—the speaker will now fill the need/want already identified in step two. The speaker should clearly state the action, attitude or belief the listeners must take or adopt to meet the need identified in step two. It is the stage where appropriate solution to the problem/need is proffered. It is important to be sure that the solution offered really fits the need/want. Stage four is *visualisation.* It is imperative that listeners have a clear picture of the benefit they stand to gain. At his stage, the speaker endeavours to intensify his/her audience's desire for his/her message. This can be achieved by using words or illustrations that are capable of creating effective mental picture or auditory imagination (Hasan, 2013). This stage is often called the projection stage because it looks forward to the future The speaker can reinforce this projection by (a) painting a positive picture of the consequence of accepting the message; (b) painting a negative picture

of the consequence of rejecting the message; or (c) combining both negative and positive consequences in a manner that establishes a contrast of the alternatives. The final stage is *action*, where the speech ends with an overall call for the listeners to act in agreement with the speaker's position of belief (Berry, 2013; Geiger, 2004; Sprague, Stuart & Bodary, 2010). It ends on a strong note with powerful and convincing words that would have an enduring impact on the listeners.

For three reasons, this model is considered relevant to the focus of this current study. One, radio broadcast is a form of public speaking where a large, scattered, heterogeneous group of audience is the target. Two, the radio listeners are likely to have other sources of news, and they would naturally remember or adopt the massage that motivates them, the one that has a greater impact on them or promises to benefit them most. Third, radio, like public speaking, appeals to the sense of hearing. To win the hearts of the audience, the radio presenter needs to employ appropriate attention getting devices (rhetorical strategies) as the foregoing Monroe's Motivated Sequence Model espouses.

4. Method

The study combined in-depth interviews and documentary (content) analysis as research designs. It used in-depth interviews to explore the views of editorial personnel of the radio stations selected for this study in terms of the rationale for news reviews. It used documentary analysis to examine the rhetorical devices employed by radio anchors to present the news reviews. The qualitative data for this study were obtained from (1) responses of interviews conducted with six purposively selected producers and presenters of news reviews of Radio O-Y-O, Premier FM, and Splash FM, Ibadan; and (2) a total of 242 secondary content matters randomly selected from the recorded broadcasts of the radio stations from February to December, 2010.

5. Findings and Discussion

To present the data and discuss the findings, we constructed some themes. These themes are used to capture the core issues that reflect in the data as they answer each of the research questions:

5.1. Rationale for Reviewing News Contents of Newspapers

We considered it expedient to first examine the primary objectives of the news review programmes of the selected radio stations. Responses from the news editors, producers and presenters of news review programmes interviewed showed a similar pattern of objectives across the three radio stations—Radio O-Y-O, Premier FM, and Splash FM. The primary reason for floating this programme, as the interviewees, by consensus, explained, was to satisfy the radio audience. By extension, this would increase the listenership for the stations and expand their profit margins in the market place. To do this, the radio stations had to improve their market value by expanding their audience base. This is what the programme—news reviews—was really meant for. This situation supports the argument by Whitney, Sumpter and McQuail (2004) that the single largest influence on the media gatekeepers' decisions is probably that of money.

5.2. Persuasive/Rhetorical Devices in the News Presentation

The mode of delivering the gate-kept contents has been identified as a significant factor that stimulated listener's interest towards the programme. Major devices of delivery that the on-air personnel employed to sustain audience interest include dramatisation, paraphrasing and suspense, translations, and voice modulation and mimicking.

5.2.1. Dramatisation

The presenters of the Yoruba version of news reviews always introduced extraneous comments in the form of humorous, dramatic dialogue just after some interesting stories or before they played commercial jingles. At the beginning of every daily broadcast of the news review, the presenters of the Yoruba version of the review always engaged in an exchange of a lengthened comical dialogue that has almost become the stations' trademark in respect of the Yoruba version of news review. The version of dramatisation employed by the presenters, apart from frequent exchange of banters by these presenters, is hilarious and extended. An example from the Splash FM Station's review of April 1, 2010 is provided as follows:

Dramatisation (Yoruba)	English Translation
Presenter A (Akolawole Olagoke): *Bayo ooo!!!.*	**Bayo!!! (Exclaiming his partner's name)**
Presenter B (Adebayo Faleke): *Ooo. Se o si nkan?*	**Yes. I hope there is no problem?**
Presenter A: *O wa o, oun ree: Boya lo mo wipe* 'rush-rush' *ni yio fi mu rifaasi pada o?*	**There is!! This is it: Do you know that it will hurriedly turn back?**
Presenter B: *Ta a ni o?*	**Who is that?**
Presenter A: *Alangba to t'ori bo iho akeekee, walahi nigba ti atilaawi ba d'ehin mo o l'agbari, enikan ko ni yio so fun un ti yio fi mu ori pada ni* 'rush-rush.'	**A lizard that strays into a scorpion's hole, I swear, would spontaneously hurry back when the stinging insect attacks.**

The foregoing conversation is used as a delivery device to stimulate audience interest

towards the programme. This rhetorical device applies at the first stage of Monroe's Motivated Sequence. This is the stage of *attention,* where the speaker has to establish a motivating atmosphere that would attract the listeners' favourable attentiveness to the message of the speech. Dramatisation as used by the presenters is a rhetorical strategy that serves as attention getter. This is one of the unique characteristics of news review programme: It combines humour with news contents to sustain listener's interest. Newspapers do not have this unique advantage.

5.2.2. Paraphrasing and Suspense

Paraphrasing and suspense are other delivery devices often combined by the presenter to stimulate listener's curiosity towards the day's review. The presenters do this by first running the headlines of the most interesting stories of the day and playing some commercials before the main review. Sometimes, the presenters even paraphrase the headlines and create some suspense either by concealing names of the central characters or leaving out important settings of the stories. They also introduce some rhetorical questions to cap the suspense. After running the headlines in this manner, the presenters go for the first commercial break and come back to start the review in detail. This is done purposely to arrest listener's interest towards the programme. Examples of paraphrasing and suspense are found in the Yoruba versions of Premier FM and Splash FM, Ibadan, as presented in the following headlines read by their presenters:

Suspended Headline	English Translation
Presenter (Abisola Oluremi): *Awon kan ti n pe fun idasile ajo awon afin.... N'ibo nio? Iroyin n bo l'ori e.* Premier FM (*Gbe e si Mi L'eti*), July 27, 2010	**Plans are underway for establishment of Albinos' Association.... Where? Details coming shortly.**
Presenter **(**Folake Otuyelu [*Omoluabi*]**)** *Won ni awon meji ni won ti ba ara won n'ile ejo o..! Nitori esun kinni? E o maa gbo tifun-tedo re laipe.* Splash FM (*Tifun-T'edo*), May 11, 2010	**Reports say two people have been dragged to court... What crime did they commit? We shall give you the details soon.**
Presenter (Abisola Oluremi**)** *Awon kan ma ti n pe fun ki Abenugan Ile Asofin lo roo 'kun nile o... Awon wo ni awon egbe ohun? E o gboo laipe.* Premier FM (*Gbe e Si Mi L'eti*), June 10, 2010	**Some groups are calling for the suspension of Speaker of the House of Representatives.... Who are these people? You will know them shortly.**

Also, at the opening of each day's review, presenters of Premier FM, Ibadan, for example, in the English and Yoruba Versions (*Daybreak Gist* and *Gbe e si Mi L'eti*)

occasionally read headlines from some selected newspapers. At this point, the presenters mention the names of the newspapers being reviewed, but by the time the presenters resume after the first commercial break, they no longer mention the newspapers throughout the review. Perhaps the implicit motive for this is to create suspense and encourage the audience to go and read, and possibly buy the reviewed newspapers. This is where the Monroe's Motivated Sequence also becomes applicable. The final stage—*action*—is relevant here. The reviews were presented in such a manner that could compel listeners to act.

5.2.3 Translations

Translation is another major strategy that the radio stations adopted to sustain listeners' interest. Laninhun (2009) says translation "involves inter-linguistic mediation" whose purpose "is to transmit knowledge or information in plain, appropriate and accessible language" (p. 13). In essence, translation is a communication process where an attempt is made to render, comprehend and re-code in another language a message or an idea coded in one language. While translating news stories to the local language (Yoruba Language), presenters of the radio stations usually introduced some proverbial analogies in order to concretise the stories. That is, the on-air personnel used proverbial translation to create imagery and help the listeners to comprehend the story in the context of their socio-cultural experiences. Examples of such proverbial translations are provided in the following excerpts:

Proverbial Translation	English Equivalence
Presenter (Adeleke Faleke): *Won ni ona tooro naa lo kuku ja si ona iye. Oun naa si ni ona eleyii ti o ogbe Akunyili de oke agunla nitori pe won ni die l'okun ki ipo minister bo mo o l'owo.* Splash FM (*Tifun-T'edo*), April 1, 2010	**Narrow is the way, they say, that leads to salvation. It was the same narrow path that took (Dora) Akunyili to victory as it was reported that she almost lost a ministerial appointment.**
Presenter (Akolawole Oladoke): Irohin eleyii ti o wa lowo mi nibi yii lo n mi tupe-tupe bi eni ti o bo lowo oniwe-ile ti o wa n so wipe won ti pari ayewo fun awon alokoso tuntun lai si awon asoju lati ipinle Ebonyi ati Taraba nibe. Splash FM (*Tifun-T'edo*), April 1, 2010	**The news I have with me here is panting nervously like a fleeing tax evader saying that screening for new ministerial nominees has been concluded without representatives from Ebonyi and Taraba states.**

In the examples above, the translator (presenter) created a metaphorical proximity between the news content (messages) and the relevant proverbial expressions peculiar to the socio-cultural template of the indigenous language (Yoruba Language).

5.2.4. Voice Modulation and Mimicking

Voice modulation and mimicking are also used as persuasive devices by the radio presenters. The on-air personnel of the radio stations, while translating, simultaneously modulated their voices either to capture the mood and tone generated in the story being reviewed or to mimic the characters quoted in the story. These strategies were used to produce some imaginative effect and enable the listeners to visualise the action, actor(s), time and setting of the story being reviewed.

Voice Modulation and Mimicking	English Equivalence
(1) Iroyin eleyii lo n wipe "abukun ko to si emi lati odo enikeni o. Ki onikaluku o yaa gbe enu re dake o!" Ta lo wi bee? Bankole ni o (April 5, 2010).	This news story is saying that "I don't deserve insult from anyone of you. Let everybody shut up!" Who said this? Bankole.
(2) Iroyin ti opon sun kan yii lo n pariwo pe: "iru ewo l'eyi o? Ipinle Gombe padanu awon Asofin-Agba meji laarin wakati merinlelogun si ara won." Eyii ga o!! (April 5, 2010)	The next story is screaming: "what a strange circumstance is this? Gombe State lost two Senators within 24 hours." This is sad!!
(3) "A wa leyin re bi ike o. Emi paapaa n fowo soya pe mo jeje atileyin mi fun o." Raji Rasaki naa lo n jeje bee o fun Aare Goodluck Jonathan (July 27, 2010).	"We are solidly behind you. I am personally assuring you of my support for you." It was Raji Rasaki making this pledge to President Goodluck Jonathan.

As shown in the foregoing examples, the on-air personnel of the radio stations, while doing the translations, simultaneously modulated their voices either to capture the mood and tone generated in the story being reviewed or to mimic the dramatis personae (characters) quoted in the story. These strategies were used to produce some imaginative effect and enable the listeners not only to understand the content of the news stories being reviewed but also to visualise the action, actor(s), time and setting of the story being reviewed. The use of translation, voice modulation and mimicking as rhetorical devices can be situated at the stage four of Monroe's Motivated Sequence. This stage is *visualisation.* As explained in the literature, this stage constructs a clear picture of the benefit the audience stand to gain. It is at this stage that the speaker intensifies his audience's desire for his message. This is possible by using words or illustrations that can create effective auditory imagination or mental picture.

Overall, as the findings of this study have shown, Monroe's Motivated Sequence (Berry, 2013; Geiger, 2004; Nordquist, 2013; Sprague, Stuart & Bodary, 2010) is applicable here. As the radio presenters open the presentation with humours, jokes and other rhetorical strategies, they attract listeners' *attention*—stage one of Monroe's Motivated Sequence. The depth of the news reviews spiced with rhetorical devices that stimulate auditory imagination (Hasan, 2013) further sustains audience interest and assurance of deriving satisfaction from the programme in terms of getting information about daily events in their environment. Stages two and three (*need* and *satisfaction*) become relevant here. The impact of these rhetorical devices would manifest in the eagerness of the audience to continue to patronise the programme. This is the final stage—*action.*

6. Conclusion

This study has shown that the overt reason for secondary gatekeeping by the selected radio stations is to win more listeners by giving them a wide range of news contents that the conventional news bulletin does not and cannot accommodate. As conceded by the interviewees, the underlying covert motive, however, is to make more money for the stations through improved market value. The situation gives credence to the observation by Ojebode (2009) that the profit-driven Nigerian economy set off by government's neo-liberal policy has accentuated competition and stifled the market. Therefore, for the media organisations to survive in the highly competitive media and communication industries in Nigeria, they must devise further means of winning more audience and expanding their profit margins. This, perhaps, is what the radio stations intended to achieve through their news review programmes. This secondary gatekeeping practice is what Pearson, Brand, Archbold, and Rane (2001) describe as "safety net" (p. 27), a phenomenon where editors of one media type monitor and report contents of the other media purposely not to miss out the important news of the day that would really interest the people. Since the mode of delivering the news reviews is considered a key factor in attracting and sustaining interest of radio listeners (Hasan, 2013; Ingram & Henshall, 2008), it is recommended that radio presenters should continue to adopt, moderately, these rhetorical devices and other legitimate means to attract listeners to their radio stations.

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