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## **RELIGION OR CULTURE: GENRE OF ORAL TRADITIONAL HERBAL DRUGS PROMOTERS IN HAUSALAND OF NORTHERN NIGERIA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Hausa people have maintained a long culture and tradition which have been diffused into Islam – their religion. The oral traditional way of marketing herbal products involved the ecology of socio - culture and religion. This long cultivated oral culture conveyed a variety of genres – jokes, advertisements, songs, etc. Oral tradition as the Hausa is concerned remains a central human communication tool. However, both orality and literacy co -exist in all cultures of the world. The understanding of these interfaces is better known in the light of socio –religious frameworks. The herbal product promoters employed multiple discourse strategies to multiple audiences in order to pass their messages. One powerful means was the inclusion of religious concept - the involvement of divinity – Allah, and the Prophet Mohammed. The promoters were proficient in Hausa, the lingua - franca of the North as well as non classical Arabic. Thus, language manipulation is their weapon. As a strategy, some of these *Mallams* (Islamic teachers) spent a lengthy time preaching in public places. When they noticed that a large crowd had gathered, that was the right time to venture into commercial activities. This was a deliberate trick which had yielded positive results as far as the business was concerned. The question was always asked: was the gathering religious or commercial? My interactions with some of them indicated that this has been the style which has been passed from generation to another. The findings indicated that the Hausa herbal drug sale promoters used religious devices to penetrate into the desires of the customers via the use of divinities.

**Keywords:** genre, culture, religion, discourse community, drugs

### **INTRODUCTION**

This paper wishes to affirm that oral traditional way of advertisement possesses vastly more aesthetic socio - cultural significance. The appreciation of the cultural and religious relevance in presenting a particular type of discourse should be seen in the light of the spoken genre. Thus, this paper intends to portray a fair structure of the oral advertisement genre which is influenced

by Arabic and the contemporary culture in northern Nigeria. Additionally, this paper contributes to relative absence of ample research on oral advertisements in the Hausaland in northern Nigeria. Consequently, the paper goes beyond academic exercise; but a reflection of the aesthetics of sale promotion genre typical of a community which has been diffused by two cultures: Islam and traditionalism. Furthermore, this paper argues that both literate and non literate societies need and off course use oral traditions as they are part and parcel of every one's daily life. It is the basis of their politico – social as well as religious life. As it shall be explained later in this paper, there are certain linguistic components which are better explained if they are used orally. Historically, oral tradition has been functional much before the advent of writing, informal education or orality has been one form of disseminating education as everyone in the society got to understand this oral tradition. In Africa, Oral traditions are also used for settling communal disputes without patronizing the court of law. It is also functional for succession to the office of chieftaincy as well as other methods of transmission of power. When conflicting claims are made for certain portion of land, the people often narrated the ancestral history and the movement and migration of the tribes to determine which particular tribe has the rightful claim to the land. Oral tradition is thus an important aspect of African traditional life.

Foley (1990) presents a beautiful and a vivid definition of oral tradition through, an exposition of a 'word' which he defines as just a speech – act, a unit of utterance, an atom of composition and expression. As such, it is never what the literate users of texts mean by words. Likewise, the ancient Greek oral poet Homer describes an 'epos' (literally, 'word') that is always a speech or story rather than a collection of dictionary entries, and the old English poets of Beowulf and other oral – derived poems likewise speaks of a 'word' as an entire unit of utterance. Examples abound which include international traditions of Mongolian concept of a 'mouth – word' once again much larger than the typographical units. Thus, the realm of oral tradition, the vehicle for expression – the sound – byte is a unit appropriate to the medium.

The African continent is a home of several hundreds of active and vital oral traditions, including epic, folktale, oral praise poetries or ballads, oral history, folk dance, oral advertisement genres, etc. Additionally, oral communication is a vehicle through which all the appropriate emotions and feelings are illuminated within the sediments. The accuracy and the emotion of oral tradition is a unique and one kind of opportunity to convey tones exactly the underlying tones of a legacy and why it is important and relevant to the family heritage. From the ongoing, a considerable amount of work on oral tradition has been published in the last century, but the facts are somewhat superficial and in most case inaccessible to many young researchers.

The African continent as well as the West seems to be rich in oral traditions, although the West lays much emphasis on literacy and written traditions. As argued above, all societies are (and

still) bound by the ties of oral tradition because it is the basis of the written genre. This paper intends to erase the notion that oral tradition has no authorship, rhyme, meter, etc. are used to convey specific meanings. Oral tradition possesses certain characteristic and it is very crucial for the realization of African early form of literacy. After all, oral expression involves the emotive situation and the beauty of the voice which indicates the sincerity – all the variegated aspects contribute to the effectiveness of languages use. Furthermore, expressiveness of tone, gesture social expression aromatic use of pause, rhythm, the interplay of passion, dignity or humour, receptivity to the reactions of the audience or a listener, etc. are not mere embellishments; they are integral part of oral discourse which many seem to ignore. Also, the use of proverbs and figures of speech enhance the stylistics aspects of the speech which the speaker can effectively utilize. Thus, the appreciation of this form of language depends largely on the degree of awareness which cannot be equated with print. Additionally, since the speaker faces his/her listener or audience, s/he can take advantage of this to enhance the impact of the message. Similarly, the visual aspect is somehow very crucial if it is dramatized can enhance comprehension.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theory of discourse community helps us to see that it is only through community being part of some ongoing discourse that people can as individuals write/speak, and make /have purpose to achieve.

Swales (1990) describes communities as group of people who have goals, or purposes and use communication to achieve those goals/purposes. Central to discourse communities is the notion of genre that is the organizational structures of language spoken/written which help to define and justify discourse communities. Genre according to Swales (1981b, 1985, and 1990) is recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often, genres are structured and conventionalized with allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse communities to achieve private intensions within the framework of socially recognized purposes. This definition can be better understood by further clarifications. First, genre, is a recognizable communicative events characterized by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by members of the professional or academic community in which it occur.

Members of a particular academic/professional community do not only possess adequate knowledge of their communicative goals of the community in which they belong but are also vast in genre structures in which its members participate daily during the course of discharging

their responsibilities. The result of the experience /training gained, gives genres conventionalized structures. Third, ‘constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form, and functional value’ explains that a communicative liberty has certain idiosyncratic liberty or style will be termed not only, but inappropriate and possibly unacceptable. It is based on the stated kinds of convention that both members and non members can distinguish one genre from another. This is perhaps one reason why members of a discourse community structure genres in almost the same way. Fourth, ‘these constraints are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intensions within the framework of socially recognized purposes’. In any professional/ academic community, expert members usually have greater expertise of the conventionalized knowledge than non- members. Based on this fact, expert genre producers tend to be more creative and can manipulate linguistic repertoire within stipulated rules. This means that the ability to demonstrate artfulness is anchored on sufficient knowledge of the genre and discourse community at large.

## **METHODOLOGY**

There were just two sources of data collection: primary and secondary. The primary data came from the first - hand information gathered through interviews and observations. Those interviewed were the promoters and their customers. While conducting the interview, a tape recorder played a vital role. This method accounted for the simplified impression of oral herbs promotions. This method, though by no means universal, reliance on the tape recorder has helped the current researcher in conducting many researches. Where the sales promoters themselves used tape players, the researcher just dubbed from the ones obtained from the promoters. Reactions and participations from the listening audiences were very difficult aspects of the data collections. However, notes jotted down during the time of observations were vital aspects of the whole exercise. Secondary data consisted of texts from Islamic scholars, the Holy Quran and other relevant texts.

Items that were recorded underwent transcribed into its written equivalence. To achieve this noble task, a research assistant was recruited since the current researcher was deficient in Hausa language. The paper adopts a quantitative approach. This method was deemed appropriate because all that concerned the researcher was to come up with a generalized statement on the genre of herbal promoters in the far northern Nigeria. 39 sales promotions excerpts have been collated and analyzed but for the reason space, only two illustrations were provided.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Genre analysis has been one of the current influences on understanding language use. It is defined as abstract, socially recognized ways of using a language. Thus, the genre analyst shows

a genuine interest in the use of language to achieve communicative goals through a dynamic explanation of the way experts of a language manipulate generic conventions to achieve a variety of complex goals by combining sociolinguistic perspectives, especially the use of ethnographic information with those of cognitive perspectives. Since this paper is concerned with spoken discourse, literature on orature is pertinent. For instance, Ozuma (2004:72) explains, *orality refers to all kind of unwritten communication of intellectual significance*. Based on Ozumba's claim, orality is understood to be a process and product of history, religion, philosophy and culture. In a related dimension, Uduigwomen (2002) laments that orality comprises abstract things which include: myth, fable, legends, stories, proverbs, folklores, songs, dances, liturgies, rituals, pithy sayings, riddles, adages, ideas, social attitudes, conventions, institutions, and customs. These products can serve as identifying symbols of humanity. On the other hand, Oluwole (1999:3):

*Says, spoken words exist only for a very limited time and can travel on their own only within the limited distance because of this short spatio –temporal existence. Oral tradition in a substantial sense is quite ephemeral...the inherent dual short comings of oral expressions, that is, the limitation of time and space can be greatly reduced through the use of human memory. Yet, memory is never a perfect way of recording or transmitting thought because lapses do occur through normal and accidental condition.*

In addition to the aforementioned, mouth – to – mouth information is considered as one of the most important sources of information Ashtianti (2009). If the above statement can be likened to advertisement, or sales promotions, oral form of speech is crucial especially in a society where people no longer have confidence in paid advertisements as information received through interactions tends to unveil personal experiences Ranjaba (2010). Similarly, oral traditional advertisements and exchange of empirical knowledge have significant influence in the consumer's choice as it affects the comprehension of the information about a particular product, Gruen et al (2006). Furthermore, Hansen (2012) argues that oral tradition is another benefit of communicating a legacy in the oral tradition as it encompasses the inclusion of emotion.

Hansen (2012:9) argues: African orature has a long tradition and one major reason for attaining its quotability is that, it is also informational in its logic and thematic finalization. It asserts facts about my history, about the environment in etiological tales and riddles. It may also be directive as proverbs and riddles, but particularly in fables told by the elders to children while some works of arts and other traditional artifacts have be forgotten, oral tradition which involves advertisements is skills worthwhile in some African setting. Most significant, oral traditions are a medium of instruction. This assertion draws a parallel line with pragmatic value of the world.

### **Brief History of the Hausa People**

The Hausa are the people who currently live in the northern sub – region of the Sahel in Nigeria and Niger. They are predominantly Muslims (at least today). They formed important kingdoms of Africa especially during the Saharan trade routes.

The first Hausa states began to develop in the Sahel region of 500 – 700 AD. Gradually, several states which included Daura, Kano, Katsina, Gobir, Kebbi and Zaria emerged. These states had grown politically, economically, religiously and developed strong ties with one another. Some historians claimed that an Iraqi scholar, Bayajida was the forefather of the Hausa, others sources said that the Hausa states may have been founded by Berber immigrants from the north of the Sahara.

Islam was/is an important part of Hausa culture, customs and traditions brought about by some Arab merchants from the Middle East. The religion seemed to have acceptance first by the rulers and second by the poor majority in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Besides the Hausa was/is another ethnic group who co – existed along with the Hausa was/is the Fulani. The Fulani were treated as second class citizens which led to resent the Hausa rule. By 11<sup>th</sup> century, a charismatic Islamic Fulani ruler, Usman Dan Fodio who hailed from Gobir – one of the Hausa states began a religious movement which later metamorphosed into *jihad*. According to him, his advocacy was an attempt to preach and enforce true Islamic religion since most of the so – called Muslims at that time mixed Islam with other non Islamic practices which he thought contravened the Prophet's teaching. As a mark of vehement refusal of this new approach advocated by Usman Dan Fodio, an attempt was made to assassinate him but without success. Rather, he grew stronger than ever and formed the Sokoto Caliphate. Thus, the Hausa aristocracy was immediately replaced by Fulani aristocracy but adopted the Hausa culture as well as their language. For reason, the Hausa began to see the Fulani as their partners since they seemed to have a mixed culture. Presently, the two ethnic groups get blended and they are generally referred to as Hausa – Fulani. In fact, it is very difficult to distinguish one from another as they mingle freely.

The role of Usman Dan Fodio which was a little beginning has played a decisive role in the present – day Hausa – Islamic culture. Thus, arguably Islam is a system of life not only to the Muslims in the northern Nigeria, but also non Muslims. This can be reflected at least for three main reasons: first, the rate which they code switch and code mix Hausa with Arabic – the language of Islam, second, the numerical strength of Muslims in northern Nigeria and third, the dress code by the non Muslims especially in the far north (although the effect of modernization is apparent).

Due to effects of Islam in the Western Sudan – the seat of the Hausa people has been profoundly influenced by Muslim impact. This is evident in the external of life, names dress, styles,



festivals, ceremonies, etc. Thus, the general effects of Islam in the Hausaland have been dominant – the main stimulants for the far reaching changes in the entire culture and ideas of the people. Furthermore, the spread of Islam and the growth of some cities precipitated by the Saharan trade routes helped to stimulate the intellectual life of the Hausa as they attached values to Islam, the urge and ability to read, recite and understand the Quran. Most of their system of Quranic literacy involves travelling from one to another, settling down for a while, sometimes for years with particular Islamic masters who instruct the young learners on basic Islamic life and knowledge. Thus, Islamic education plays a very significant role in shaping people's life styles Smith (1959). This active trading culture has established a complex society that included urban and rural Muslims, non – Muslims and a cosmopolitan mixture of immigrants setting in the northern region of Nigeria. The stratifications of Hausa society are remarkable for its intricacy, affecting individuals at all levels of society.

**Figure 1: Map of Hausa land in Nigeria**



The map above indicates the present Hausa states in Nigeria with the following towns: Azare, Bauchi, Guasau, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kebbi, Kastina, Kano, Sokoto Kaura Namoda, Jega, Zaria and Zamfara, While these are original Hausa major towns, virtually all other states and towns in north share common characteristics in terms of religion, culture, customs, tradition due to the effects of both Islam and linguistics, etc.

**Analysis**

**Excerpt (1)**

**Conversation between a journalist and a herbal promoter**

**Journalist (Danjarida in Hausa)**

<b>Hausa version</b>	<b>English version</b>
<p><b>Danjarida:</b> Bismillahi Ra hemani a Rahim (Arabic doxology). Mai sauroro barka da warhaka. Barka mu da sake kansancewa tare da ku. A cikin wata tattaunawa ta musamman. In da muke kar ziyara ta musamman cibiyar wani shaharraren mai bada magani a nan garin Maiduguri. Yau ma kamar makon da ta gabata ce gani da sharharen maigani a cibiyasa wacce ake kira ABDULLAHI SARKIN BAKA wada ake lakabi da Wazirin daji. Ga duk wani mai sha'awar tun Sarkin Baka zai ya tuntursa a lamba waya: 08068269442/ 07082857860</p>	<p>In the name of Allah. Listeners good afternoon. I am glad to meet you again in this discussion where we visit the professional herbal drugs promoters here in Maiduguri. Today like the previous days, we have in our midst the man who specializes in herbal treatment of diseases whose name is Abdullahi whom we nicknamed the king of the wilderness. Anyone who wants to have a discussion with should please call via the following GSM: 08068269442/07082857860. The king of the wilderness, you are welcome.</p>
<p>To, Sarkin Baka, barka da warhaka. Barkanka da chikar yau.</p>	<p>Sarkin Baka: in the name of Allah the beneficent the merciful. I greet you all.</p>
<p><b>Sarkin Baka (the herbalist)</b> Bismillahi Ra hemani a Rahim: Yauwa barkan da yamma. Barka da warhaka. In gaisuwa.</p>	<p><b>Journalist:</b> How is goes the day? Sarkin Baka: I thank God. I thank God. I thank God. Today God has brought me here in your midst. Like the days past, people have gathered. All praise be ascribed to God almighty the author of existence. Ladies in our midst who are due for marriage may God help them to find suitable</p>
<p><b>Danjarida:</b> Yaya jama'a?</p>	<p>suitors. May God grant our leaders the wisdom</p>
<p><b>Sarkin Baka:</b> Allahamdulilahi, Allahamdulihi, Allahamdulihi. Yau gashi Allah ya kawoni. Kamarda makon daya gabata, ga jama'a sun taru. Dukkun yabo da godiya sun tabbata ga</p>	



Allah day a kaddara rayuwa. Wanda suke halin kakanikayi, Allah ya basu abun yi. Zaurawa, Allah ka basu abokan aure. Yamata da suke neman aure, Allah ka basu. Shugabani mu Allah ka basu basira suyi mana aiki mai kyau. Ni Abdullahi ba bako bani ga yanjarida. Duku mai matsala na rashin lafiya to ya zuyarci cibiyar mu nan kusa da El - Kanemi makaranta , daula da Alhaji Baffa.

Iyanyanmu mata Allah ya kara masu hakuri da juriya. Maza kuma, Allah ya taimake su yadda suke taimake mu. Shugabanaimu Allah ya basu lafiya. Ni Sarkin Baka, baboyeye bani ba ne. Ina yawao gari gari. Duk wanda Allah ya jarabshi da larura to ya ziyarce mu. Ni Sarkin Baka Wazirin Daji. Ni Abdullahi Sarkin Baka, ina kewayar kawuye, Local Government da garuruwa har kasan waje. Ina temakawa al'uma Annabi. Inje Kano, Kaduna, ko Katsina, ko Zamfara ko Sokoto. Na gaje wanna saurauta a wajen kaka na. Koma, kowacce irin cuta za'a samu sauki da yarda Allah. Mutumin da cewa babu wata cuta da bata da magani. Duk wata cutar da Allah ya saukar tana da magani sai dai in baka sani ba.

Kamar yadda Allah ke cewa, 'ban saukar da cuta ba said a ya saukar da magani ta'. Tun ina shekar guma saha uku na gada. Sauyoyi, ko

and knowledge to give proper governance. I Abdullahi, I am not a stranger to journalists – we have been partners in this business. Anyone who is ill possessed is advised to visit our head office locate at adjacent to El – Kanemi College of Islamic Theology, a stone throw to Alhaji Bappa's house. May God grant our mothers mercy and patience in all their undertakings. Also, men in our midst, may God help us to assist our leaders to discharge their responsibilities effectively. I the king of the wilderness, I am very popular as I travelled to many places. Indeed, everyone knows me. Anybody who is infected with diseases should endeavor to visit our business office. I Abdullahi the king of the wilderness visit villages, local government headquarters. I also visit other countries in order to help humanity – the Prophet's servants. I Abdullahi, I travelled to Kano, Kaduna, Sokoto, Zamfara and Katsina. I inherited this title from my grandparents. No matter the nature of the diseases, there is a cure for it by God's grace. People often say that there is no disease that is without a cure. Every diseases that God created has a cure. I got this knowledge to administer drugs since I was 13 years old. Some people say that if you are infected with a disease, you

sake sake a saraffa a bawa al'uma a yi amfani das hi. Wasu al'uma suna cewa idan Allah ya jarabba mutun da cuta sai lokaci daya yaya maka. Koda kana rayuwa wajen neman duniya, shi nema sauki mai ibada ne. Wani yana da matsaloli fitsari zai je bayan gida sau goma, ko ciwon kirji, ko baya azumi, duk da falalar azumi Ramadan. Ko yan mata sun rasa aure an buga – an buga babu wanda yazo neman. Ko ka shika gida ranka yabaci. Ko wani ya bata maka rai. Kamar yadda kaga taron maza da mata daban.

Magani ba dabarar mu ba bane, ba karfin mu ba ne. Yi ne daga Allah wata cutar. Bana bokanci. Bana shirka. Bana sabawa Allah. Bana bai mutu magani a je a yi tsubbace - tsubbace. Ba mu muke bayar da lafiya ba. Magunguna na wanda suke yi tawakkali da Allah.

Mutane suna zuwa daga nesa basu same nib a. Na tafi daji neman magani. Akwai wani yaro da shekar bakwai. Idan yabaka magani, ka karba kayi amfani dashi. Daga karshe, abin d azan gaya maka Allah yasa magani ya masa amfani. Muna son mutu da ya nemi magani da rasa, yazo wajen mu ko aljani ne, ko surri aka yi masa. Allah yasa duk wanda yazo wajen mu, yazo ba don neman magani don cutar da wani

should wait for a divine healing. While, I wish to reiterate that trust in God is also godliness. If anyone is suffering from urinary difficulty, and the person urinates more the required number, or chest inflammation, back aches, or a young lady lacks a suitor, or gets offended easily just men –women are two poles apart so are treatments to sickness different. The power to diagnose is a gift from God for I do not possess the power because I neither practice witchcraft nor help the wicked to harm someone. Due to my vast knowledge and assistance I render, people come from a long distance to seek for help, but I was away – I went to the bush to obtain some herbs. Believe my words, if a little lad gives you a medicine in the form of herb, just believe that it work for you. Finally, it is my desire that God almighty will provide solutions to your ailments. I thank God for everyone here.

ba. Daga karshe, muna godiya ga Allah.

**Excerpt (2)**

<b>Hausa version</b>	<b>English version</b>
<p>Bismillahi Ra hemani a Rahim. Jama'a garin nan, ina mu sallama irin ta Mucillinci. Mun kawau muku magani dun ku samu lafiya da iyalin ku. Da yardan Allah, yau zamu bayana mu irin maggaguna da muka kawau na ciwo daban daban mai kamar haka: ciwon mara, kaikayin gaba zuwa basir. Na ruwa ne. An riga an tafa, an tace. Idan ka jijjiga, ka sha, ka jifar da ampty robba. Idan mutun yana da basir ko wane irin basir ne, kayi magani ka gaji, baka dace ba, duk irin yadda yake damunka, wallau Allah yayi maka tsiro ne, ko mai kaikayi, ko digar da jinni, ko mai tsaga dubura, basir ko mai hana bayan gida, ko mai saka gudawa, ko mutum da zai je fisari ya gama ya cigaba fisari ya gama yana fida fisari, ya bata masa wandu, ko yayi fisari yaga jinni, ko mutum da zaiyi fisari yaji zafi, ko mutum yaji kaikaiyigansa, ko mutum da zai je rukui Sallah ko sujada yaji kamar goshinsa zai fadigaba. Sanyi ne. Kayi aski kaji kanka yana gari – gari, idan, ko mutum ya kwanta barci yaji bayansa suna masa</p>	<p>In name of name of God the beneficent and the merciful. The people of this town, I bring greetings to you in the Islamic way. We have brought herbs for your family health. By God, the drugs we brought are for the treatment of the following ailments: inflammation of the bladder, itching of the genital organs, and pile related diseases. This drug has been boiled, sieved and ready for consumption. Just drink it and discard the container. The drug also treats the following ailments: piles of various degrees, if even the patient has tried a different means but with success, just try this one, it is unique and your will be healed. Also, all patients who passes bloody stool, feel dizzy, severe headache, migraine, dysentery, backaches, irregular menstruations, or any disease, this drugs will cure all your infirmities.</p>

ciwo, ko kafasa tana masa ciwo, mai ciwon baya, mai ciwon kashe, mai yawan zafin ciki, mutum da mazakutasa bata da karfi, mace da take gani al'adan ta fiye da sau uku a wata,ciwon mara, ko mace matar aure ko budurwa tana fama da ciwon mara matsaloli ciwon mara kowanene irin ciwo mara ne idan aka samu wanna magani a jijjiga a sha a jefar da amti robba. Zai wancke mara da duk wani datti daka marasa. Za'a fisarin sa. Wanna magani mun riga mun tace muna bayar das hi akan naira dari. Duk mutumin day a manllake wanna magani, ka sha ka jefara da amti roba.

## ANALYSIS

In both excerpts (1&2) above, the speakers used Islamic doxology to begin the conversation. The use of God is usually associated with a positive and supreme power of the Creator or divine authority of the state of affairs. Also, the positive ascribing of power of divinity implies an absolute subordination to the source of power- the definite source – God *Allah*. It is a sales strategy used in exploitation of a reality. This strategy can be applied to cover up a reality which does not allow the listener to question or judge the authenticity of the drugs but accept everything the way it is presented. Consider the speaker's exonerating himself from evils, in excerpt (1). *Bana saba wa Allah ...bana boka ci...* (I neither contravene God's laws, nor engage in any form of Satanism). Divine use of language can be argumentative especially in the manner in which it is used as it reflects the perspectives in the life of the members of the audience. For instance, 'God' or 'Prophet' indicates a shared knowledge about the concept such as faith and believe. Similarly, disease or ailment may refer to a different fragment of reality depending on whether one is a medical personnel or a religious person since what falls within the frame of disease or ailment is debatable.

The use of mystification through the nickname *Sarkin Baka* (the king of the wilderness) makes reality inaccessible to the audience. Consider the use of 'I went to the bush'. In excerpt (1), '...Medications are not an individual person's making; they are God's wish for mankind, for I do not have the power of my own – it's God's'. The audience cannot ascertain this statement as a reality because it is an obscured statement used to prevent the audience from understanding the fragment of reality. Similarly, it is a discourse style used in sales promotion genres - a deliberate style to deter the listener from engaging in any form of evaluation. Furthermore, the use of 'my grandparents' which is a possessive determiner shows the speaker's recognition of lineage as his source of power which God has endowed the family with. The implication is that one cannot acquire the knowledge he possesses, for it is God's gift to the family (probably only). Therefore, the audience should not query his source. Furthermore, the use of divinity to buttress claims indicates that the speaker's religiosity; it is a typical discourse strategy used in the northern Nigeria to prove one's inclination with his faith. The faith based - technique as used in sales promotion is aimed at covering up falsehood or doubt in the mind of listener. It is also a sort of proof that the speaker respects the Creator and wishes everyone who patronizes his products to follow suit.

On the other hand, the use of euphemistic language *mazakuta* (male genital organ) as against penis *bura* or *dubura* (anus) is euphemistically used to avoid vulgarity. The device is creatively applied to hide some aspects of reality in the discourse as the language is not meant for the novices; rather, only proficient Hausa speakers or members of the discourse community are familiar with such terms. Similarly, the speaker's domestication implies the familiarity of the speaker with the geography, belief and the situation of the audience. Consider the use of the phrase, in excerpt (1) 'I am not a stranger in this business', '...I visited Kano, Kaduna, etc.' implies a group membership. The use of 'thank God' in excerpt (1) which is repeated three times indicates a typical illustration of an informal or familiar spoken genre. It is emotively uttered for emphatic purpose.

In both excerpts, the use of the coordination of clause elements, *ko* (or) which occurs within different clause elements makes the whole sales promotion genres musical and emphatic which is achieved via the enumeration of the items exaggerated, the nature of the diseases and the qualification of assurances that the matters are difficult, yet simple or easy to handle since God is in charge of the healing process. This sales move can be associated with a fallacious attempt which can be perceived as an act of being dubious since only one form of drugs which stands to cure multiple diseases in a single or few doses. The speaker's claim is better described as unreal as he states the meaning of the situation by adding emotional charges as indicated in excerpt (2) *I have a vast experience on herbal drugs as I started this business since I was seven years old.*

*Some people say that if someone is infected with a disease...* The speaker is being self evident about his proclamations.

## **DISCUSSION**

My investigations revealed that 100% of the people who constituted the data for this study is Hausa natives and of course Muslims. So, it is not surprising that the whole approach is ethno-religious in nature. This because Islam takes a holistic approach to health since religious life is indeed inseparable from the secular life; they are three parts that make up one's body. So, deficiency in one may invariably affect the other two parts since a physically ill person cannot in anyway take proper care of himself/herself. No wonder, *Allah* in the Quran says, 'O mankind! There comes to you a good advice from your Lord (i.e. the Quran), and a healing for that which is your hearts' (Quran: 10:57). Again, *Allah* says, '... and we send down from the Quran that which is a healing and mercy to those who believe... (Quran: 17:82). The quotations from the Quran indicate there are certain verses and chapters which can bring healing to believers, but over the years, people have begun to rely more on medicines rather depending on spiritual remedies as prescribed by Islam. The Prophet said that there is disease that Allah created, except that He also has created its treatment. The Prophet further reiterated that there is remedy for every malady and when the remedy is applied to the disease, it is cured with the permission of Almighty Allah. For this reason, most Muslims believe that the Quran is a source of healing. In fact, about 50 Hadiths on specific ailments and their cures have been grouped under the chapter, Kitab –al –tibb of well know collections of Hadith by Bukhari. As a result, Islam makes it the duty of every society or group of people to conduct research in order to profess solutions to diseases.

From the above, it is apparent that Muslims got their source of medicine from their religion. No wonder, my investigations seems to tally with what Quadghiri (2003:7) says. 'All theses Islamic states, kingdoms and dynasties made Arabic their cultural, educational, religious and administrative language as well as linguistic medium of their commercial transactions and serves well the cause of spreading its learning and extending its use.' The dominance of Arabic influence is strong in the Hausaland as Arabic expressions and culture as well as civilizations are felt virtually everywhere in the northern Nigeria.

Despite strong Islamic domination, there are still incursions of non Islamic elements in some of the practices of the Hausa people especially in marketing, because there is a struggle between two forces: Islamic tradition and African traditions. Consequently, the Hausaland has become a land of multiple cultural practices. Thus, a transcultural index in northern Nigeria has made it very difficult to identify with accuracy the line between Islam and African tradition.



Although most of the herbal promoters in the Hausaland are Hausa by tribe, other non Hausa advertisers are classified under a singular culture due to the influence of Islam – the dominate religion of northern Nigeria. The advertisement genre (the one under study) can be distinguished from other sale promotion genres by the styles and discourse types. Since the message has always been in oral form, the question of sincerity and authenticity remains a mirage, but one common characteristics of all oral advertisers is the tendency to improvise or create ‘newness’ using language as each promoter has within his/her discretion to compose words to suit the target audience and purposes. The degree of language use – repetitions, the ordering of words and the general discourse application are all at the discretion of every promoter.

In the field of medicine and the curing of any ailment, Muslims have been admonished to align themselves to the Quran and the *Sunna* of the Prophet Mohammed. Muslims are required to adhere strictly to the traditional methods of seeking for cures to ailments by first, praying to *Allah*, invoking His blessings and apply the necessary medicines. These medicines can include reading the words of *Allah* from the Quran or special prayers of the Prophet. However, magic and secret arts also constitute other forms of healing ailments among the Hausa people in the northern Nigeria despite Islam’s outright rejection of this type of practice. For instance, an interviewee told the current researcher that in a few communities in the north where the people mix religion with tradition, when a child is born, *Jakhanke* cleric is called upon by the host community to perform naming ceremony *Aqiqah* in Arabic. The cleric would spit into the ears of the new born child. This *dua* constitutes protection from the evil forces of the world. The clerics’ basic medium of transmission is oral. They would testify their powers to their customers and the danger for those who disbelieve them. However, this practice is losing its taste among the Hausa Muslims due to the constant and sustained influence of Islam.

Much more could be said about the means of advertising herbs in Hausaland. The elements added by the advertisers through vivid idiophones, dramatized dialogues or other forms of linguistic manipulation have affected the audience. The oral advertisers can develop diverse techniques to suit their purposes which have significance on the products being advertised. However, it is to be noted that not every herbal promoter (at least within the area under investigation) use para - linguistic tools in promoting their products.

A very important aspect of the herbal medicine promoters is the role of the audience. In rare cases, the artists are influenced by the audience through participation as sometimes the artists would invite members of the audience to participate. Those invited would be required to perform certain functions under strict instructions of the promoters some of which could be magical. Thus, the involvements of the audience explicitly arouse the audience’s attention and expect them to believe the authenticity of the products advertised. The close relationship between the

promoter and the audience may go beyond buyer – seller relationship as the promoter may sometimes act the leader of a drama. This strategy has adverse effects on the products and the personality of the promoter as well as making the whole advertising process look flexible. Similarly, the involvement of the audience provides an avenue for them to critique some parts or the whole act thereby making the setting less formalized. In a situation where the promoter (or performer) misses out a particular function during the ‘dramatization’, the performer may intervene by making attempts to rectify the noted flaws. The promoter may sometime challenge the audience by stating the limit of the human wisdom and attributes perfection to the creator – *Allah* (God). Challenge from the audience may be great importance not only the promoter but also to the prospective buyers around.

The promoters have great roles to play as they have to ensure that the appropriate audience is chosen or they stand the chance of losing patronage. More so, creativity is the aroma of the whole exercise which should be preserved at all cost. The results of creativity are the sole causes of humor, and acceptance which the promoters do not joke with.

The promoter on the hand may feel honoured since the audiences are not mere listeners but actively contribute to the reality of the ‘drama’ where clusters of people from different works of life are brought together and the outcome of the gathering gets spread fast like wild fire. The forum can also enable friends who have not met for a long time converge at the arena. Other hawkers may also take advantage by making sales.

Although the Hausa oral traditional herbal/medical advertisements are traditional in nature, they are influenced by familiarities with Quranic recitations but their contents may be on traditional healing patterns which are often broadcast on public address systems or on radio stations.

**Figure 2. Picture of a young herbal drug promoter**



Thus, be a Hausa native or any Hausa second language speaker may be familiar with the wordings. The advertisements are religious poetic *qasila* praise poems, focusing on religious pattern set for transmitting the message. Their massagers serve as commentators on medical values being advertised. Consequently, opening and closing doxologies of all Hausa –Muslims discourse follow the pattern of any activity in this Muslim society, beginning with, ‘Let us begin in the name of God...’ *Bismillahi Ra hemani a Rahim....* These advertisements are replete with religious allusions, echoing the formulaic styles of the Quran verse. Members of any Hausa audience would be intuitively familiar with any of the delivery styles which echo Quran verifications.

Other common characteristics of the sales promotion genre are use of praise recitations of the persons who discovered/inherited, and mixed the herbs. In some cases, the oral advertisers compose short praise epithet *kirari* whose contents are dependable on the artistic skills of the

persons involved. In rare cases, a third party's service is required whose sole function is to recount laudatory actions, nicknames and attributes unique to that individuals. The metaphoric complexity of praise epithets which make up major portions of any orally composed praise songs in Hausa is distinct. The praise epithets functions by the juxtaposition of two images. It involves calling a person a nickname that indicates something about that individual, thus implying a metaphoric connection is a common term between the two. Common terms of address for praise epithets include allusions to parentage, using the term, 'song of...' *Dan...* or grandparent *jikan...* or a parent'. In addition to patronyms and matronyms, paedonnymy (identification through one's offering) may be used to describe an individual. Using Individuals to describe relationship to their family members is a clear indicative of the importance of family lineage among the Hausa herbalists family milieu. Another common praise construction involved the term is 'master of...' *mai ...* in the grammatical agentive construction. 'Mai' alludes to ownership or control over something (the herbal drugs) in this case. *Maimagani* (herbalist) is not gender specific; it attests to everyone's control of or connection to a group of people, a town, a geographical area or a skill. It is a term that may be affixed to any member of nouns to indicate superiority.

Oral traditional advertisements among the Hausa people are considered as instruments of religious advocacy because community solidarity is founded on the sense of brotherhood among the people specifically associated with religious brotherhood as it is common to hear the promoters use *Yan uwana Muslimi* such a phrase, (my fellow Muslim brothers). Keeping with this tradition, Hausa oral herbal promoters go on to exhibit varying degrees of language use in which they make regular reference to *Allah*, the Prophet and to humanity. Such simultaneous expressions of the sacred beings are important. The wordings are made to suit both religious and social settings as the composers tailor their herbs to the prospective customers within designated situations. The contents of the promotions include descriptions of the subject matter, recognition of the target audience and ill – fetidness of the people who might patronize the products.

For effective coverage, the promoters choose the right audiences who are usually found at local festivals, motor parks, roadsides, wrestling venues and other recreation centers which are held place in open places. This is why most of the promoters are concentrated in the urban centers. My investigations revealed that most of the promoters are Islamic preachers or disciples. By virtue of their knowledge of the Quran and knowledge in Islamic jurisprudence, they become influential members of the society. As a strategy, some of these *Mallams* (Islamic teachers) spend a lengthy time preaching in public places. When they notice that a large crowd has gathered, that is the right time to venture into commercial activities. This is a deliberate trick which has yielded positive results as far as the business is concerned. The question is always asked: is the gathering religious or commercial? My interactions with some of them indicated that this has been the style which has been passed from generation to another.

In virtually all the excerpt under scrutiny, the herbal promoters have exactly the same pattern. This conventionalized language use is typical of the discourse community the members belong. Their commonality lies in the style of expressions.

On the other hand, the scope of the artists to improvise or create may vary, but there is almost some elements of semblance in the forms and contents as words and phrases, the stylistic devices, the ordering of repetitions, improvisations and elaborations, etc. However, there are a few exceptions in the individual degree of creativity.

Furthermore, one of the major characteristics of the sales promotion genre is its verbalization as the speakers have to rely to a great extent upon the manner in which they express their ideas in order to give beauty. Again, there is the production of stories and descriptions of ill situations.

Within the sales promotion genre as investigated, there are other genres such as storytelling, jokes, dialogues and conversations. The classifications are actually based on subject matter as well as techniques, although there are no clear demarcations between those genres as far as the language is concerned.

## **CONCLUSION**

A full appreciation of the genre of oral sales promotion lies not only in the interplay between religion and culture but also its styles, structures, contents, and other devices at the disposal of the language users and the various ways these can affect the audiences.

The genre of oral traditional herbal drugs promotions is influenced by Arabic, Islam and Hausa traditional practices retained by visible features due to a long time contact between the cultures.

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