

Title of Article: A Speech Acts Analysis of Adverts of Soft Drinks in Nigeria, 2000-2006.

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Abstract: This paper views adverts of soft drinks as a discourse type which in the context of the Nigerian advertising industry performs actions. The research illustrates the pragmatics of adverts as a form of language in action showing that the investigation of meaning and functionality of language should be central to linguistic analysis rather being viewed as a mere intuitive enterprise. The Speech Acts theory (Austin, 1969; Searle 1969, 1975) provides the theoretical framework for the study as it attempts to interpret the language of advertisement in terms of persuasive actions common to most marketing communications. The data comprise 20 adverts that appeared in the print media and outdoor advertising namely newspapers and magazines; billboards, posters and flyers. This represents about 95% of popular soft drinks in Nigeria between 2000 and 2006. Analyses however show that the directive act and the representational act are more frequently demonstrated in the advert. The two acts involve requesting, appealing, claiming, reporting, asserting and suggesting. These appear to be the best persuasive strategy in the adverts as they particularly appeal to the consumer's sense of ego, sex, class and self-worth.