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**ILLOCUTION IN ADVERTISING SLOGANS OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES IN
NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Slogan is a short sentence or phrase that is commonly found in advertisements. It is observed to have persuasive capabilities and to help advertisers achieve their goals. Unfortunately, the low level of scholarly attention given to the linguistic study of slogans used in Nigerian alcoholic drink advertisement causes scarcity of related information. The aim of this study, therefore, is to examine the slogans used in the advertisements of alcoholic drinks in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to identify the illocutionary acts used in the slogans and the specific functions of the acts. The study adopts descriptive research design and data are collected from twenty advertising slogans of popular alcoholic brands in Nigeria. The advertisements are sourced from the social media pages of the concerned brands. The collected data are qualitatively analysed through the lens of Searle's (2005) illocutionary acts. Findings show that three illocutionary acts, which are assertives, directives, and expressives, are used in the slogans. Nevertheless, assertives and directives are used more than expressives. The study also observes that the illocutionary acts are used to give commands to the audience, make claims about the advertised products, express feelings, and show respect. The study concludes that the slogans are used to control the behaviours of the audience and the narratives surrounding the advertised products.

Keywords: Illocution, slogans, persuasion, advertising

1.0 Introduction

Advertisement is a business communication that is used to create awareness and alert the public about the availability of a product or service. Advertisements can be in different communication forms, such as images, audio, and audio-visual forms. Yadav (2020) states that advertisements are found in every communication channel and they constantly interrupt the flow of information. Nevertheless, advertising is an important business communication because it enables business owners to increase sales and stay in contact with their customers. Allahverdiyeva et al. (2024) explain that advertising also allows companies to learn the needs and demands of their customers. That way, they are able to provide what is needed and increase company's sales.

The impact of advertisement on the consumption of alcoholic drink in Nigeria and other parts of the world shows an increase in the consumption of the alcohol despite warnings from health practitioners against the excessive consumption of the product. Achageba (2017) observes that the use of celebrities in alcohol advertisements influences youths to consume more alcohol. Snowden (2023) also observes that alcohol advertisements increase consumption and explains that it is so because advertisers target the product consumers specifically and design their advertisements to attract and encourage them to purchase and consume the product. Gunter et al. (2009), however, explain that advertisements do not increase the consumption of alcohol generally but increases the sales of certain brands. Bameyi et al. (2022) also observe a low impact of alcohol advertisements on the consumption of the product. However, they discover that exposure to alcohol through other social factors, such as family and religion, have significant impact on alcohol consumption rate. In other words, any form of exposure to alcohol influences the decision to consume it.

One of the crucial persuasive tools used in advertisements is slogan. This is a catchy expression that accompanies an advertisement to make it (the advertisement) easier to recall, thereby keeping the product at the fore of the customers' minds (Abdi & Irandout, 2013). The use of this linguistic communication form in advertisements has attracted scholarship interests, however, adequate attention has not been given to the use of slogans in alcohol advertisements in Nigeria. This oversight creates a gap in literature that requires scholarly attention as there is scarcity of scholarship regarding the linguistic features of slogans used in alcohol advertisements in Nigeria.

The aim of this study is to examine the advertising slogans used in alcohol advertisements in Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to identify the types of illocutionary acts found in the advertising slogans and the specific functions performed by the illocutions. As a result, the research questions that guide this study are (1) what are the illocutionary acts performed with the use of slogans? (2) What are the specific functions performed with the acts?

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Illocution

Illocution simply refers to the use of language to carry out actions. According to Dewi (2021), illocution is a linguistic device that discloses the purpose of an utterance while performing an action. In addition, it is used to persuade and influence the audience. Herring and Ge-Standnyk (2023) explain that illocution helps in revealing the intention of language users when they make utterances. Nevertheless, Putri et al. (2023) insist that the major purpose of illocution is to perform an action with utterances. This study views illocution as the linguistic device that performs an action and also reveals the intention of the speaker.

The actions performed with language are numerous. They include promising, denying, suggesting, asserting, expressing feelings, and changing people's social status. These functions have been broadly categorised by theorists, such as J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle. Austin categorises illocution into five, which are commissives, expositives, behavatives, exercitives, and verdictives. Commissives refer to the use of language to reveal and commit to future actions or intentions (Damanik & Gurning, 2014; Putri et al., 2023) while expositives refer to the use of language to clarify, explain, expose and expand views (Mabaquiao, 2018). Behavatives refer to the use of language to show attitude (Mabaquiao, 2018); exercitives occur when language is used to change the listener's state or condition (Siebel, 2001; Mabaquiao, 2018); and verdictives refer to the use of language to judge, evaluate, acquit, convict, rule, and make other utterances that reveal discoveries and findings (Ellah & Nta, 2020).

Searle (2005) also identifies five types of illocution in interactions. These are commissives (utterances that commit the speaker to a future event), directives (utterances that require the audience to do something), assertives (utterances that show the speaker's perception of the truth), declaratives (utterances that change social status of the directed) and expressives (utterances that show the speaker's feeling, emotion and attitude towards a concept). This study adopts Searle's taxonomy of illocution as the lens for examining the types of illocutions in selected advertising slogans.

2.1.2 Slogan

Slogan, according to Muste et al. (2015), is an advertising phrase that facilitates the dissemination of a product in the media. Abdi and Irandout (2013) state that the concept was adapted from Scottish Gaelic 'slough-ghairm' (pronounced as 'slogorm'), which means a battle cry. However, in advertisement, it refers to a frequently used phrase that expresses purpose or idea designed to remain unforgettable. Seli et al. (2021) explains that slogans are primarily designed as short sentences that reinforce the name or logo of a business and further create positive aura, sentiment or perception of the advertised product. Kurman and Zuraida (2022) observe that advertisers use slogans to make their audience curious about and interested in the advertised product. Based on that, they describe the concept as a series of easily remembered words or short sentences with interesting meaning.

Mashra (2025) explains that slogans go beyond advertising to incorporate other aspects of life, such as socialisation and influencing people's perception of certain issues. He describes the concept as symbolic because it gives a deeper insight into social values and norms. Mashra also states that slogans are forms of identity markers because they (slogans) give information about people's ideologies, cultures, resistance, demands and beliefs. In advertising, therefore, slogans capture the culture and ideologies uphold by the advertising company.

This study adopts Seli et al. (2021) description of slogans. As a result, it perceives the concept as a short phrase or sentence used in advertisements to show the ideology behind the advertised item and further support its name to make it (the product) easy to remember.

2.2 Empirical Review

The use of slogans in advertisements has attracted several scholarly attentions, including the interest of researchers that examined the use of language in the construction of the advertising phrase. Among these scholars are Muste et al. (2015), who examined the lingo choices found in the corpus of brand slogans. The objective of their study was to establish that repetition and variation are the key strategies used in constructing slogans. They built

a corpus of brand slogans from the data they collected from the database of the United States Patent and Trademark Office's Electronic Search System. Their corpus contained 353,075 brand slogans extracted from the database. The working corpus contained 1,278,986 words. They carried out a quantitative analysis of the corpus and discovered the repetition of sounds to create rhyme, alliteration, assonance and para-rhyme. Variations also existed in the slogans and they are found in the use of figurative devices, such as metaphor, simile, hyperbole and irony, to show differences and similarities shared by an item. Muste et al. concluded that brand slogans are persuasive strategies used in product marketing.

Obitube et al. (2020) examined the language of slogans with the aim of identifying the slogan that can attract sales and the interest of customers. They examined Coca-Cola's slogans from 1886 to 2020 through the qualitative descriptive approach. They examined the phonological, morphological, lexical, syntactic and semantic levels of slogans and discovered that phonologically, the slogans contained sibilants, high vowels, alliterations, assonances, and consonances. The lexical and morphological analysis show the use of adjectives, imageries, and superlatives, while the syntactic analysis showed the use of interrogative, declarative and imperative sentences in the construction of the slogans. The examination of the semantic features of the slogans revealed the use of figurative language, such as hyperbole, metaphor, personification, simile and meaningless expressions to embody and deliver meanings. The study concluded that the use of exaggeration in slogans can attract the attention and interests of viewers and further influence them to buy the advertised product even though it (exaggeration) can cause disappointment when the product fails to meet the claims in the advertisement.

In a study that examined the communicative functions of slogans in public service advertisement, Seli et al. (2021) explored the purposes the advertisers intended to achieve with their slogans. Their data were collected from twelve slogans from public service advertisements, which they collected through document analysis. They qualitatively analysed their data through the perspective of Leech's (1985) Theory of Meaning and Searle's (1985) Illocutionary Act Theory. Findings showed that the slogans contain different kinds of meanings, which include conceptual, connotative and affective meanings. Nevertheless, it was discovered that more slogans contained conceptual meaning than the other types of meanings. It was also observed that the slogans were used to perform different communication functions, which included invitation, informing, reporting, expressing emotions, and convincing people to purchase the advertised product. It was concluded that slogans used in public service advertisements have different kinds of meaning.

Finally, Thah (2023) explored the linguistic features of slogans used by American food industry in order to identify the use of words in their construction. He collected data from fifty advertising slogans used by American food companies and analysed them quantitatively. The examination of the linguistic features of the slogans showed that most of the advertising terms are constructed as short simple sentences or phrases. It was also discovered that the components of slogans are nouns, verbs, pronouns and adjectives. Furthermore, the study observed the use of food registers and expressive terms in the slogans. It was concluded that the words used to form the slogans make the advertisements memorable, attractive, and easy to remember.

These reviews show that scholars have examined the language of advertisement slogans and identified how language is used to construct them. These studies also identified the persuasive strategies used in them, including the use of illocution in the slogans. However, the specific actions performed with these slogans are not captured. In addition, the slogans examined by previous studies are not for alcohol advertisements. This study, therefore,

examines slogans in popular alcohol brands in Nigeria and identifies the specific actions performed with illocution.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Searle's (2005) Illocutionary Act Theory. This theory propounds that language is used in communication to carry out five functions. These are commissives, declaratives, assertives, expressives and directives. Commissives are the utterances used by speakers to commit themselves to future events, actions or tasks. They can be in the form of promises, pledges and oaths. Searle explains that declaratives are utterances that change situations at the point of utterance. Assertives are utterances used by speakers to commit to truth or falsity. They are used to claim, conclude, deduce, explain and clarify. Expressives are used to show emotions, feelings and attitudes and directives are used to make the audience carry out certain actions or tasks.

The five illocutionary acts identified by Searle (2005) offer the theoretical lens for examining the expressions of the slogans. They enable the identification of the types of illocutions found in the slogans and the specific functions they performed in the slogans. That way, the study identifies how slogans act as a persuasive strategy in alcohol advertisements.

3.0 Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive research design, which enables it to describe the language features of the selected slogans. Data were collected from twenty advertising slogans of popular alcohol brands in Nigeria. To ensure the authenticity of the data, samples were sourced from the social media pages of the selected brands. The advertisement posters and flyers posted on the social media pages were downloaded as the sources of data. Purposive sampling method was used to select only the advertisements posted on Nigerian social media space by alcohol brands in the country. The slogans were analysed qualitatively through the lens of Searle's (2005) Illocutionary Act Theory, where the five illocutionary acts propounded by the theory provided the framework for identifying, categorising, examining, and describing the illocutions used in the selected slogans.

4.1 Data Presentation and Analysis

Data are presented in a tabular form to show the slogans collected for the study, the advertised products, the functional type of sentences used to construct the slogans, the type of illocutionary act achieved with the slogan and the specific function performed with the illocution.

Table 1: Analysis of Collected Slogans

s/n	Slogan	Product	Sentence Type	Illocutionary Act	Function
1.	Light up your world	Smirnoff Ice	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
2.	Stay twisted.	Smirnoff Ice	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
3.	Twice the refreshment	Star Radler	Phrase	Assertives	Make a claim
4.	Every meal hits different	Star Radler	Declarative	Assertives	Make a claim
5.	The beer for heroes	Hero	Phrase	Assertives	Make a claim
6.	Live uncaged	Tiger Beer	Imperative	Directives	Give a command

7.	The ultimate	Gulder	Phrase	Assertives	Make a claim
8.	King of beers.	Budweiser	Phrase	Assertives	Make a claim
9.	Life for progress	Life Continental	Phrase	Assertives	Make a claim
10.	Be honourable	Trophy Lager	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
11.	Your excellency	Goldberg	Phrase	Expressives	Show respect
12.	Open your world	Heineken	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
13.	Cheers to good times.	Carlo Rossi	Imperative	Expressives	Express feeling
14.	Rule your mix.	Chelsea London Dry Gin	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
15.	Some people enter a room some people change it	Squadron Dark Rum	Declarative	Assertives	Make a conclusion
16.	Unlock your blessings in lockdown	Seaman's Schnapps	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
17.	A refreshing start to the month ahead.	Lord's London Dry Gin	Declarative	Assertive	Make a claim
18.	Keep walking.	Johnnie Walker (Black Label)	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
19.	Never stop never settle	Hennessy	Imperative	Directives	Give a command
20.	Make it count	Jack Daniels	Imperative	Directives	Give a command

The analysis of data shows that the illocutionary acts in the alcohol advertising slogans are mainly directives, assertives and expressives. However, expressive illocutionary act occurred fewer than the other two illocutionary acts. The directives in the slogans are used to give commands while the assertives are used to make claims and conclusions. The expressives found in the slogans are used to show respect and express feelings. Furthermore, the analysis of data shows that the slogans are expressed as imperative or declarative sentences and also as phrases.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

Slogans have been observed to perform crucial roles in advertising because they are constructed to be attractive, easy to memorise and quick to recall. This owes to the linguistic features of slogans, which involve the use of repetition, related register, short sentences or phrases and figurative expressions. This study further observes the use of three illocutionary acts, directives, assertives and expressives, which are also identified by Seli et al. (2021) in the slogans of public service advertisements. However, these illocutionary acts are not used to report, invite, inform or express feelings as observed by Seli et al. (2021) but to command, claim, conclude, express feelings, and show respect. This observation shows that even though the same illocutionary act is used in advertising slogans, they perform different functions.

Furthermore, Obitube et al. (2020) observe that slogans are constructed with imperatives, declaratives and interrogative sentences. However, this study identifies only the use of imperative and declarative sentences to construct slogans in alcohol advertisements in Nigeria. It is further observed that directives and expressives are constructed with imperative sentences while assertives take the form of declarative sentences and phrases. The syntactic forms of these illocutionary acts align with the functions they perform. For instance, the use of imperatives to construct directive illocutionary act enables it (the illocutionary act) to give commands, whereas the use of declarative sentences for the construction of assertives provide room for making claims and conclusion, which show the speakers' perception of the truth.

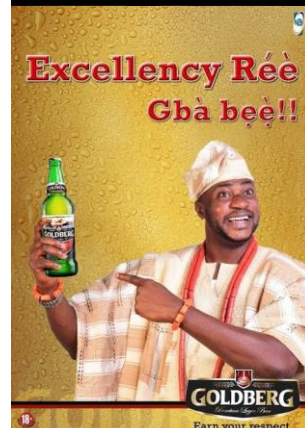
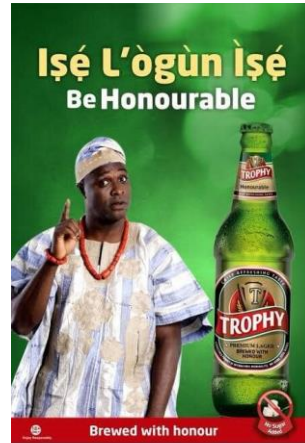
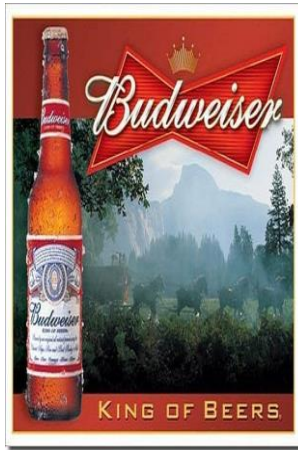
5.0 Conclusion

Slogan is a component of an advertisement that makes the advert easy to recall. It is usually a short catchy phrase or sentence that captures the values and ideology of the advertiser. Slogans have been found to present the advertised products positively and also invite the audience to purchase the advertised products. In this study, it is observed that slogans in the advertisements of alcoholic drinks are used to perform illocutionary acts, especially directives, assertives and expressives. With these acts, the advertisers use their advertising slogans to give commands to the audience and then make claims about the products. Hence, the slogans are used to control the actions of the audience and the narratives surrounding the advertised alcoholic drinks. These roles make slogans a critical persuasive tool used in advertisements.

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Appendix





4

Your Excellency, Goldberg hits the streets

Editor

