

Indirect Speech Act Strategies in Nigerian Online Marketing Discourse on Beauty Products

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Abstract

Marketing communication is shaped in part by the perception of what consumers need and value as well as by their interests, preferences, and demographic data. Marketers generally attempt to segment their target market when choosing an audience so that they could modify the message's content and the distribution method to reach a specific audience. This study examines the discourse strategies employed by beauty product marketers on social media, with particular emphasis on the Indirect Speech Acts (ISAs). A total of 200 data set comprising 100 from Facebook and 100 from Instagram are analysed drawing on insights from John Searle's (1979) taxonomy. The findings show the recurrent use of representative, directive, commissive, expressive, inquire, and integrative acts, with declarative, imperative, and interrogative having the highest frequency. However, Integrative speech acts exhibit the highest frequency across all brands, as they frequently engage followers by referring to them as if they were part of a family unit, indirectly urging them to take specific actions. Furthermore, many of the speech acts display similar sentence structures but have different intentions or functions, primarily serving as indirect speech acts. The study concludes that the indirect speech acts are persuasive in nature, aimed to compel potential clients and boost sales.

Keywords: Indirect Speech acts, Social media marketing, Brand marketers, Facebook and Instagram Advert messages.

Introduction

The primary and most efficient method of human communication is language. It is an essential part of our daily lives and the primary tool for conveying messages, communicating ideas, thoughts, and opinions (Schomaker & Zaheer 2013). Language defines our cultural context; it is a social activity that generates and further determines our position in various social networks and institutions. Language is human species-specific and a key component in identifying a group which can be in either spoken or written form. Wittgenstein in Etaywe (2022) claimed that "Language is a labyrinth of paths" You might access it from a single perspective and be aware of your environment; however, if you access it from an opposite direction, you might lose your way. It is the tool that is used to establish this connection between man and other members of the society through common norms of behavior. Because of the complex link between human beings and human society, it is impossible to imagine the existence of the two without language

Language functions in different domains of life. These domains include teaching (Nancy & Sandra, 2010; Farrell, 2019), Civil service (Tangirala, 2009), Medicine (Moore 2019, Heritage & Maynard 2006) and Business. Marketing and advertising are important components of business. It is not new to use linguistic expertise to analyse speech acts in the field of

marketing. (See Kusumaningsih 2018, Haddad 2019, Prastio *et al.*, 2020, Prastio *et al.*, 2021). Though, studies exist in different domains of marketing, and have been studied from different linguistic perspectives. (see Akar and Topcu. 2011, Hanifaini *et al.*, 2018, Onyijen *et al.*, 2019, Aziz S. and Othman 2020, Lina *et al.*, 2021), there appears to be little research in the area of the analysis of indirect speech act strategies of social media marketing discourses on beauty products . This is the motivation for this research.

The Social Media as a Marketing Tool

Over the past 40 years, communication and business practices have seen a significant transition. Personal computers, the Internet, and e-commerce have transformed how firms function and sell themselves. Since social media technology is becoming more widely used, we should expect it to keep on having a positive effect on businesses both today and in the future. Companies that adopt new technology can benefit greatly when they become available. Microsoft, eBay, Amazon, and Google are a few well-known examples of technology-driven businesses. The concept of social media has drawn numerous interpretations and points of view from a wide range of fields (Onyijen, 2019). Organisations use social media sites to understand their customers and find creative methods of meeting their needs. Brands communicate information about price, product, and location to consumers through social media platforms that have the broadest target audience (Ekwueme and Okoro 2018). Social media platforms are places where people express their opinions, wants, needs, and values. Social media's feature of drawing a sizable population is what makes it such a viable medium and an audience that is suited for advertising. The basic benefit of social media is the capacity to track how people who have seen our ads have responded. This is hugely important for advertisers since it enables them to spend their marketing budgets more wisely (Deepak Verma, October 2018).

Persuasion in Market Interactions

According to Jackson (2013), persuasion entails the use of emotions, symbols, images, phrases, and emphasis to influence a message's recipient in a way that motivates them to follow the sender's suggested course of action. The author goes on to say that it is important to distinguish between persuasion and manipulation because the former aims to satisfy needs and foster understanding on both sides rather than relying just on one actor to achieve his goals. One of our goals while communicating is to be understood. A research by Septianasari *et al.*, (2021), shows that 12 different persuasive techniques—including hyperbole, testimonials, name-calling, flattery, bandwagons, simple solutions, scientific evidence, group dynamics, bribery, personal branding, and giving advice—are frequently used by cosmetics dealers to promote their goods in their personal profiles and to pique consumers' interests. While another study by Moghaddamon & Esmaeilpour (2023), found out that business owners who use social media employs a variety of micro strategies and persuasive approaches in their advertisements, each of which was linked to a different persuasive strategy. Eleven micro-strategies and six general codes/persuasive techniques were identified from the study. These are: reciprocity (discount, 24-hour support, and gifts), consistency and commitment (commitment leads to consistency), social proof (share learner reviews and feedback), liking (motivational quote, compliment), authority (social media influencer, experience), and scarcity (uniqueness, limited). The results

indicate that "scarcity, commitment and consistency" were the most and least utilised strategies, respectively.

Theoretical Framework – Indirect Speech acts (ISAs)

Following Searle (1975), Kroeger (2023) defines indirect speech acts as utterances in which one illocutionary act is purposefully done through the performance of another act. Languages typically, if not always, have grammatical and/or phonological methods for classifying sentences into one of at least three basic types: requests, commands, and declarations. Declarative, interrogative, and imperative terms are often used to express statements, requests, and commands, respectively. When these requirements are met, we have a direct speech act because the grammatical structure matches the required illocutionary power. An interrogative is one of the most common forms of indirect speech acts in English. However, it is rarely used to ask a question (i.e., we expect more than just an answer, such as an action).

- a. Please pass the salt.
- b. Would you give it a try?

Usually, these occurrences are understood as requests. In fact, in English, asking a question about a person's purported capacity ('Can you?', 'Could you?') or possibility of doing anything in the future ('can you?', 'could you?') frequently counts as an order to actually carry out that action. In English, indirect speech act is frequently seen as being more polite than direct speech. In order to comprehend why, we need to consider more than simply a single remark or a single speech act. Advice, offers, ideas, invitations, expressions of thanks, cautions, threats, resentment, persuasion, and prohibitions can all be communicated through the use of imperatives, which are indirect speech acts. The most efficient and straightforward approach to convey traditional wisdom and experience is through the use of negative imperatives, which proverbs and sayings provide in abundance. Examples include "Do not wash your dirty cloth in public", "Do not put all your eggs in one basket". An indirect act is a method of giving a message by not expressing its genuine content. According to Thomas (1995), as cited in Prastio *et al.*, (2021), speakers employ indirect tactics when they are unable to explain something openly. In keeping through this viewpoint, Norrick (2015) claims that indirect act conveys the speaker's implicit will and desire. Speakers frequently handle nonverbal language in the form of countenance or gestures when making a speech. The goal of nonverbal communication is to reinforce goals given implicitly. Moreover, the use of indirect communication tactics might be seamless if conversers or speakers grasp the understanding of words outside the language. According to Yule (2006), understanding direct speech demands global knowledge, cognitive prowess, experience, and good mastery of a strong context.

Methodology

In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, the method of analysis is both qualitative and quantitative. The data is collected from Facebook and Instagram pages on beauty products which are named data IG 1- 100 and FB 1-100. Then the meanings of the collected messages

are identified and analysed. The table below gives the names of each brand and the platforms where they are gotten from, including the number of messages from each brand.

S/N	BRAND NAME	PLATFORM	NUMBER OF MESSAGES
1.	Lush hair Nigeria	Instagram	25
2.	Nivea _Ng	Instagram	25
3.	1705 med spa	Instagram	25
4.	Organic kiki	Instagram	25
5.	Awele body works	Facebook	25
6.	Natures gentle touch	Facebook	25
7.	Skinwhite Ng	Facebook	25
8.	Fuzzimas Beauty palace	Facebook	25
	TOTAL		200

This research employs an adaptation of indirect speech acts theory. After analysing the corpus that is collected from Facebook and Instagram, the speech acts which are representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, integrative, and inquires are identified.

Data Analysis and Discussion

A. Indirect Speech Acts Strategies

Table 2.

S/N	Type Of Speech Acts	Number of Sentences from Facebook	Number Of Sentences From Instagram	Overall Percentage
1.	Representatives	12	19	15.5%
2.	Directives	28	20	24%
3.	Commissives	10	15	12.5%
4.	Expressives	1	4	2.5%
5.	Inquires	14	12	13%
6.	Integrative	35	30	32.5%
	Total	100	100	100%

Table 2 presents the different speech acts used by the brand marketers on the two social media platforms and the number of occurrence of each of the speech acts. The result reveals that there

are six types of speech acts found in the beauty product marketing discourses. Based on the table, those types are representatives, directives, commissives, expressive, inquiries and integrative acts. The data reveals that representatives, directives, and integrative were the most frequently employed speech acts. Notably, integrative speech acts were the most prevalent among all types. Upon closer analysis, it was found that out of the 200 posts examined, 65 sentences (32.5%) were identified as integrative based on their functional characteristics as it is context based. Social media users often use integrative speech acts more frequently compared to other speech acts for several reasons. Integrative speech acts are cooperative and inclusive in nature, aiming to bring individuals together, foster relationships and build a sense of community.

Online marketers use the integrative to respond to their specific queries and tailor their communication to match the Nigerian context this creates a more memorable brand experience, there by indirectly persuading the customers to patronise the brands. This indicates that these speech acts effectively served the purpose of representing the brands' messages. Following the integrative is the directives with 48 sentences (24%). Some scholars (see Carlson 2017), believe that directives are the most important persuasive tool because they are used indirectly to command, order or ask target customers to take action. Carlson (2017) argues that directives are effective because they do not appear impolite or face-threatening to the audience or followers. However, this study disagrees with the assertion because the integrative comes first as it is context based and fosters relationships especially on the social media. Then, the representatives come with 31 sentences which form 15.5% of the corpus. The other three speech acts are inquires with 26 sentences (13%), commissives which are 25 sentences (12.5) and expressive being the least with 5 sentences (2.5). Expressives are not as much as other speech acts, reasons being that most of the brand marketers need more customers and appreciation or expressing ones psychological state is really not necessary except being used indirectly to persuade customers to continue patronising their brands.

Integrative Speech Acts and their Strategies

Integrative speech acts are characterised by their ability to foster a sense of unity, connection, and cooperation between the speaker (marketer) and the audience (potential customers). These speech acts go beyond simply conveying information or making direct requests. Instead, they aim to build rapport, establish trust, and create a positive relationship with the audience, ultimately leading to persuasion. Examples are shown below:

IG MESSAGE (1-3)

FABULUSH fam, what are you up to this weekend? (*Lush hair NG*)

What to do when you can't pick a colour? Mix them all! Which colour of the two braids extension have you mixed? (*Lush hair NG*)

Beautiful *FAM!* Your favourite nivea product is waiting for you with up to 33% of this beauty month. (*Nivea_ NG*)

These advert messages are used indirectly to persuade the target audience by creating a sense of inclusivity and intrigue. The first IG message is a directive speech act seeking information

or requesting action from the audience, which the speaker is directly asking the audience about their plans for the weekend, this falls under the directive speech act category according to Searle 1979 speech act taxonomy. The sentence is indirectly portrayed in an integrative manner, using the term “fabu-lush fam” to create a feeling of belonging and closeness with the audience in this way, the speaker attempts to persuade them to engage in conversation and share their plans for the weekend.

The second extract is a directive speech act giving advice but functioning as integrative speech act which presents a solution to a common dilemma. By suggesting that mixing colours is a way to solve the problem of indecisiveness, the speaker indirectly persuades the audience to consider trying this approach. The implication is that by mixing colours, the audience can achieve a unique and visually appealing result, thus encouraging them to experiment with different colours. The last sentence is a representative speech act functioning as integrative as it uses flattering language “beautiful fam” appeals to the audience’s emotions and make them feel valued. By stating that their favourite Nivea product is waiting for them, the speaker creates a sense of anticipation and desire, indirectly persuading the audience to engage with the brand and potentially make a purchase.

One of the key features of integrative speech acts is the use of inclusive language. Marketers employ pronouns like "we," "us," and "our" to make the audience feel like they are part of a larger community or group. This fosters a sense of belonging and encourages the audience to align themselves with the brand or product being promoted. For example:

IG MESSAGE (6)

Looking at lifting your nose shape? You wish your nose pointed? Consider PDO thread lift for the nose. **We** offer the best non surgical pro nose lift 100% safe with 0% down time. (*1705 Med Spa*)

FB MESSAGE (1,2)

Our whitening shower gel is *banger*. This particular product has over 1000+ review over the years. (*Fuzzimas beauty palace*)
Don't hesitate to reach out to **us** for any assistance related to **our** hair extensions. Your satisfaction is our top priority.

These indirect speech acts are used integratively to persuade and convince the audience about the benefits, quality and reliability of the products or services being offered. They aim to indirectly express positive assertions, recommendations or requests while promoting the desired response or action from the audience. By using personal pronouns, the brand marketers aim to establish a sense of trust and familiarity, ultimately making the message more persuasive and influential. The use of “we” in the first sentence imply that the speaker is part of a company that provides the nose lift service. By including them into the conversation and emphasising their involvement in offering the product. This creates a sense of credibility and accountability as the marketer takes on the responsibility for their claim. Likewise the use of “us” and “our” in the second and third sentences the brand marketers position themselves as accessible and

accountable for the customers' needs. It implies a personal commitment to customer satisfaction and establishes a sense of trust and reliability.

Another crucial feature is the upbeat tone. Integrative speech acts typically employ positive, welcoming, and optimistic rhetoric. Marketers who use a positive tone establish a favourable impression and build a sense of enthusiasm and excitement about the brand. This enthusiasm can serve to shape the audience's perception and receptivity to the message.

IG MESSAGE (25, 30)

A baby *gurl* getting her waist snatched using our ultrasonic cavitation machine.
(1705 Med Spa)

Our milk shake wash back in store. *Promo, promo, promo*. 3 pieces for the price of 3500. *As e dey hot. No sleep no sleep wake up.* (Organic kiki)

FB MESSAGE (17)

Let your hair do the talking. (*Natures gentle touch*)

In the given sentences, the use of friendly and expressions that are common among social media users serves as integrative speech act as it creates a positive and engaging tone that aims to captivate the audience's attention and persuade them. IG 25 uses expressions like "baby gurl", "waist snatched" to show a lively and engaging tone the language is designed to evoke curiosity and capture the audience's interest. By using this tone, the intention is to indirectly convey and confidence about the effectiveness of their product in achieving a desirable result (a snatched waist). This friendly and optimistic language aims to create positive associations with their offering and encourages the audience to explore further. The use of "as e dey hot" and "no sleep no sleep wake up" creates a sense of urgency and excitement to inform the target customers about the availability of their product (milk shake wash) and the promotional offer. The use of this terminology heightens the sense of opportunity and impels the audience to act right away. The message becomes more powerful due to repetition and the use of Nigerian pidgin (as in the phrase "e dey hot").

Another method employed in integrative speech actions is personalisation. Marketers can develop a more intimate and sympathetic relationship with their audience by sharing personal experiences, anecdotes, or using conversational language. Marketers can increase trust and credibility by presenting themselves as approachable and relatable individuals, making the target customers receptive to their persuasive messaging.

IG (88, 29)

Who is sitting in the front seat? Your mum or your wife? Keep calm with deep antiperspirant black carbon formula with 48hr superior protection that puts you in control even in dilemmas. (*Nivea_Ng*)

Every time you sniff your underarm and you do not like the smell, it is a reminder to use a deodorant. (*Nivea_Ng*)

The first IG message employs a conversational tone and anecdotal reference to address a common experience. It indirectly communicates the need for using Nivea deodorant to maintain freshness and combat body odor, positioning the product as a practical solution to a relatable situation. The last sentence uses conversational language and a hypothetical scenario to engage the audience. By mentioning situations involving family dynamics, it indirectly suggests that using Nivea antiperspirant will provide superior protection, instilling confidence even in challenging circumstances. Integrative speech acts also focus on highlighting shared values, goals, or aspirations between the marketer and the audience. By emphasising common interests or desired outcomes, marketers create a sense of alignment and unity. This helps to establish a connection based on mutual understanding and shared experiences, making the audience more likely to be persuaded by the message.

B. Representatives as Indirect Speech Act Strategy

Representatives are employed when something is potentially true or untrue. According to Searle (1979: 10) they "commit the speaker to something being the case, to the veracity of the expressed proposition".

We are your right plug for all skin conditions. (Skinwhite Ng)

The speaker (1) states that they are the best brands for treating any skin condition, which may or may not be true. However, the speaker remains convinced that the utterance is true, thus rendering it representational. Quoting Tsoumou (2020), Arifianto *et al.*, (2022) are of the opinion that this type of speech act states what the speaker believes to be the case or not. In other words, representative speech acts depends on mental state of belief and the kind of informative response anticipated from the listener is an acknowledgment which may not be only certain however can be ranged from complete to fractional and disapproval. This assertion aligns with Carlson (2017) that it is simple for misconceptions to occur in online communication if followers do not comprehend what an influencer is attempting to say. Also says that the audience must grasp the tone and goal of a post. He mentions that it is critical to examine how language is handled in order to "save face". Hence, it is critical to be mindful of the tone used in social media messages. Some verbal acts, such as instructions, are seen more dangerous than others. Based on the two hundred posts analysed, thirty one had used representative speech acts. Examples are as shown below:

IG MESSAGE (10)

One thing that never goes out of style is an afro! Elevate your look this weekend with the lush kinky twist. (*Lush hair Ng*)

This sentence is an assertion because it presents a claim about the benefits of the snow white oil. It states that the oil is very good for formulation and helps achieve a perfect snow white shade without offering any further explanation or evidence. It's in form of recommendation. It's a representative speech act that is recommending a specific hairstyle to enhance someone's appearance. By stating that an Afro never goes out of style and suggesting the lush kinky twist,

the speaker indirectly advises the listener on how to improve their look during the weekend. By using the phrase “elevate your look”, the speaker is suggesting that this specific hairstyle choice will have a positive impact.

FB MESSAGE (23)

Inner beauty is really great, but healthy hair never hurts." (*Natures gentle touch*)

The sentence "Inner beauty is really great, but healthy hair never hurts." can be classified as a statement. This sentence presents a general statement about the value of inner beauty and the importance of healthy hair. The sentence does not provide explicit evidence or reasoning to support the statement, but rather offers a subjective perspective on the subject matter. However, the context says otherwise. As the brand marketer tries to convince the target audience that the only way to get this health hair is by patronising their brand because having a health hair never hurts and will only take the effort of buy good hair care product, which is why their product is being recommended even though it is not explicitly mentioned, but from the context, it can be deduced.

IG MESSAGE (74)

Dermatologically approved, gentle on skin, for all skin types and shades. Have you tried it yet?(*Nivea Ng*)

FB MESSAGE (22)

Our gentle yet effective tea tree anti dandruff treatment tackles flakes without stripping your hair of its natural oil. (*Natures gentle touch*)

The first sentence is convincing because it presents a series of features and benefits of a product. It highlights that the product is dermatologically approved, gentle on skin, suitable for all skin types and shades, and then poses a question, inviting the listener to try it. It aims to persuade or convince the listener to give the product a try based on the positive attributes mentioned. This sentence which is a declarative sentence introduces the product by explaining its benefits. The marketer claims that this particular oil is effective in helping achieve a desired snow white shade when used in a formulation. This statement is presented as a factual assertion, aimed at persuading the listener to consider using the product. The second is also convincing as it presents the benefits of a tea tree anti-dandruff treatment. It states that the treatment is gentle yet effective in combating dandruff without stripping the natural oils from the hair. By highlighting these positive qualities, it aims to persuade or convince the reader to consider using the product. It asserts that the tea tree anti-dandruff treatment is both gentle and effective in combating flakes without causing any harm to natural oils of the hair. The marketer is providing information to convince the listener of the product's benefits and consequently encourage its usage. These examples demonstrate how representatives, as indirect speech acts, allow advertisers to convey their persuasive messages in a subtle and indirect manner. By utilising statements, opinions, claims, or information, the advertisers influence the readers' perceptions

and decisions without explicitly expressing their intentions. The indirectness of representatives adds a layer of persuasion and influence to the communication, making the messages more engaging and compelling to the audience.

C. Directives as Indirect Speech Act Strategy

A directive is when someone orders, commands, requests, begs, suggests, asks, etc. in order to get someone else to do something (De Pablos-Ortega, 2020; Yule, 2019). A directive speech act is a potentially demeaning activity that needs the listener to respond to the speaker's words and do certain behaviours in a given situation according to (de Pablos-Ortega, 2020). Prayitno (2021) asserts that speakers use directive speech actions to instruct listeners. This kind of speech act communicates the expected action of the listener by the speaker in response to their words. A directed speech act is one where the speaker intends for the other person to take action as a result of what they say. For instance, “Exfoliate your skin using your body scrub and face scrub”. The speaker is ordering the hearer to exfoliate their skin with this comment. A directive speech act having a requesting function, asking might take the form of pleading, pressuring, inviting, praying, or pushing. Inquiring, querying, and requesting are all forms of the directive speech act of asking inquiries (Widyastuti & Sartika 2023). From the table above, the directives are used in 48 sentences out of the 200 analysed, instances of directive speech acts are explained below:

FB MESSAGE (18, 19, 73)

Yes I know your acne has cleared up but that doesn't mean you stop your skin care or stop the products that get you the results. DM. for free recommendation and consultation (*Skinwhite Ng*)

Hair care isn't an expense, it's an investment. Invest in your hair for a longer and healthier hair. Our Monoil oil range is here to help you in your hair care routine journey. (*Natures gentle touch*)

Harmattan is almost here! Say no to being ashy this season. Protect your lips and those areas that tend to get dryer with our Tender Care Multipurpose Balm. (*Nivea_Ng*)

The statements above demonstrate that directed speech acts are communicated via a variety of tactics, one of which is indirect speech acts. Sentence one is a declarative statement which is used indirectly to offer and recommend a particular service. While the later part of it makes the whole sentence directive “DM for free recommendation and consultation”. The speaker indirectly encourages the target audience (who have used their products and have seen a positive result) to continue their skin care routine by observing how their acne responds to it. It is also an indirect way of assuring those that have not used the product that it works. The advert message implies that the audience should pay attention to the results. In the same vein, the second sentence declares that hair care is an investment while the other part is asking the target audience to invest in their product for a longer and healthier hair. The speaker indirectly conveys advice about hair care in this statement. The speaker implies that the audience should put effort and resources into taking care of their hair for better result which can only be achieved

by using their product (Monoil). In addition, the third statement advises the listener on how to avoid dryness during the harmattan season through the use of an imperative statement and advises using the suggested balm as a protective measure. The imperative statement used in sentence six suggests that the audience is being advised to take action to protect their hands and nails. By using the verb “guard”, the speaker implies the need to be proactive and cautious.

FB MESSAGE (90-91)

Say goodbye to bleaching and hi to skin white kojic body lotion! Keep a youthful glow without hurting your skin. (*Skinwhite Ng*)

Wave goodbye to those pesky flakes with our favourite tea tree anti dandruff set. (*Natures gentle touch*)

The first statement is an imperative statement, through this statement, the speaker orders the target audience should stop using bleaching products and instead use the suggested Skin White Kojic Body Lotion to achieve a youthful glow. By using the Phrase “say goodbye to bleaching”, the speaker indirectly advises against a certain action implying that it is not effective or recommended. So the target audience is requested to switch to the body lotion recommended for desired outcome. The second is also an imperative statement which the speaker indirectly proposes a solution for dandruff by introducing the product (tea tree anti dandruff set). Here, the speaker indirectly asked the audience to buy their tea tree anti dandruff set. The phrase “wave goodbye to pesky flakes” implies that the audience should eliminate or get rid of dandruff, by adding and buying their product as a replacement. The imperative statement used in third sentence suggests that the audience is being advised to take action to protect their hands and nails. By using the verb “guard”, the speaker implies the need to be proactive and cautious.

D. Commissives as Indirect Speech Act Strategy

Similar to promising Widyastuti & Sartika (2023), compliant commits the speaker to an action in the future that is related to the activity they want to take in the requesting future. The linguistic techniques known as "commissives" are used by a speaker to commit themselves to a future action. They communicate the speaker's meaning. They can be expressed either individually or collectively by the speaker, and they might take the form of vows, threats, refusals, and promises. By using commissives, the speaker hopes to make the world fit the words (Yule, 1996: 54). Some people employ performative verbs when speaking in commissives, such as "promise", "swear," "guarantee", and "vow" (Al-Bantany, 2013). Some instances are:

IG MESSAGE (92, I6, 93)

Imagine you had a whole 1million naira to do whatever you wanted?

Tell us the first thing you will buy in the comments below. (*Lush hair Ng*)

You can raise your hands confidently anytime, as the Nivea dry deodorant offers up to 72 hours of sweat protection. (*Nivea-Ng*)

Achieving luminous skin in 2 weeks is possible. All you need to do is consistently applying the nivea luminous 630 anti-dark marks serum on a clean face. (*Nivea_Ng*)

The first sentence is an example of a commissive speech act used indirectly to convince customers to patronise a product or service. By starting with the word “imagine”, the speaker is inviting the customers to envision a scenario where they have a large sum of money to spend. These appeals to their desires and aspirations, making them more inclined to engage in the conversation and Share their thoughts. By using this indirect approach, it creates a sense of anticipation and excitement for the customers, encouraging them to continue interacting with the brand or business. Likewise, the second sentence utilises a commissive speech act, emphasising the benefits of the Nivea deodorant. By using the phrase “you can raise your hands confidently anytime”, the speaker indirectly convinces the customers that this product provides significant advantages. Claiming that it offers up to 72 hours of sweat protection appeals to customers’ desire for long lasting freshness and confidence. This indirect approach aims to persuade customers to choose Nivea over other deodorant brands by highlighting the product’s efficacy. In the third statement, the commissive speech act is used indirectly to convince customers to use the Nivea luminous 630 anti-dark marks serum. By stating “achieving luminous skin in 2 weeks is possible”, the speaker appeals to customers’ desire for quick and visible results. The sentence implies that consistent application of the serum on clean face is the key to achieving this desired outcome. By using the word ‘consistently’, the speaker encourages customers to choose the Nivea serum as reliable and effective solution for their skin concerns.

Expressives as Indirect Speech Act Strategy

A speech act that reflects feelings or a psychological condition is referred to as expressive. Searle says that expressive speech acts include words stating what the speaker feels. He suggested emotive forms such as expressing regret, thanking, celebrating, condoling, mourning, and welcoming (Sembiring & Ambeligin, 2019). They can be caused by either the speaker or the listener, but they are about the speaker's experience. Some instances are given below:

IG MESSAGE (44-46)

To everyone patronizing us and referring us, thank you, God bless you all. (*1705 med spa*)

How does lush hair make you feel? (*Lush hair Ng*)

FB MESSAGE (89, 45)

Celebrate the beauty of your natural hair (*Natures gentle touch*)

No harm, just fun! Achieve naturally white skin with Skinwhite papaya milk. (*Skinwhite Ng*)

From the examples given above, it can be seen that brands use expressive to show gratitude, and indirectly persuade the target consumers to patronise them. Sentence shows the expression of gratitude towards customers who patronise and refer them. By thanking and blessing the customers, the speaker indirectly persuades them to continue patronising their business and recommending it to others. The indirectness lies in the fact that instead of directly asking customers to patronise the business, the speaker uses gratitude as a persuasive tool. The indirect speech act in the second statement is the inquiry about how lush hair makes the audience feel. By asking this question, the speaker indirectly persuades the target customers to consider the impact of having lush hair and associate positive emotions with it. The indirectness lies in the fact that instead of directly stating that lush is desirable, the speaker prompts the audience to reflect on their emotions and implicitly suggests that having lush hair can evoke positive feelings.

Expressive speech act is also seen indirectly in the third sentence as the encouragement to celebrate the beauty of one's natural hair. By suggesting that the audience should celebrate their natural hair, the speaker indirectly persuades the target customers to embrace and appreciate their own hair, potentially leading them to seeking products or services that cater to their natural hair care. Instead of directly promoting their products or services, the speaker promotes self-acceptance and self-celebration, appealing to the emotions of the target customers. Lastly the speaker gives an assurance that achieving naturally white skin with a specific product does not cause harm but is instead fun. By stating that there is no harm and emphasising the fun aspect, the speaker indirectly persuades the target customers to try the product and achieve the desired whitening effect. The indirectness of this statement lies in the fact that instead of directly stating the benefits or effectiveness of the product, the speaker addresses potential concerns about harm and highlights the enjoyable aspect, appealing to the desire for a safe and enjoyable skincare experience. In all of these examples, the indirect speech acts are expressives because they shape the perception of the target customers and influence their decision making in choosing products and services. By using indirect language, the speakers are able to evoke positive emotions, prompt reflection or address potential concerns, without directly stating their intentions. This indirectness make the speech acts more subtle and allows the target customers to feel like the decisions they make to patronise the speaker's business or use their products are based on their own thoughts and feelings rather than being overly influenced.

E. Inquiries as Indirect Speech Act Strategy

Inquiries are a type of speech act that involve asking questions and seeking information. They serve various purposes in communication, including gathering facts, expressing curiosity, engaging in conversation, seeking clarification or conveying interest. Inquiries can be direct or indirect, depending on whether the question is asked explicitly or implicitly. Indirect inquiries often involve asking questions with a secondary purpose or meaning. The speaker's intention may not be explicitly stated, requiring the listener to infer the underlying intention or implication. Indirect inquiries are often used for persuasive or suggestive purposes for example a sales person might ask a customer, "how do you feel about our new product?" the underlying intention of the speaker is not just to seek the customer's opinion, but also to indirectly persuade

or influence the customer's perception of the product. Similarly, in marketing or advertising, indirect inquiries can be employed to engage potential customers or subtly persuade them. Examples from the advert messages from the corpus are given and explained below:

FB (55-57)

Famz, do you have our hydrating face serum in your face care kit? If not, then your routine is not complete. (*Awele body works*)

Who said your natural fair complexion cannot glow remarkable without using toxic skincare product? They lied! This is a unique natural body lotion that will help you maintain moisturise and make your natural fairness glow. (*Awele body works*)

Curly hair is everyone's favourite, but do you know how to maintain it? Well we've got few tips for you. (*Natures gentle touch*)

The first sentence is in form of a question, making it an inquiry as a speech act. It is used indirectly by implying that the person's routine is incomplete without the hydrating face serum. Rather than directly stating that their routine is incomplete, it is suggested through the question. The second statement is also in the form of a question, making it an inquiry as a speech act. It is used indirectly by challenging the belief that natural fair complexion cannot glow without toxic skin products. By asking "who said" indirectly suggests that the belief was a lie. The sentence then goes on to present an alternative solution, further implying that the person can achieve a glow without toxic product. Meanwhile, the third statement begins with a statement, but then transitions into a question, making it an inquiry as a speech act. It is used indirectly by presenting curly hair as everyone's favourite and then questioning the person's knowledge on how to maintain it. Instead of directly stating that the person may not know how to maintain curly hair, it is asked if they are aware and then offers tips as assistance. In the last statement, there is no explicit question being asked. However, an inquiry speech act is still present but used indirectly as a persuasive tool. The statement implies a question like inquiry by contrasting the use of a DIY face mask with a power face mask that has been formulated specifically for the person. It indirectly asks the audience to consider the benefits of using the power face mask that is specifically tailored to their needs, it indirectly suggests that the DIY face mask may not be as effective or beneficial. By positioning the power face mask as a "miracle in a container" the statement further persuades the person to believe in its exceptional properties.

Conclusion

This research has looked at how indirect speech acts can be used artistically on social media. In particular, it investigated Instagram and Facebook's use by companies selling cosmetics. And looked into the methods brand marketers employ in persuasive speaking. The study applied Searle's (1979) complete classification of speech acts into representatives, directions, commissives, expressives, and declaratives. This classification assisted research and allowed for a deeper dive into issues of speech acts usage in these social networking sites. The data demonstrates that integrated communication was the norm. Brand marketers made use of customers' native tongues in an effort to sway them in the direction of making a purchase. There

was no variation in the percentages indicating how commonly integratives were used among the various brands. Directives, representatives, commissives, expressives, and inquiries were also employed effectively. Direct speech acts often have the indirect role of persuasion, as in the case of representatives. Despite representatives being claims or statements, marketers frequently employ them to sway customers. Many of the speech acts fit this description since they were employed by the selected beauty product marketers to subtly promote their businesses. Because of their prevalence among the study's sample brands, indirect speech acts are crucial to consider. Some multi-national corporations often started their posts with a quote or used blending (fabu-lush, luship, etc.) or other creative wordplay to sway readers. When communicating with their target audience, non-international companies typically use either freebies or polls. One possible explanation is the persuasiveness of certain combinations of speech acts, such as representations and directions or expressives and directives. The focus of this primarily qualitative investigation was on the setting in which indirect speech acts occurred. It looked at indirect speech acts in social media marketing postings in greater detail but didn't check to see if they were effective.

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