

## INTERPERSONAL MEANING IN MALTINA ADVERTISEMENTS IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

Advertisement is as old as the Garden of Eden when Satan advertised ‘the forbidden fruit’. However, through the ages, advertisement has grown from one stage to another for effective identification and possible patronage of the advertised goods and services. Meaning in advertisement, as in life, is diverse and multidimensional. Consequently, an advertiser ensures that the meaning encoded is the meaning derived by the consumer. An application of Halliday’s Interpersonal meta-function is made to bear on an advertisement of Maltina non-alcoholic drink in Nigeria. Maltina advertisements dominated the advertising space for over a decade in Nigeria. The analysis reveals, to a large extent, that conscious efforts are made by the advertiser to sustain the social and interpersonal relationships with the advertisement consumer. This is done through the system of Mood explicated in the Subject, the Finite and Residue. The Residue which is the remainder of the message reveals advertiser’s social role thereby reflecting both inner and outer spheres of the situational context in their persuasive efforts. The interconnectivity of the mood and residue reveals how advertisements explicate ‘exchange of goods and services’. The use, by advertisers, of declarative, interrogative and imperative clauses, make this possible.

**Keywords:** Advertising and Advertisement, Systemic Functional Theory (SFT), Interpersonal Meta-functions, Maltina

### Introduction

The life of human beings can best be imagined than experienced without language. Language, among other things, makes human beings human. It distinguishes man from his associates – apes and other creatures. For daily interactions and socialisation, human beings need language. Language is employed by human beings for many reasons. Among these reasons are to explain, instruct, inform, warn, entice or persuade and express feelings whether positive or negative. It is believed that human beings use language for thousands of reasons depending on

context or situation. Halliday (1985 [1994]) sums up all the functions of language into three namely, Ideational function, Interpersonal function, and Textual function. It is to one of these, Interpersonal function, that we turn in this work.

Language is an important index of identifying an individual or a group. It is an organiser of knowledge which is stored as a social and propositional representation (Ogunsiji, 2013). It is through language that individuals re-present to themselves the outside world and their own actions and experiences. Immediately man evolved from his primitive life, language has been used to document his history, to interact with other human beings and if he wishes, to alienate them. Man is at the mercy of language (Farb, 1973:38). This is owing to the fact that human beings require the use of language not only to interact or to understand but to impact the environment. A society without language is better imagined than experienced. It seems, therefore, that language is all in all in the affairs of man.

Language uses words in advertisements as symbols. These symbols have to be learned in consonance with the shared knowledge between the advertiser and the advertisement consumer. It is learned through experience and it is based upon agreement. This is because the meaning of symbol is determined by convention (Leiss *et al.* 1986: 184). Advertisements work as they use our common resources of language in ways that affect us and mean something to us (Goddard 1998 [2001]:3).

An advertisement does not create meaning on the surface value of the words and image(s) but it invites the reader to make a transaction (Williamson 1978:19; Najafian and Ketabi 2011: 64). Advertisements utilize a pre-existing referent system of meaning, because the product, prior to signification in the advertisement, has no meaning (Saren *et al.* 2007: 128). Advertising is a prominent discourse type in virtually all contemporary societies. We live in a society where advertising is now well established or, perhaps we should say, it is rapidly gaining ground (Cook, 1992:5). Advertisement is capable of manipulating the perception and the behaviour of the customers (Ranjan, 2010:6).

### **Nigerian Breweries and Maltina Advertisements**

Nigerian Breweries is one of the few leading brewers in Nigeria. The company was established in 1945 and has, along the line, acquired some other breweries for its expansion. However, in this study, concentration is on Nigerian Breweries product, Maltina, which equals or even may be said to be more popular than the company that produces it. It is the first non-

alcoholic malt drink of the company. Although there are many malt drinks in Nigeria (Maltina, Malta Guinness, Vitamalt, Betamalt, Amstel Malta, Mighty Malt, Supermalt, Power Malt, Hi Malt, Dubic Malt, Malta Goya, Malta Caracas, Pony Malta, Royal Malt, etc.), Maltina seems to have subsumed all other names and assumed the household names for other Malts in the country. It is as if it is to say 'I want to buy Maltina' is easier than 'I want to buy any other malt'.

Maltina advertisement used in this study was published many times in newspapers and news magazines. This work, therefore, is an exploration of the advertisements of a product of Nigerian Breweries with the focus on the use of words to explicate meaning in the persuasive efforts of the advert producers. The choice of Maltina informs the choice of Nigerian Breweries Plc, the brewer of the malt drink. The choice of the Nigerian Breweries is also owing to the age of the company in the advertising industry – a period of about seventy years. Much more important, too, is the feat this company had attained over the years by buying up or absorbing some other breweries in different parts of Nigeria. Finally, Maltina is the first indigenous brewed malt drink in Nigeria. Its advertisements had occupied the advertising landscape for over a decade while some other adverts do not last one year.

### **Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory (SFT)**

Systemic Functional Theory (Halliday 1985, 1994; & Matthiessen 2004, 2014) seems to share a number of tenets which mark a drastic shift from traditional descriptions of language. SFT was first introduced by M.A.K. Halliday (1985). It is an approach to the study of grammar which radically departs from erstwhile traditional view in which language is a set of rules for specifying grammatical structures. SFT is also a departure from concerns that language is a mental process.

Halliday, the major proponent, explores how language is used in social contexts to achieve particular goals (O'Donnel, 2012:2). Halliday explains that language is a resource for making meanings and hence grammar is a resource for creating meaning by means of wording (Bavali & Sadighi, 2008:14).

In SFT, meaning is seen as choice. Consequently, if there is only one way to do a thing without an option or alternatives, such is not meaningful. If however there is more than one way to express a concept, then the available choice is meaningful. Halliday (1973:23) posits that authors' linguistic and functional choices are result of social circumstances and their influences on author's perception (Harartan, 2011: 260). Language, as a social phenomenon, is functional.

SFT analyses language in social context where a particular lexico-grammatical choice is constructed under the influence of the social and cultural context. Meaning, then, is achieved through the linguistic choices in paradigmatic and syntagmatic axis of discourse (Halliday).

### **The Meta-functions of language**

The clause in an SFT mode of analysis refers to the structural unit in which we express a particular part of that meaning potential. It is our experience of the processes of the external world. The external world includes the process of our own consciousness, thinking, seeing, liking, talking and so on (Kress, 1981: 20). The uses of language is to approve or disapprove; to express beliefs, opinions, doubt; to include and to exclude; to ask and to answer questions; to express personal feelings; to greet, chat-up, take leave of; these and many others are realised in the clause.

Halliday's Systemic Functional Theory is concerned with the mechanism of text texture, function and meaning of language. Meaning as a central phenomenon is consequently achieved through the linguistic choices in both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations in the clause or text. These are the relations of an item to another which encapsulate the form and structure of a clause in a combinatory process. Whereas the other, paradigmatic, obtains from possible available options by selecting elements that are appropriate linguistically to context of discourse.

The awareness of diverse and inexhaustive functions of language informed Halliday (1994:119 & 193) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 2014:134 & 211) to categorise the functions under two conjectures of ideational function and interpersonal function. The former which is divided into experiential and logical functions cater for construction of human experience. The latter is concerned with our personal and social relationships with the other people around us. Other than these two, there is another function which takes care of the first two. This is the textual function of the language. It is concerned with the processes of keeping the text together.

### **Methodology**

The advert used in this study is particularly unique because it is the only Maltina advert that spans over a decade. The advert kept recurring from 1979 to 1996. This informs the choice of it from among all others since 1976 to date. The same advert appeared in The Daily Times, The Punch, Nigerian Tribune, Newswatch magazine and some newspapers that are no longer in circulation. At that period, both on the radio and television in Nigeria, the slogan *Have a Maltina*

*today* was popular. Our concern in this study is, however, the print version of the advert. This particular advertisement recurs more than thirty times in our search for advertisements of Nigerian Breweries for a larger research work.

The advert selected is apt perhaps because it is one of the adverts of the Nigerian Breweries in which major clauses are utilised in the process of explicating meaning. Analysis of the clause is the preoccupation of the Hallidayan Systemic Functional Theory. It is to be noted today that some advertisements of either alcoholic or non alcoholic drinks do not have more than two or three words.

## **I. Data Presentation**

1. Have a Maltina today...
2. .... *So lively, so refreshing!*
3. More and more wherever there's action Maltina's the thing!
4. *And why not?*
5. Made from pure malt, Maltina is the Number one on alcoholic malt drink.
6. *Rich, dark and bubbling over with life.*
7. With a taste so refreshing and so irresistible, it's out of this world!
8. *Just sheer pleasure!*
9. Yes, things soon come alive with Maltina.
10. So, put some fun into the action...
11. and stay lively ever refreshed!
12. Have a Maltina today!

## **II. Analysis and Discussion of Data**

Twelve expressions are contained in this Maltina advertisement. Four of these (2, 4, 6 & 8) are classified as minor clauses or partial as the covert (elliptical components) are recoverable while the other eight are major clauses. The fact is that the minor clauses, otherwise called groups or phrases lack the required components for an interpersonal analysis under the SF theory. Meaning, to Halliday, resides in the clause although language functions are declared

further by the phrases (Butt *et al.*, 2013). Meaning is imperfectly done in the absence of full expression. The interpersonal meaning realised through the mood systems unearths human activities such as ‘indicating, declaring, interrogating, wishing, hypothesising, commanding, seeking agreement, etc.’ as explicated by Butt *et al.* The interpersonal meaning in the adverts of the Maltina, a non-alcoholic drink in Nigeria, is analysed below.

Table 1: Have a Maltina today

1				
Form	Clause	Have	a Maltina	today...
Function	Interpersonal meaning	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
		Residue		

The mood here is in the imperative without the subject of the declarative but with goal realised nominally in the complement. The choice of meaning in the complement is realised in Maltina – one of the twelve products of the Nigerian Breweries. The adjunct is in the location of time ‘today’ specifying promptness of ‘have’.

However, 2 in our data (*So lively, so refreshing*) realises its interpersonal meaning in the degree of the epithet that is recoverable in clause one. It is focusing adjunct which heightened the degree of quality of the goal in clause 1. ‘so’ heightened ‘lively’ and ‘refreshing’ descriptions of the quality of Maltina.

Table 2: More and more wherever there’s action Maltina’s the thing!

3					
Form	Clause	More and more wherever there’s action	Maltina	’s	the thing!
Function	Interpersonal meaning	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Complement
			Mood Block		

		Residue	
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Unlike 1, the system of mood contains both the subject ‘Maltina’ and the finite ‘s’. The adjunct realised in the adverbials is positioned clause initially (thematized) being the most mobile element of the clause even when the traditional position is clause finally. The interlocutor exchanges meaning in the declarative mood providing information on the subject matter. 4, another group of words, ‘*And why not?*’ is interrogative and possibly elliptic although rhetorically demanding goods and services as against 1 which offers goods and services.

Table 3: Made from pure malt, Maltina is the number one non alcoholic drink

5					
Form	Clause	Made from pure malt,	Maltina	Is	the Number one non alcoholic malt drink.
Function	Interpersonal meaning	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Complement
		Residue	Mood Block		

In 5, too, the residue encompasses the mood block ‘Maltina / is’ – subject and finite. The process adjunct is that of means indicative of Maltina whose partial synonym ‘malt drink’ in the complement is pre-modified by article/numeral/adjective component.

‘*Rich, dark and bubbling over with life*’ (6) is an admixture of multiple epithets which alternate between quality (rich) and colour (dark) and an adverbial (with life). It expresses its meaning partially as the comprehensive meaning is dependent anaphorically on the subjects in 1 & 3 above. ‘Rich, dark, and bubbling over are epithetical orchestrated by adjectives and modifying a process adjunct realised in a prepositional phrase ‘with life’.

Table 4: With a taste so refreshing and so irresistible, it’s out of this world

7					
Form	Clause	With a taste so refreshing and so irresistible,	It	’s	out of this world!

Function	Interpersonal meaning	Adjunct	Subject	Finite	Adjunct
		Residue	Mood Block		

The pattern in 5 is replicated in 7 as the mood block is encircled by the residue. The residue both begin in preposition which makes them adverbials although the noun phrase ‘a taste’ is rankshifted to function as a member in the adverbial. The subject of the mood block is replicating 3 & 5 in pronoun form. The declarative mood chosen enables the speaker to offer the interlocutor goods and services thereby indicating direction of information. 8 is exclamative expressing the emotions of the speaker in the persuasive efforts of an advertiser to identify with the expectations of an advertisement consumer. Although ‘*Just sheer pleasure!*’ is introduced by a focusing adjunct which is a limiter, the choice of the lexis ‘pleasure’ erases down-toning suggested by ‘just’ and ‘sheer’. Thus, the premodifiers could be in secondness interpreted to suggest ‘basically’ or ‘fundamentally’.

Table 5: Yes, things soon come alive with Maltina

9								
Form	Clause	Yes,	things	soon	come		alive	with Maltina
Function	Inter. meaning		Subject	Mood Adjunct	‘present’ Finite	Come Pred.	Comp.	Adjunct
			Mood Block			Residue		

‘Yes’, a marker of discourse, opens the clause to call the interlocutor to attention. The mood block in the manners of the adverbials is interrupted by a mood adjunct ‘soon’. The finite is realised in the present form of ‘come’ which equally realises the predicator. The adjunct is realised in the prepositional phrase ‘with Maltina’. The mood is declarative.

Table 6: So, put some fun into the action

10						
Form	Clause	So,	put	some fun	into	the action...
Function	Interpersonal meaning		'present' Finite	Put Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
		Residue	Mood Block	Residue		

As a way of starting the clause labelled 10, the connector, 'so', is used. The mood is in the imperative, realised by the finite 'put' in the present which is also the predicator. Though with the absent 'You' as the subject, the interlocutor is helped to connect the target and the direction shown through the adjunct.

Table 7: and stay lively ever refreshed!

11						
Form	Clause	and	stay	lively	ever refreshed!	
Function	Interpersonal meaning		'present' Finite	Stay Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
		Residue	Mood Block	Residue		

Semantically, or rather meaning-wise, 'and' which does not have a significant status in the interpersonal classifications means 'consequently' thereby connecting with the demand of goods and services in 10. Though in the imperative mood, the clause seems to predict the outcome of the acceptance of directive in 10.

Table 8: Have a Maltina today!

12				
Form	Clause	Have	a Maltina	today!
Function	Interpersonal meaning	Predicator	Complement	Adjunct
		Residue		

‘Have a Maltina today!’ is strategically positioned as the first and the last clauses of the advertisement for the purpose of realising the effect of a repetition in discourse. It is a device for emphasis.

Finally, Mood as realised in the advertisements are realised as follows:

- a. **Use of Declaratives:** These are the statements. They convey information. It is a process of announcing, explaining, saying and reporting. There are four of these realised in the clauses 3, 5, 7 & 9. The predominance of declaratives suggests exchange and delivery of information (Koussouhon *et al.*2016:162) with which advertisers and the advertising consumers are more concerned. 2, 6 and 8 are examples of partial or elliptical declaratives in which the advertiser relies on the world background and shared knowledge with the advertising consumer for the comprehensive realisation of the message and consequently, the intended meaning of the clauses. However, the prevalent use of full declaratives is in consonance with Hasan (1985:42) that the predominating occurrence of declarative mood is the mood par excellence.
- b. **Use of Interrogatives:** Interrogatives, rather than volunteering information, demand one. Halliday refers to this as demanding ‘goods and services’. They are words that are used to ask questions, thus seeking information. Elsewhere, it could be classified as wh-, yes/no, tag or echo. However, the one employed by this advertiser is wh- which we have identified as rhetorical. The only instance is in 4. In its full presentation, *And why not?* impacts on the three previous texts. Thus, it is possible to realise: (i) Why won’t you have a Maltina today? (ii) Why won’t Maltina be so lively, so refreshing? (iii) Why won’t Maltina give more and more? And, Why won’t Maltina be the thing wherever there’s action?
- c. **Use of Imperatives:** As there are in the interrogative mood, there are three imperative moods in this advertisement. They are shown in the clauses: *Have a Maltina today...* (1), *So, put some fun into the action* (10), & *and stay lively ever refreshed!* (11).

- d. **The imperative mood expresses order through the verbal elements.** Three of the imperatives in this advert are subtle, non-authoritative and non-forceful as this seems to say that force does not work to achieve the purpose of an advertisement. The fourth, clause 1, does not have an intervening word that will make the clause serve an indirect or subtle imperative. Replicating imperative clause 1 in 12 reinforces an advertising persuasive device in form of command.

### III. Summary of Mood System from the Data

The mood shows the attitude towards the processes, participant and circumstances. The mood, through the finite process, attitudinally declares a fact or interrogates it as we see in the following: *Maltina's*, *Maltina is*, *It's*, *come* (present-finite), *put* (present-finite) and *stay* (present-finite). The indicative realisation is seen in the subject-finite order. The finite element makes the proposition finite. It is for the purpose of making it arguable. It relates the proposition to its context in the speech event.

#### Conclusion

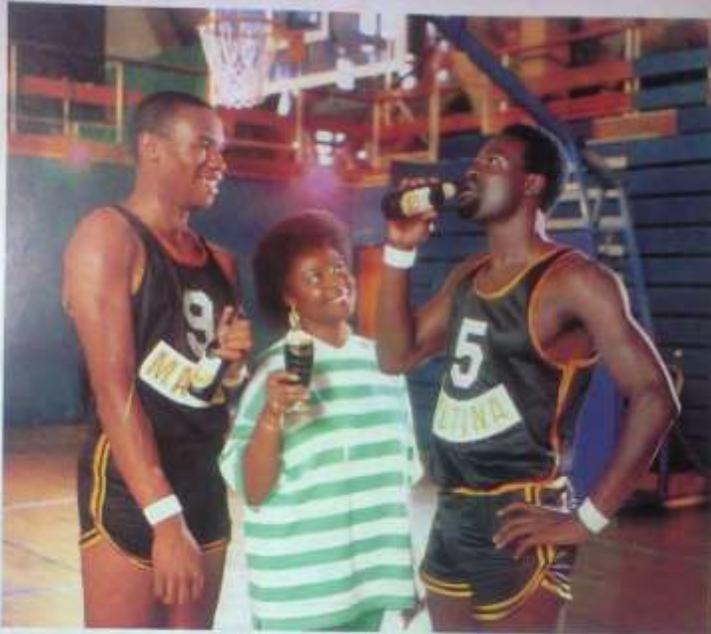
This paper has focused on the linguistic exploration of Maltina advertisement to buttress Halliday's description of clause as exchange and as realised through the process of the mood system. The choice of the advert is important because unlike many other adverts in the drink industry, this particular advert spanned over fifteen years, thereby feeding the curiosity of a probing mind. The advert endured for this long in the industry because it has, we want to believe, been effective in making the advertisement consumers actually the consumers of the malt drink. Even while some other adverts had come and gone during this period, it seems the particular advert in this study captures the human essence in "Have a Maltina today". The analytic focus of determining how meanings are signified cannot be better realised than in the interpersonal metafunction of Halliday's (1985:68-100 & 1994:134-199) Systemic Functional Theory. Lowe Lintas, the advertising agency for Nigerian Breweries companies (NB), through the choice of mood system, was able to establish interpersonal relationships between the brewer and the members of the society who are the product consumers. By the conscious efforts of the advertiser, the speech functions of advertisements in persuading, enticing, motivating, demanding, inviting, ordering, proposing, recommending, confirming, persisting, and denying (Haratyan, 2011:260) are realised.

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APPENDIX: Maltina advertisement in Nigeria (1979-1996)



**Have a MALTINA today...  
...so lively, so refreshing!**

More and more, wherever there's action, Maltina's the thing!  
And why not?  
Made from pure malt, Maltina is the Number One non-alcoholic  
malt drink. Rich, dark and bubbling over with life.  
With a taste so refreshing and so irresistible, it's out of this world!  
Just sheer pleasure!  
Yes, things soon come alive with Maltina. So, put some fun  
into the action...and stay lively, ever refreshed!



**Have a MALTINA today!**