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**Selected Motivational Books by Nigerian
Authors: A Pragma-stylistic Analysis of Blurbs**

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Abstract

A Blurb refers to a summary or promotional piece accompanying a creative work. It is usually deployed to function as a marketing or persuasive strategy aimed at getting the potential customers to buy and read a book. This study examined the blurbs of motivational books through pragma-stylistic approach. It investigated various pragma-stylistic devices deployed in the selected blurbs in relation to the contexts in which they are used. Blurbs of motivational books written by Nigerian authors constituted the data for the study; the blurbs were selected because the books discuss various topical issues that are of interest to Nigerians. Furthermore, motivational books were considered appropriate for this study, because virtually everybody wants to be motivated in every area of life. The data for this study were drawn from purposively selected blurbs of ten (10) motivational books written by Nigerian authors. The data were analysed with insights drawn from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. The study showed that the pragmatic features – reference, deixis, inference and allusion –

play a prominent role in the composition of blurbs of motivational books written by Nigerian author. Pragmatic features are employed in blurbs by Nigerian authors of motivational books as persuasive tools to convince readers to gladly buy the books. The study notes that the blurbs of motivational books by Nigerian authors are replete with reference, deixis, inference and allusion that play a great role in their structures.

Keywords: Nigerian authors, Blurbs, Reference, Deixis, Inference

Introduction

Language is the principal tool with which we communicate daily. Language is of phenomenal importance, because communication among members of a speech community is made easy with its utilization. It can be made to perform different functions in the society. This assertion is corroborated by Holmes (2000:61) who asserts that language is adaptable to new situations, new ideas and new aspects of culture. It is this attribute of language that makes it a great advertising tool for authors/publishers of motivational books, because they use language persuasively to persuade readers to buy their books. When book blurbs are composed, the use of language to attract readers' attention is of paramount importance to authors/publishers. This accounts for their tendency to use language in a way that will make the readers to be interested in buying their books. In an attempt to paint a vivid picture of their subject matters and hold their audience (readers) spellbound, book publishers/authors employ language in a creative manner so as to construct attention-grabbing blurbs.

Furthermore, authors/publishers leave no stone unturned in making sure that their books are received well by the readers. This is confirmed by Gea-Valor (2005) who opines that it is a well-known fact that publishing companies spend much money, time and energy in designing their book covers to attract potential customers. Gea-Valor (2005) states further that every time one intends to buy a book, the first thing one looks at is its front cover.

However, if one wishes to know more about the book one is about to buy or read, one usually looks at the information on its back cover.

Worthy of note is the fact that blurbs can be written by both the authors and the publishers. Authors usually compose blurbs and have them sent to the publishers. Publishers thereafter fine-tune the blurbs for clarity of expressions and ideas. At times, authors do instruct publishers to write book blurbs for them. However, whatever is written as the blurb for a particular book is usually forwarded to the author for the endorsement of what has been composed as the blurb for his/her book. It also needs to be stated here that nowhere is the role of editors in publishing firms more evident than in the fine-tuning of manuscripts and blurbs sent to them by the authors.

This is further expounded by Okwilagwe (2001: 12) who submits that “the editor reads the manuscript to ensure consistency of content, organisation and sense. He identifies ambiguities, illogicalities, errors and consistencies. He ensures factual accuracy of text and corrects all discrepancies. The housestyle is maintained by ensuring internal consistency of spelling, grammar, punctuation and number”.

Therefore, when it comes to the composition of blurbs, it can safely be asserted that the relationship between the publishers and authors is a cooperative one. This is a result of the fact that each element found in book blurbs serves as a hinge on which language rolls when the authors/publishers persuade the audience.

Blurb

A blurb is a summary or promotional piece accompanying a creative work. A blurb on a book usually comprises quotes from the work, the author, the publisher, fans or reviewers. Blurb is further described as having a beginning, a middle and an end, a light style and a definite point to make about the content or

purpose of the book, as well as an expression of the publisher's own confidence in its merits (Bingley, 1966 in Eaglstein & Berman, 1990). It also contains the biography of the author or claims about the importance of the work. The word 'blurb' was coined in 1907 by American humourist, Gelett Burgess (1866-1951) (Crystal, 1995). It may also refer to the text on the back of a book but can also be seen on DVDs and video cases, web portals, and news websites. A blurb may equally introduce a newspaper or magazine feature story. Henceforth in the study, reference to blurb should be interpreted as book blurbs.

Information about books can also be found on the web sites that most publishing houses design in order to reach a wider public via the Net. We should not forget that we live in a technologically advanced society where one of the most powerful and widespread tools of communication is undoubtedly the Internet. And like so many other companies all over the world, publishing firms make use of this effective tool to advertise and sell their products, in this case books. Whether information about a book appears on its covers or on a web page, these short descriptive texts are generally known as blurbs. Blurbs do not only describe the contents of a book, but also evaluate and recommend the book by means of extracts from reviews in well-known newspapers, journals and magazines which praise the qualities of the book and the author (Gea-Valor, 2005). Therefore, blurbs seem to function as factual marketing strategies aimed at getting the potential customers to buy and read the book.

Statement of Research Problem

Existing studies on book blurbs have focused on diachronic and comparative linguistic paradigms (Gea-Valor, 2005; Cacchiani, 2007). In his evaluation in book blurbs, Cacchiani (2007) submits that book blurbs serve both an informative and a promotional function. Cacchiani (2007) further echoes Kotler and Armstrong's (1993) model of marketing strategies by asserting that book blurbs

position and market the book. However, there is a dearth of studies on blurbs of motivational books using pragma-stylistic approach. Investigating the pragma-stylistic features in the selected blurbs of motivational books will aid in understanding the roles played by context and style in the composition of blurbs of motivational books. This present study intends to fill this gap.

Scope of the Study

The scope of the study was restricted to selected motivational books written by Nigerian authors, because Nigerian authors employ social contexts in Nigeria which readers can easily identify in Nigerian society. The ten blurbs of motivational books were selected because they all discuss issues that border on business, religion, unemployment, personal achievement and education. The blurbs of these motivational books were selected because of the topicality of the issues they have discussed. This finds strength in the fact that, in Nigeria, the issues of business, religion, unemployment, education and personal achievement have wide currency in Nigeria.

Theoretical Framework

Book publishers/authors make use of various linguistic structures when writing their book blurbs depending on the context, which might be linguistic, social or deictic. Therefore, the study adopted the pragmatic approach through the investigation of reference, deixis, inference and allusion, which are all pragmatic features. This was done with insights drawn from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. Abuya (2012) submits that pragmatics is the theory of appropriateness. Pragmatics sees context as composed of the knowledge, beliefs, assumptions and earlier utterances of the language-users themselves (Hickey, 1993). Therefore, this study explored the appropriateness of language use through the exploration of reference, deixis, inference and allusion in the selected book blurbs.

Systemic Functional Linguistics pays attention to the context in which a text is produced. It recognises the situation in which linguistic elements occur as being a determining factor for the interpretation of the language. Halliday (1978) discusses three variables of context: field, tenor and mode. *Field* is concerned with what is happening, the nature of social interaction taking place: what the participants are actually doing with language, which features prominently in social interactions. *Tenor* refers to the participants taking part in interactions. It involves the social roles and relationship of the participants, their status and roles. In other words, tenor is all about the relationship existing between the participants. *Mode* involves the organisation of the text, rhetorical modes (persuasive, expository, etc), channel through which communication is made possible, such as written and spoken, computer-mediated communication, and so on. Halliday (1985) further posits that field, tenor and mode constitute the register of a text.

Adopting the Systemic Functional Linguistics expounded by Halliday is useful for the analysis of the data for this study because of the attention it pays to the context of situation. Aligning with this assertion, Babalola (2007) lists pragmatics as one of the significant parts of the Systemic Functional Linguistics. Others mentioned by Babalola (2007) are semantics, discourse analysis, and some aspects of sociolinguistics.

Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been carried out on blurbs. Bhatia (1997) explores the way generic conventions are manipulated and mixed for promotional purposes in academic introductions. He asserts that “genres traditionally considered non-promotional in intent, including book introductions, are becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish from publishers’ blurbs” (Bhatia, 1997: 190).

Gea-Valor (2005) opines that blurbs may be considered as a genre, characterised by its own communicative purpose, rhetorical

organisation and linguistic conventions. He stresses that the rhetorical structure of blurbs consists of three main moves, each one performing a specific function. The three moves are Description, Evaluation and About the Author.

Move 1, which is the *description*, is the only obligatory move in the blurb. It usually means a summary of the book's content, which may refer either to the plot or to the line of argument according to literary genre in question; that is, if the book involves a story (fiction, crime, thriller), the plot and the characters are usually described, whereas if the book deals with science, history or politics, the argument line is offered.

Evaluation is the Move 2, which is usually done by means of review excerpts. This is why blurbs usually involve extracts from longer reviews published in newspapers and magazines. For example, the book *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man* by Steven Harvey is evaluated in *Philadelphia Inquirer*. The review excerpt reads: "Harvey offers surprising insights into the male mentality and gives women strategies for taming that unruly beast."

In Move 3 (*About the author*), the professional background of the author will be presented, and this usually includes previous publication, awards won, current interests, and occasionally place of residence and family details (Gea-Valor, 2005). Gea-Valor (2005) concludes by asserting that blurbs constitute a genre characterised by its own communicative purpose which is meant to persuade the reader to buy the book by describing its contents and by praising its qualities. According to Gea-Valor, this communicative purpose, characteristic of advertising and promotional genres, is reflected in the rhetorical structure of the blurb, which consists of description, evaluation and author's biography. Moreover, blurbs make use of a wide range of textual features and linguistic conventions, most of them typical of advertising, in order to achieve their communicative purpose.

Cacchiani's (2007) study on the structure of book blurbs bears a striking similarity to that of Gea-Valor's. He, however, identifies a 4-move structure, namely, identification, establishing credentials, highlighting parts of the book, and appraising the book. Cacchiani (2007) submits that the book blurbs selectively present the positive features of books in highly positive terms; book blurbs are often comprised of positive and colourful words, phrases and sentences. Önder's (2013) study pays attention to the online fiction blurbs accompanying the 95 best-selling books from Amazon United Kingdom and Okuoku Turkey by investigating their generic structure and promotional elements. Önder comes up with different move structure synonymous with the blurbs that go with the best-selling books. Okuoku is a company that sells books that are written in Turkish or translated into Turkish online (Önder, 2013). Önder's findings suggest that Amazon UK book blurbs have a six-move schematic structure: complimenting the author, book description, justifying the book by establishing a niche, book promotion, author's background and author's website/blog; the second, fourth and fifth being the obligatory moves. However, Okuoku book blurbs feature a five-move schematic structure with complimenting the author, book description, involving the reader in the text, book promotion and author's background; the second and fourth being obligatory. In the study, Önder (2013) upholds the Bhatia's (2005 in Önder, 2013) submission by stating that the analysis of promotional elements in the corpora reveals that online fiction book blurbs employ the art of advertising through the use of favourable expressions and innovative uses of rhetorical strategies to persuade the reader to read and buy the book.

Marciulioniene (2012) studies book blurbs in fiction from a diachronic perspective. In addition to the identification of its 4-move structure, the study reveals that unique and rare words, in particular, adjectives, in the book blurbs are still very stable across time differences. However, Kathpalia's (1997) study of book blurbs is marked by the comparative perspective adopted in his

analysis. He threads a different path by embarking on a comparative study of book blurbs by examining the book blurbs from a cross-cultural perspective by comparing those printed by international and local publishers.

It is imperative to state here that, having taken an excursion through some of the previous studies carried out on blurbs, it can be seen that this study is related to them because it has book blurbs as its data, but it is different in the sense that it will adopt a pragmatic approach with insights from Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics. The study investigates the appropriateness of language use through the investigation of reference, deixis, inference and allusion, which are all pragmatic features.

Methodology

Book blurbs of motivational books written by Nigerian authors constituted the population of the study, because they discuss various topical issues that are of interest to Nigerians. Furthermore, motivational books were considered appropriate for this study, because virtually everybody wants to be motivated in every area of life. Ten (10) blurbs of motivational books were purposively selected and categorised into five broad groupings: **business, religion, unemployment, personal achievements and education**. For ease of reference, the blurbs on business were labelled Texts A1 and A2; the ones on religion were labelled Texts B1 and B2; the ones on unemployment were labelled Texts C1 and C2; the ones on personal achievement were labelled Texts D1 and D2; and the ones on education were labelled Texts E1 and E2.

Data Analysis

Pragmatic Features in the Data

1. Reference: This is usually used in book blurbs to give information about the books being presented. It is also employed in book blurbs to identify with the readers with the aim to get them involved, thereby getting them interested in buying the books.

(a) Exophoric Reference: Here, the referents of the deitic items are outside the text. The words ‘you’, ‘your’, ‘yourself’, ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ are instances of exophoric reference in the extracts below:

EXTRACT 1

Sack **your** boss and grow **your** own business... Do **you** need a job or you want to do business? If yes is **your** answer to any of the questions above then **you** must read this book (Text A1)

EXTRACT 2

... Read it and start today to becoming **your** own boss and achieving independence (Text A2).

Your’ and ‘your’ in extracts 1 and 2 are instances of the employment of exophoric reference to make every reader understand that they can become their own boss in any business set-up. Nonetheless, one thing that is obvious from its use is that the author/publisher encourages every reader to buy the book so as to discover the secrets to becoming the boss in every business embarked upon. Similarly, in extracts 3 and 4 below, there are instances of exophoric reference:

EXTRACTS 3

This book will bring an end to drought in **your** life! **You** will never suffer drought again! (Text B1).

EXTRACT 4

This book is an outstanding masterpiece that teaches **you** not just how to acquire faith...to put **your** faith... (Text B2).

The pronouns ‘your’ and ‘you’ refer exophorically to readers. This is also evident in the extract 5:

EXTRACT 5

This book will bring an end to drought in **your** life! It will show **you** how to leave the wilderness and step into Canaan! It will put **you** into the land flowing with milk and honey, and living will become cheap! ... (Text B1).

The referring items 'you' and 'your' in extract 5 have their referents outside the text. They are used to refer to the readers directly. The employment of the referring items makes it possible for the author/publisher to address the readers, especially people in the Christendom.

The use of 'we', 'you' and 'your' in the extract below is another manifestation of exophoric reference:

In extract 6, we have the preponderance of referring items 'you', 'your', 'our' and 'yourself'. They are employed as instances of exophoric reference as captured below:

EXTRACT 6

HOW TO REALLY GET **YOUR** DREAM JOB EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS HIRING offers **you** the step by step guide on how **you** can secure gainful employment in **our** highly competitive labor market. Essentially a teaching manual, the book reveals to **you** in a clear, readable and simple language the following

- What **You** Must Do To Make **Yourself** The Toast Of The Employer
- 7 Critical Things **You** Must Do In Writing **Your** Application
- How To Make **Your** CV Irresistible
- The Right Information To Give In **Your** CV
- How To Awaken The Genius That Lives In **You** And Launch **Yourself** To Great Success In Business... (Text C2).

The referring items in extract 6 are used exophorically to tell the readers that becoming employable will be an easy task provided they buy the book. It is important to submit here that the referring item 'our' is utilised to collectively refer to us Nigerians. This is as a result of the fact that there is no gainsaying the fact that the issue of unemployment is inflicting serious damage on the psyche of every unemployed graduate in Nigeria. The utilisation of 'you', 'your' and 'yourself' is meant for the direct address of the readers. The employment of 'our' emphasises the fact that the problem of unemployment in Nigeria is an issue acknowledged by Nigerians. And the author/publisher uses this situation to reach out to the readers that they will secure their dream jobs, if they buy the book. We also have the employment of exophoric reference in extract 7:

EXTRACT 7

...The cure to getting out of **your** comfort zone and overcoming **your** fear is by taking action. If **you** conceive the thought in **your** mind, then surely **you** can achieve what **you** purpose in **your** mind, but only if **you** follow it up with action.

In this book, **you**'ll learn how to:-

- Overcome **your** fears and going after **your** dream
- Take the necessary action **you** need to kick start **your** dream
- Navigate through obstacles that come **your** way (Text D1).

The referring items 'you' and 'your' in extract 7 refer to people outside the text. The employment of these referring items is meant to persuade the readers who are would-be buyers to buy the book.

(b) Anaphoric Reference

Anaphoric reference is a backward reference in which the reader has to look forwards in the text to know the referred item or

referent in the text. There are instances of anaphoric reference in the first part (About the Author) of extract 8 below:

EXTRACT 8

Wale Badmus is a graduate of Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State and Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife where **he** obtained **his** Post-graduate diploma in management (PGDM) (Text A1).

EXTRACT 9

The men and women who own these businesses cannot be sacked or retrenched. Each is a top executive, the ruler of **his** own empire, and the architect of **his** own fortune.

This book is about what to do. **It** is practical and straight to the point. Read **it** and start today to becoming your own boss and achieving independence (Text A2).

In the extract 8, the referring item 'he' and 'his' is used anaphorically to refer to 'Wale Badmus'. Similarly, in the extract 9, the referring item 'his' is used anaphorically to refer to 'a top executive', and the word 'it' in the second sentence of the second paragraph is an instance of anaphoric reference to 'this book' seen in the first sentence.

EXTRACT 10

This book will bring an end to drought in your life! **It** will show you how to leave the wilderness and step into Canaan! **It** will put you into the land flowing with milk and honey, and living will become cheap!

It is another book on prosperity, but on the mysteries of God's rainfall (Text B1).

EXTRACT 11

...Chris Oyakhilome has helped millions experience a victorious...**He** is the author... (text B2).

The referring item 'it' in extract 10 is also used anaphorically because it refers back to 'This book' mentioned in the first sentence of the extract. It makes the readers to look back for what it means in the previous sentence; and in this case, the context helps the readers to identify that the word 'it' refers to. 'He' refers back to 'Chris Oyakhilome' in extract 11. The instances of the use of anaphoric reference can also be seen in extract 12 and 13:

EXTRACT 12

The book is loaded with inspirational nuggets for soaring beyond limits. **It** contains lives of soaring men ... them to the top (Text D2).

EXTRACT 13

Tunde Adeleye is a Management Consultant, public speaker, trainer and social commentator...

Born in Liverpool, England, **he** attended Igbobi College, Yaba Lagos where **he** did **his** Ordinary and Advanced level education (Text D1).

In extract 12, 'It' refers back to 'The book', while the referring items 'he' and 'his' in extract 13 refer back to 'Tunde Adeleye' – the author.

EXTRACT 14

"Attaining Academic Excellence", written by Pastor Solomon Jegede, demonstrates in practical and spiritual form how students can excel in **their** studies.

The book is simple to read and understand. Any student who goes through **it** with full attention and puts its contents into practice will not only attain academic excellence in school, but will also excel in **his** or **her** future career. I therefore strongly recommend **it** to all students and non-students (Text E1).

In extract 14, ‘their’ refers backwards to ‘students’; ‘it’ seen in the third and fourth sentences of the extract refers anaphorically to ‘The book’ mentioned in the second sentence of the extract.

EXTRACT 15

How to Pass Examinations x-rays, virtually, all the minute details of what it takes to pass examination at all levels of academic endeavours. **It** also attempts ... studies. **It** is a ... examination or the other.

Born in 1952, Professor Ayo Oni hails from Oke-Opin in Ekiti Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Kwara State, Nigeria. **He** had **his** secondary school...**He** had **his** Bachelor’s degree in ... the University of Ibadan (Text E2).

In extract 15, while ‘it’ in the first paragraph refers backwards to ‘***How to Pass Examinations***’, ‘he’ and ‘his’ refer backwards to the author – Professor Ayo Oni.

(c) Cataphoric Reference

The occurrence of cataphoric reference is shown in the extract below:

The occurrence of cataphoric reference is shown in extract 16:

EXTRACT 16

When asked what would make **them** automatically reject a candidate, employers said: (Text C2).

‘Them’ is an instance of cataphoric reference pointing forward to ‘employers’.

In the data examined above, the occurrence of the types of reference pointed out creates cohesion in the text.

2. Deixis: The manifestation of person, time, place and social deixis is discussed below:

(a) Person Deixis: The following extracts contain the instances of person deixis:

EXTRACT 17

Wale Badmus is a graduate of Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State and Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife where **he** obtained **his** Post-graduate diploma in management (PGDM) (Text A1).

EXTRACT 18

LADI OLATUNJI is the author of two other books *How To Get Money For Your Business Or Projects* and *Glossary Of Advertising, Marketing And Communication Terms*. **He** is an Entrepreneur and Investor (Text A2).

In extract 17, ‘he’ and ‘his’ are the person deictic words used to refer to the author, Wale Badmus. In extract 18, ‘he’ is a person deixis, pointing to Ladi Olatunji as a male author.

EXTRACT 19

- What **You** Must Do To Make **Yourself** The Toast Of The Employer
- How **You** Can Turn From Being An Applicant To An Employer (Text C2).

EXTRACT 20

This book is an outstanding masterpiece that teaches **you** not just how to acquire faith, but how

to put **you** faith to work so **you** can live the life of victory...which God has planned for **you**.

...Oyakhilome has helped millions...**He** is the author of...**His** teachings are also available in all audio and video formats (Text B2).

‘You’ and ‘Yourself’ in extract 19 as well as ‘you’, ‘your’, ‘he’ and ‘his’ are the person deictic words in extract 20. While ‘you’, ‘yourself’ and ‘your’ refer to readers, ‘he’ and ‘his’ refer to the author, Oyakhilome.

EXTRACT 21

The central theme of the book is focused on the industrious nature of the Ant and the tiny creature was used as a metaphor for hard work and resilience. All that is required of any individual to pursue **their** dreams, possess **their** possessions and recover all **their** lost blessings is to stop sitting comfortably, stop procrastinating and stop making excuses... If **you** conceive the thought in **your** mind, then surely **you** can achieve what **you** purpose on **your** mind, but only if **you** follow it up with action.

Tunde Adeleye is a Management Consultant, public speaker, trainer and social commentator....

Born in Liverpool, England, **he** attended Igbobi College, Yaba Lagos where **he** did **his** Ordinary and Advanced level education... (Text D1).

In extract 21, ‘their’, ‘you’ and ‘your’ are person deixis that are used to refer directly to the readers. Addressing them directly will motivate them to purchase the book. Similarly, ‘he’ and ‘his’ refer to the author – Tunde Adeleye.

Finally on the deictic words used in the data above, ‘you’, ‘yourself’, ‘your’ and ‘we’ are person deixis used to address the

readers directly in order to make them feel wanted and highly regarded. A closer look at how they are used in the extracts considered above reveals that emphasis placed on them is deliberately used to make readers feel they are greatly valued as would-be buyers of the books. Instances of ‘you’, ‘your’ and ‘yourself’ in the texts are used to address the readers generally irrespective of their gender.

(b) Time deixis: This features prominently in book blurbs. This can be seen in the extracts below:

EXTRACT 22

Sack your boss and grow your own business is an entrepreneurial book that has answers to all joblessness situation in the country **today** (Text A1).

EXTRACT 23

Most of the big businesses **today** were small ones of **yesterday**. Many of the small ones **today** will be giants **a few years from now** (Text A2).

The deictic words ‘today’ in extract 22 and ‘today’, ‘yesterday’ and ‘a few years from now’ in extract 23 are time deixis. They are used in discussing the success recorded by the big businesses we have around. ‘Yesterday’ is used to refer to the time past when small businesses were striving to be big, and that nowadays (today), they are big businesses. ‘A few years from now’ is used to point to what will happen in future; it is used to emphasise that small businesses we have around now will become big businesses in future.

(c) Place deixis: It is common to have the employment of place deixis in the composition of book blurbs. The instances of place deixis in the following extracts are highlighted in bold type:

EXTRACT 24

Wale Badmus is a graduate of **Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State and Obafemi**

Awolowo University Ile-Ife where he obtained his Post-graduate diploma in management (PGDM). He has written many articles for publication **in various reputable journals** (Text A1).

In extract 24, the instances of place deixis are ‘Ondo State Polytechnic’, ‘Owo, Ondo State’ and ‘Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife where he obtained his Post-graduate diploma in management’, which is utilised to persuade the readers that the author acquired management skill from higher institutions of learning.

EXTRACT 25

Tunde Adeleye is a Management Consultant, public speaker, trainer and social commentator. ... and trainer **in England** as well as **in Nigeria**. He has delivered capacity building trainings, lectures and papers **at seminars, conferences and workshops to corporate staff as well as in schools** (Text D1).

EXTRACT 26

This book aims at changing your mind and opening your eyes to resources and potentials available **right inside of you** to help reaching the top and soaring beyond the limits. It contains lives of soaring men and the principles that lifted them **to the top** (Text D2).

EXTRACT 27

Born in 1952, Professor Ayo Oni hails from **Oke-Opin in Ekiti Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Kwara State, Nigeria**. He had his secondary school...He had his Bachelor’s degree in ... the **University of Ibadan** (Text E2).

The instances of place deixis used to convince the readers to buy the books are highlighted in bold type in extracts 25, 26 and 27.

All the instances of place deixis in the extracts are used to persuade the readers to buy the book by constantly drawing the attention of the readers to places of importance, because we have place deictic expressions such as ‘in Liverpool, England’, ‘right inside of you’, ‘in Nigeria’ and so on.

(d) **Social deixis:** The manifestation of the use of social deixis can be seen in the following extract:

EXTRACT 28

HOW TO REALLY GET YOUR DREAM JOB
EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS HIRING offers you the
step by step guide on how you can secure gainful
employment in **our** highly competitive labor market
(Text C2).

The social deixis ‘our’ in extract 28 is a pronoun of solidarity used to motivate the readers to buy the book. Further, the utilisation of ‘our’ will most likely get readers persuaded to buy the book as the author/publisher identifies with the unemployed in the highly competitive Nigerian labour market.

3. **Inference:** The manifestation of inference is evident in the extracts below:

EXTRACT 29

Most of the big businesses today were small ones
of yesterday. Many of the small ones today will be
giants a few years from now.

The men and women who own these businesses
cannot be sacked or retrenched. Each is a top
executive, the ruler of his own empire, and the
architect of his own fortune.

A lot has already been said on how to curb
unemployment and “create jobs”. Many theories

have been propounded. Position papers written. But none has actually shown what could be done (Text A2).

In the extract above, it can be inferred that the author/publisher seems to be saying that the books written previously on how to curb unemployment do not give an in-depth treatment to the issue of unemployment. Specifically, the author/publisher is of the view that the only text that offers effective steps to take in curbing unemployment and creating jobs is the book whose blurb is captured in the extract. We can also infer that anyone who follows the principles enunciated in the book will be his/her own boss, and that the person will never be scared of retrenchment. One can as well infer that asserting that the small businesses today will be giants a few years from now is suggestive that the author/publisher is saying that small businesses of today will develop to become big businesses, if their owners buy the book.

EXTRACT 30

This book will bring an end to drought in your life! It will show you how to leave the wilderness and step into Canaan! It will put you into the land flowing with milk and honey, and living will become cheap!

It is another book on prosperity, but on the mysteries of God's rainfall. The four rains of god that equal showers of blessings.

Welcome to a new realm! A realm of freshness and flourishing. You will never suffer drought again! As you read, you'll come in contact with righteousness, you'll flow in the spirit and you'll delve into revelations, then explode in abundance (Text B1).

It can be inferred in extract 30 that at one point or the other, it is possible for one to be confronted with difficulties, challenges and tribulations in life. The author/publisher could be said to be assuring the readers that every challenge in their lives will be over

once they buy the book, as it offers what can be done to bring suffering, disappointments and lack to an end. This could be attributed to the author's allusion to 'wilderness' and 'Canaan' in the extract, because of what the Israelites experienced in the wilderness before they eventually got to the Promised Land.

EXTRACT 31

- What You Must Do To Make Yourself The Toast Of The Employer

...

- How You Can Turn From Being An Applicant To An Employer
- And Lots More (Text C2).

Jacob Akinwumi Onifade is an alumnus of the University of Ibadan where he took his first degree in Political Science plus a professional degree of Masters in Industrial & Labour Relations (Text C2).

The inference in the extract above is that the author has the requisite knowledge of what the unemployed graduates can do to be successful at job interviews. This is as a result of the fact that the author is described as someone who has master's degree in Industrial and Labour Relations. Therefore, being someone with an advanced degree in Industrial and Labour Relations marks him out as a person that can offer solutions to the problem of unemployment in Nigeria. It is very clear in the extract that the readers are guaranteed success in their search for jobs. What they only have to do is to buy the book and read everything discussed in the book, because of many useful tips that are explained in it.

EXTRACT 32

The central theme of the book is focused on the industrious nature of the **Ant** and the tiny creature was used as a metaphor for hard work and resilience. All that is required of any individual to pursue their dreams, possess their possessions and recover all their lost blessings is to stop sitting

comfortably, stop procrastinating and stop making excuses. The cure to getting out of your comfort zone and overcoming your fears is by taking action.

...

In this book, you'll learn how to:-

- Overcome your fears and going after your dream
- Take the necessary action you need to kick start your dream
- Navigate through obstacles that come your way
- Be persistent and not give up on your dreams
- Succeed against all odds to make your dream come true (Text D1).

One can infer in the extract above that the ant used signifies that achieving success requires hard work. This emphasises that the readers have to be as hard-working as the ants in order to achieve success in life. The readers also have to banish every element of idleness and fear from their lives. They have to take appropriate actions so that they can be in control of their own destinies.

4. Allusion: The employment of allusion in book blurbs helps in giving support to what is being discussed. There is the preponderance of allusion in book blurbs, and its instances are considered in the extracts below:

(a) Biblical Allusion: When Biblical allusion is used in book blurbs, we have reference being made to an event or a person in the Bible which will help in persuading the readers to buy the books described. In the extracts below, we have the occurrences of Biblical allusion.

EXTRACT 33

This book will bring an end to drought in your life!
It will show you how to leave the wilderness and
step into Canaan! It will put you into the land

flowing with milk and honey, and living will become cheap! (Text B1).

It is evident in extract 33 that Biblical allusion is made to the journey of the Israelites in the wilderness before they got to Canaan, which is described as a land flowing with milk and honey in Exodus 3 verse 8 which reads: "...unto a land flowing with milk and honey...", and Exodus 33 verse 3, which reads: "Unto to a land flowing with milk; for I will not go up ... thee in the way." Wilderness was full of ups and downs for the Israelites before they eventually arrived in the Promised Land – Canaan. On their way to the Promised Land, it is recorded in the Bible that they got to the 'Wilderness of Sin' in Exodus chapter 16 verse 1: "And they took their journey from Elim...the children came into the wilderness of Sin...out of the land of Egypt." Another wilderness recorded in the journey of the Israelites is the 'Wilderness of Sinai' in Numbers chapter 1 verse 1, which reads: "And the Lord spake unto Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai ... out of the land of Egypt, saying...

The use of allusion to the experience of the Israelites throws up the fact that the Israelites were confronted with drought in the wilderness. The word 'drought' means "a long period of time when there is little or no rain" (Hornby, 2010). The utilisation of allusion by the author/publisher in extract 33 is suggestive that difficulty, challenge or anything negative in the lives of the readers will become a thing of the past once they purchase the book. Allusion made to the difficulties experienced by the Israelites paints the picture of what the readers might be going through in life; this is used to show that solutions to their problem lie in the book described in the extract. This is a strategy to lure the readers into buying the book.

(b) Literary Allusion: In book blurbs, literary allusion is used to draw the attention of the readers to other books previously

written by the authors. This is done to motivate the readers to buy the books on which the blurbs are written.

EXTRACT 34

LADI OLATUNJI is the author of two other books *How to Get Money for Your Business Or Projects* and *Glossary Of Advertising, Marketing And Communication Terms* (Text A2).

In extract 34, the allusion made to the books previously written by the author paints the picture of someone with technical know-how in business development. The first book alluded to explores how to get money for businesses, and the second one revolves around what can make a business organisation viable: advertising, marketing and communication; and some of the things that play important roles in the life of a business organisation are advertising, marketing and adequate communication. So, any reader that sees the books being referred to will be persuaded to buy the book on which the blurb is written.

EXTRACT 35

...He is the author of several best sellers including *None of These Diseases* and *Rhapsodies of Realities*, which he co-authors with his wife, Pastor Anita (B2).

Authors/publishers often make use of allusion because of the success recorded by the previous books written by them. The attention of the readers is therefore easily drawn to the new book on which the blurb has been written.

Conclusion

In the blurbs of motivational books considered, it is evident that, in writing the blurbs of motivational books, Nigerian authors make use of pragmatic features to convince readers to gladly buy the books. This study has shown that the blurbs of motivational books written by Nigerian authors are replete with reference, deixis, inference and allusion that play a great role in their structures. Their interpretation depends solely on the context in which

language has been used to construct them. In investigating these pragmatic elements, it is evident that linguistic, deictic and socio-cultural contexts play a prominent role in the employment of the identified features in the composition of blurbs.

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Appendix

TEXT A1: SACK YOUR BOSS AND GROW YOUR OWN BUSINESS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Wale Badmus is a graduate of Ondo State Polytechnic, Owo, Ondo State and Obafemi Awolowo University Ile-Ife where he obtained his Post-graduate diploma in management (PGDM). He has written many articles for publication in various reputable journals. He is a multiplex personality who demonstrates life in a collection of varied experiences. His personal Integrity and competence enhanced [sic] him several responsible positions in the society such as, Instructor, counsellor, facilitator, co-ordinator, treasurer, and secretary to many organisations.

Wale Badmus, currently is the Chief Executive officer (CEO) of Wisdom Circle books Publications Ltd and wisdom circle bookshop Ltd at Lagos and Lagos respectively. He is married and blessed with Children.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Sack your boss and grow your own business is an entrepreneurial book that has answers to all joblessness situation in the country today. Do you need a job or you want to do business?

Do you need extra business that will give you extra income?

Are you tired of your paid job and you do not know what next to do?

If yes is your answer to any of the questions above then you must read this book.

This book is specifically designed for independent minded persons who actually and anxiously want to be employers of labour.

Working for some merciless bosses running traditional business is not the ticket to extreme wealth or financial and personal freedom.

The real road to wealth is not getting paid a salary but instead is getting paid the same amount of money up-front and per client.

TEXT A2: 66 BUSINESS YOU CAN START AND RUN ON YOUR OWN

66 Businesses You Can Start and Run on Your Own

Most of the businesses of today were small ones of yesterday. Many of the small ones today will be giants a few years from now.

The men and women who own these businesses cannot be sacked or retrenched.

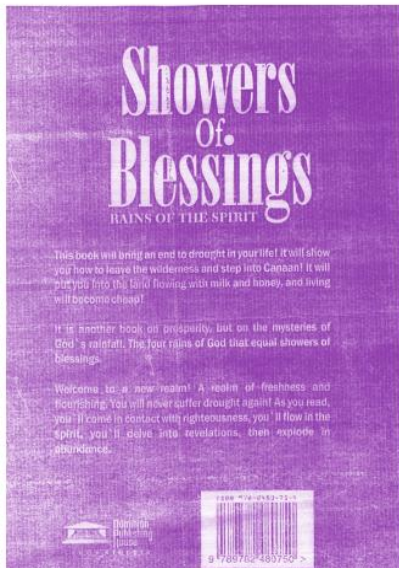
Each is a top executive, the ruler of his own empire, and the architect of his own fortune.

A lot has already been said on how to curb unemployment and "create jobs". Many theories have been propounded. Position papers written. But none has actually shown what could be done.

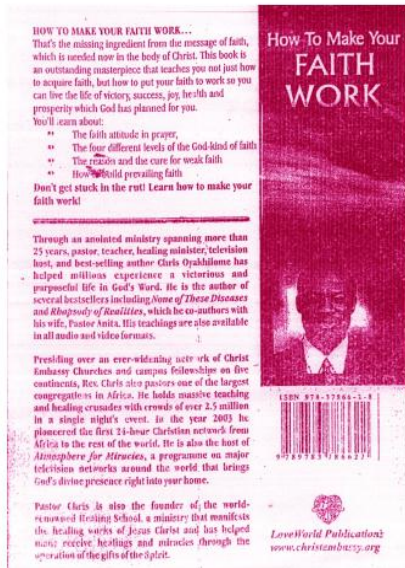
This book is about what to do. It is practical straight to the point. Read it and start today to becoming your own boss and achieving independence.

LADI OLATUNJI is the author of two other books *How to Get Money For Your Business OR Projects and Glossary OF Advertising, Marketing And Communication Terms*. He is an Entrepreneur and Investor.

TEXT B1: SHOWERS OF BLESSINGS



TEXT B2: HOW TO MAKE YOUR FAITH WORK



TEXT C1: HOW TO WRITE A SUCCESSFUL JOB CV

**How to write
A SUCCESSFUL
JOB CV**

When asked what would make them automatically reject a candidate, employers said:

- CVs with spelling mistakes or typos 61%
- CVs that copied large amounts of wording from the job posting 41%
- CVs with an inappropriate email address 35%
- CVs that don't include a list of skills 30%
- CVs that are more than two pages long 22%
- CVs printed on decorative paper 20%
- CVs that detail more tasks than results for previous positions 16%
- CVs that include a photo 13%
- CVs that have large blocks of text with little white space 13%

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TEXT C2: HOW TO REALLY GET YOUR DREAM JOB EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS HIRING

HOW TO REALLY GET YOUR DREAM JOB EVEN WHEN NO ONE IS HIRING offers you the step by step guide on how you can secure gainful employment in our highly competitive labor market. Essentially a teaching manual, the book reveals to you in a clear, readable and simple language the following:

- What You Must Do To Make Yourself The Toast Of The Employer
- 7 Critical Things You Must Do In Writing Your Application
- How To Make Your CV Irresistible
- The Right Information To Give In Your CV
- How To Awaken The Genius That Lives In You And Launch Yourself To Great Success In Business
- How You Can Turn From Being An Applicant To An Employer
- And lots more.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jacob Akinwumi Onifade an alumnus of the University of Ibadan where he took his first degree in Political Science plus a professional degree of masters in Industrial & Labour Relations.

He studied Journalism at the Nigerian Institute of Journalism, Lagos, obtaining certificates in Public Relations and Report Writing & Specialised Reporting. He also holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Theology. He is also a full Member of the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered).

An inspirational writer, he engages in writing and publishing of motivational and self-improving books. He also speaks at Church programmes, seminars and conferences. He is at present the Deputy Registrar (Academic), Osun State College of Technology, Ede-Oke.



TEXT D1: ARISE AND IGNITE YOUR LIFE

Arise and Ignite

THE BOOK

The central theme of the book is focused on the individual nature of the Art and the way creativity was used as a catalyst for hard work and excellence. All that is required of any individual to pursue their dreams, possess their possessions and recover all their lost blessings is to stop sifting conformity, stop procrastinating and stop making excuses. The time is getting rid of your comfort zone and overcoming your fears is by taking action. If you conceive the thought in your mind, then surely you can achieve what you purpose in your mind, but only if you follow it up with action. Many people who live averagely and who choose not to take advantage of opportunities that come their way will continue to be in a state of *Floating Over Opportunities Repeatedly (F.O.O.R.)*.

In this book, you'll learn how to:

- Overcome your fears and going after your dream
- Take the necessary action you need to kick start your dream
- Navigate through obstacles that come your way
- Be persistent and don't give up on your dreams
- Succeed against all odds to make your dream come true


This book will not only inspire you, but it will incite you to take action

THE AUTHOR

Tunde Adedipe is a Management Consultant, public speaker, trainer and social commentator. He has worked with the academic and consultancy sector as a Business and Management consultant and trainer in England, as well as in Nigeria. He has delivered rapidly building trainings, lectures and papers at seminars, conferences and workshops to corporate staff as well as individuals.

Born in Liverpool, England, he attended Igbafé College, Yaba Lagos where he did his Ordinary and Advanced level education. He also holds a First degree in Corporate Communication from Southampton Solent University in England and an MBA from the University of East London.

He is the CEO/Principal Consultant of Afton Integrated Services Limited. A corporate company focused on management training, consultancy, research and personal development. He is a Honorary Consultant for African Religious Foundation (ARF).



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Ibadan, Oyo State Nigeria

TEXT D2: BEYOND THE LIMITS


BEYOND The LIMITS

This book aims at changing your mind and opening your eyes to resources and potentials available right inside of you to help reaching the top and soaring beyond the limits, if properly tapped. The book is loaded with inspirational nuggets for soaring beyond the limits. It contains lives of soaring men and the principles that lifted them to the top.

It is inspirational, thought provoking, life-changing, soul-lifting and soul-refreshing. It will surely spur your heart to settle for nothing but the top and help you to pursue and fulfil your purpose.

Authorisation

This inspirational book is a piece of motivational write-up. It is on a class of its own. No mortal can read it and still remain static, motionless or stationary. It is a book that sees set-back as stepping stones and obstacles as a sure way to the zenith.
(Barrister Ademola Opejunde Oyo State Ministry of Justice, Ibadan.)



Yinka Okunade

TEXT E1: ATTAINING ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

About the Book

"Attaining Academic Excellence", written by Pastor Solomon Jegede, demonstrates in practical and spiritual form how students can excel in their studies. The book is simple to read and understand. Any student who goes through it with full attention and puts its contents into practice will not only attain academic excellence in school, but will also excel in his or her future career. I therefore strongly recommend it to all students and non-students.

PROF. M. O. ILORI

African Institute for Science Policy and Innovation,
Faculty of Technology,
Obafemi Awolowo University,
Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria.

I have found the book, "Attaining Academic Excellence" to be very useful in encouraging students across the globe to focus on their studies and to excel. Additionally, I have found the book to be of tremendous value to the Christian student population across the globe especially as it emphasises the benefits of staying dedicated to high levels of performance even in the face of contextual adversities. The book is easily understandable and spiritually inspiring.

IRENE OKOMA, LL.B, B.L., Psy. D.
SBHS, Illinois, U.S.A.

The book – Attaining Academic Excellence – a rebirth of Serving God on Campus with Envious Proofs is a master piece that guides the purposeful student through a myriad of ills and twists that bedevil higher learning across the globe. With content spread across nine chapters, its utility transcends socio-economic strata with key chapters premised as nuggets for excellence. A book written in lucid English with widespread applicability is not just a must read but a must keep. Pastor Solomon Jegede has through this book demonstrated that excellence is a force that can only be created through diligence and hard work thereby according living with a purpose its rightful place in humanistic settings.

DR. G. B. OKON

Head, Department Of Mass Communication,
Rivers State University of Science & Technology.
Port-Harcourt.



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Living the Angles Series: Of Academic Excellence
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TEXT E2: HOW TO PASS EXAMINATIONS

THE BOOK

How to Pass Examinations x-rays, virtually, all the minute details of what it takes to pass examination at all levels of academic endeavours. It also attempts to enlighten those who may have to attend oral interview either for promotion or for other purposes of securing new jobs or admission for further studies. It is a book you must have for your personal use and the benefit of your household who may get involved in one form of examination or the other.

THE AUTHOR

Born in 1952, Professor Ayo Oni hails from Oke-Opin in Ekiti Local Government Area (L.G.A) of Kwara State, Nigeria. He had his secondary school education at Saint Paul College (now Kufena College) Wusasa-Zaria and his higher school certificate programme at Kwara State School of Basic Studies (now Kwara Polytechnic). He had his Bachelor's degree in English/Education at the University of Ilorin, his Masters and Ph.D degrees in Adult Education at the University of Ibadan. He is currently a Lecturer in the Department of Continuing Education and Extension Services, University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. He has authored and co-authored several other publications in journals, books and other prints. He is happily married to Remi Eytayomi. Both are blessed with children

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