

# The Role of Speech Acts in Advertising: A Comparative Study across Age Demographics

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## ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the linguistic strategies implemented in advertising in order to address three different age demographics: children aged between four and ten, Gen Z or youth aged between fifteen and twenty-four, and middle-aged as well as senior adults aged between fifty and seventy-five. Through utilizing Searle's speech act theory, the paper explores how assertives, directives, commissives, and expressives are employed to align with each age group's sociolinguistic and pragmatic preferences. Thus, a mixed-methods investigation, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, was conducted on twenty commercials, which demonstrates substantial variations regarding the utilization of speech acts. The findings demonstrated that representatives and directives were prevalent across all age demographics, although their tone and focus varied by age group. Commissives were featured only in youth commercials, where they represented playful commitments, whereas declaratives were completely absent. Expressives varied the most as children's commercials emphasized excessive happiness, youth advertisements encouraged peer-like friendliness, while commercials that target middle-aged adults and senior adults employed limited expressives to show reassurance. These results illustrate how linguistic techniques in advertisements are customized according to the target audience's social, cognitive, and emotional traits.*

**Keywords:** Speech acts theory, advertising, sociolinguistics.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is one of the current significant usages of language (Cook 2008). Linguistic techniques serve a vital function in developing effective and appealing commercials (Mishra 2013). Advertisers implement a number of strategies to stylize and alter language depending on the item or service being advertised and the intended audience (Mishra 2013). These methods involve morphological techniques like hybridization and code-mixing, stylistic elements such as personification and metaphors, and phonological strategies including alliteration and rhyme (Shariq 2020).

Furthermore, the deliberate utilization of language in advertising seeks to catch audiences' interest and influence how consumers behave (Teodorescu 2015). Advertisements frequently try to guarantee consumers' happiness, whether explicitly or implicitly, by correlating it with the promoted items or services (Akata 2021). In

advertising, language not only conveys the promoted items or services, but it also generates depictions that consumers will connect with, evolving language to become a consumption device (Mishra 2013; Akata 2021). The intriguing, yet controversial, nature of advertisements has led to immense and ongoing interest from many academic fields, including linguistics, media studies, politics, semiotics, and sociology, among many more (Cook 2008).

This study seeks to employ Searle's speech act theory in analyzing commercials that target different age demographics with the goal of emphasizing the patterns of variation that might occur to cater to each age group. The present research contributes to the discipline of sociolinguistics by exploring how speech acts in advertisements differ according to the age demographic targeted, thereby presenting

an understanding of how language is deliberately employed to influence various target demographics. While previous research has concentrated on the broad application of language in advertisements, few have investigated advertising tailored to various age groups from the perspective of Searle's speech act theory. By concentrating on expressives, commissives, assertives, and directives, this study illustrates how advertisers tailor their communication techniques to accommodate the expectations, preferences, and communication styles of each age group. Therefore, the findings are significant for researchers exploring the relationship between language and age, in addition to professionals in media and advertising who seek to produce more successful and age-appropriate advertising.

This paper aims to analyze twenty advertisements to identify the language used to target different age demographics using the speech act theory. Therefore, the advertisements selected are as follows: seven that target children, seven that target Gen Z and youth, and six that target middle-aged adults and senior adults. This paper aims to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most frequently employed speech act types in advertisements targeting children, youth, middle-aged adults, and senior adults, and how do their uses vary across these age groups?
2. What are the communicative roles that the observed speech acts execute in the context of age-based advertisements?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Speech Act Theory

The speech act theory was initially created by John Austin (Clark 2021). It refers to the notion that when individuals converse, they are conducting an action that enables one to better comprehend spoken interactions through paying attention to the types of acts that speech may perform (Clark 2021). Austin's concepts regarding speech acts have evolved over time and were finally published in 1962 in a book called *How To Do Things With Words* (Clark 2021). Austin began the book by differentiating between statements and other types of utterances perceived as conducting actions (Austin 1962). Nevertheless, according to what he later noted in his book, he viewed every utterance as essentially executing actions and contended that saying an utterance corresponds to doing an action (Austin 1962).

Austin classified speech acts under five categories: verdictives, exercitives, commissives, behabitives, and expositives (Austin 1962). Table 1 shown below presents each of the five categories.

**Table 1. Austin's Speech Act Theory Classification**

Category	Definition	Examples
<b>Behabitives</b>	These are responses to other individuals' attitudes, and they convey an opinion concerning the behaviors of others.	Thank, apologize, deplore, congratulate, criticize, bless, curse, protest.
<b>Verdictives</b>	They constitute statements possessing a truth value which Austin first referred to as constative sentences.	Estimate, date, assess, describe, value.
<b>Expositives</b>	These are employed to clarify notions and rationales.	Revise, understand, report, affirm, inform, deduce, conjecture, deny.
<b>Commissives</b>	They urge the person speaking to commit to a certain action or plan.	Promise, guarantee, vow, pledge oneself, contract, covenant.
<b>Exercitives</b>	These have to do with the choice of whether or not to pursue an action.	Appoint, demote, veto, command, warn, pardon.

Note: Adapted from Austin 1962.

Afterwards, Searle categorized the speech acts under five distinct classifications while additionally modifying some of the names of the previous terms (Searle 1969). They can be classified as representatives or assertives, directives, commissives, declaratives, and expressives (Searle 1969). Table 2, shown below, outlines the five different classifications.

**Table 2. Searle's speech act theory classification**

Category	Definition	Examples
<b>Representatives / Assertives</b>	It links the person speaking to something that can be considered true.	The sun has just come out.
<b>Directives</b>	The speaker's endeavors to convince those listening to execute an action. It also includes requests.	Pass the salt / What time is the next train due?
<b>Declaratives</b>	It alters the world, rendering the events implied by the words a reality.	I name this ship Boaty McBoatface, and I declare these games open.
<b>Commissives</b>	It has to do with making the person speaking committed to executing an action in the future.	I promise I'll be there on time / I will be there on time.
<b>Expressives</b>	It expresses emotions or a psychological state.	What a great performance! / Am I pleased to see you!

Note: Adapted from Clark 2021.

An additional vital part associated with speech acts is locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts (Clark 2021). Locutionary acts can be described as a combination of phatic, phonetic, and rhetic acts since they involve declaring something as well as utilizing words and grammatical structures to express meaning.

Meanwhile, illocutionary acts are essential to both Austin's and Searle's notions of speech act theory, as they mean conducting an action like saying something with a sense of power. These incorporate statements, requests, promises, and apologies, among others. Perlocutionary acts represent acts that leave an impact on the listener and are conducted by the execution of an illocutionary act. These can encompass appealing, aggravating, insulting, among others (Clark 2021).

Austin explored various issues concerning speech acts (Austin 1962). One of them focused on what he described as the *felicity conditions* so that the speech act is conducted effectively, as they constitute the conditions necessary to be fulfilled, allowing an action to be successfully executed (Austin 1962). When commanding somebody to conduct an action, the speaker must possess the power to influence the hearer, but if the hearer has more authority than that of the speaker, then the order will not be fulfilled (Clark 2021).

If somebody promises to execute an action, it must fall within the speaker's power to accomplish it; for example, the person speaking cannot promise to win a competition in which he or she has registered (Clark 2021). In addition, if the person speaking offers an apology, then he or she has to be sincerely sorry; hence, a number of these conditions are referred to as the *sincerity conditions* (Clark 2021).

This theory additionally encompasses another crucial component, namely, direct and indirect speech acts (Birner 2021). Certain forms of the English language frequently correlate with certain behaviors. When these types of structures are utilized to conduct associated actions, such as using a declarative to make a statement, they are referred to as direct speech acts. However, all these acts can be executed indirectly via an indirect speech act. In this case, the form and, consequently, the semantic meaning are integrated to perform one purpose, although the context clearly suggests otherwise (Birner 2021).

## 2.2 Previous Studies

A number of studies have examined the application of speech act theory to advertising campaigns, offering a beneficial understanding of the pragmatic characteristics of advertisements. Halim (2016) examines the pragmatic elements of speech acts in multi-domain commercials, particularly the frequency and the purpose behind directives, expressives, and assertives. The research conducted highlights the significance of cultural and contextual relevance in transmitting successful advertising messages. The results offer a comparative structure for analyzing the ways advertising is linguistically altered for different age demographics.

Afzaal (2022) investigates how speech acts are used in advertisements on television for health and food products and mobile phone carriers. The research conducted highlights that commissives and directives are used in advertisements at an elevated frequency, and that these speech acts are crucial for convincing audiences as well as evoking desirable behaviors from customers. This research is especially noteworthy because it highlights the way speech acts could be used to persuade others, a principle that supports the emphasis of this paper on how advertisements target specific age groups.

Kadri (2022) analyzes the speech acts employed in fast food commercials, emphasizing the importance of written texts in internet advertising. The results display a strong dependency on assertive speech acts so as to draw attention to the quality of the products, while utilizing directives to generate fast responses from consumers. These results are essential because they help comprehend the pragmatic techniques used to attract younger demographics, namely, Gen Z and teenagers who often interact with internet advertising.

Chinturu Adiniu and Uchenna (2023) examine the utilization of speech acts in commercial slogans, with an emphasis on how they fulfill a variety of communicative roles across different categories of products. The study stresses the crucial role of expressives in developing emotional appeal on the part of the audience as well as creating a brand identity. The results of that research contribute to the significance of the current study by demonstrating the way speech acts impact age-specific advertising strategies, most notably the formulation of slogans.

Although these studies offer an in-depth analysis of the utilization of speech acts in advertising, they do not particularly investigate the changes in how speech acts are employed to align with different age demographics. Therefore, this paper seeks to tackle that via analyzing the manner in which advertising, aimed at children between the ages of four and ten, Gen Z and youth between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four, and middle-aged adults and senior adults between the ages of fifty and seventy-five, use various kinds of speech acts to successfully accomplish their communicative goals.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

#### Searle's Speech Act Theory

According to Clark (2021), Searle classifies speech acts into five types. The first category, representatives or assertives, is defined as speech acts that commit the speaker to something being true. That can be seen in

utterances like “the sun has just come out”. The second category, Directives, is the attempts of the speaker to make the listener do something. That is evident in phrases such as “pass the salt”. Questions, which convey requests for information, also belong to this type of speech acts. One of these questions could be “what time is the next train due?” (Clark 2021).

The third category, commissives, is known to be the speech acts that commit the speaker to doing something in the future (Clark 2021). Examples of this type include: “I promise I’ll be there on time,” and “I’ll be there on time”. The fourth category, declaratives, changes the world so that the situations the words refer to become real. That can be seen in examples like “I name this ship Boaty McBoatface,” or “I declare these games open”. The fifth and last category, expressives, which convey emotions as well as psychological conditions. Some examples of this type are “what a great performance” and “I’m pleased to see you” (Clark 2021).

### 3.2 Procedures

This study follows a mixed-method approach combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches as it compares different advertisements that target various age demographics in order to analyze the linguistic strategies used in each commercial via applying the speech acts classification proposed by Searle. The first step was choosing the advertisements that were available on YouTube or iSpot, a website dedicated to advertisements, or both. Twenty commercials in total were selected. They were all thirty seconds to a minute long. Six to seven commercials were chosen for each age group to ensure that there is sufficient material for analysis and that all groups were represented equally.

The second step was generating a video transcription of all the commercials, which was done through the automatic speech recognition and transcription technologies available on YouTube. The third step was revising the video transcriptions to ensure that all the transcriptions were correct before conducting the analysis. The fourth step was analyzing the commercials using the speech acts classification proposed by Searle and identifying the most frequently used strategies in the commercials. The fifth and last step was providing commentary on the results of the analysis.

### 3.3 Data Description

#### Advertisements Targeted at Children

The first commercial chosen is the advertisement for Lunchables, an American pre-packed meal kit for children. It premiered on American channels on April 3, 2024, and was later uploaded to YouTube unofficially. On YouTube, it garnered 3,000 views thus far. It is thirty seconds long. The second commercial selected is for

the juice brand Capri Sun. It premiered on American channels on April 14, 2024, and was later uploaded unofficially to YouTube. On YouTube, it garnered approximately 3,000 views. It is thirty seconds long.

The third chosen advertisement is the McDonald’s commercial for a new Happy Meal that includes toys from the Minecraft game universe, created as a part of a collaboration between the game and the American food chain to promote the Minecraft movie. It is thirty seconds long and was released on March 21, 2025. At the time of analysis, the commercial had garnered 2.6 million views on YouTube. The fourth commercial chosen is for the candy Baby Bottle Pop Twisters. It premiered on American television on April 21, 2025. It is thirty seconds long and was not uploaded to YouTube.

The fifth advertisement selected is for the children’s meal at Ono Hawaiian BBQ, which features a theme based on the Disney movie Lilo and Stitch. It premiered on American channels on May 14, 2025, and three days later, on May 17, it was uploaded to the official Ono Hawaiian BBQ YouTube channel as a YouTube Short. On YouTube, it garnered almost 2,000 views. The sixth chosen commercial is for the chocolate brand Kinder. It was released on the official Kinder USA YouTube channel on May 30, 2025, and has garnered approximately 2,000 views thus far. It is thirty seconds long and also aired nationwide on American television.

The seventh and final selected advertisement is another McDonald’s commercial for a new happy meal, this time including toys from the Pixar movie Elio as a collaboration in light of the release of the movie. It was released on June 10, 2025, on American national television and uploaded unofficially to YouTube. At the time of analysis, that unofficial upload had garnered about 188,000 views. It is thirty seconds long.

#### Advertisements Targeted at Gen Z and Youth

The first commercial selected is for the American restaurant Taco Bell, featuring the American singer Doja Cat and the American basketball player LeBron James. It premiered on American Television on May 9, 2025. A day later, on February 10, 2025, it was released on the official Taco Bell YouTube channel. At the time of analysis, the commercial had garnered approximately 200,000 views on YouTube. It is thirty seconds long.

The second advertisement chosen is for McDonald’s, promoting a new meal called the Angel Reese meal. It features the American basketball players Angel Reese, Lisa Leslie, Breanna Stewart, and Aalyah Del Rosario, as well as American rapper and singer Latto. It premiered on American television and McDonald’s official YouTube channel on February 10, 2025. It has garnered 121,000 views on YouTube thus far. It is one minute long.



The third commercial selected is for the American restaurant Little Caesars. It promotes a new pizza tied to the Marvel movie *Fantastic Four: First Steps*, created as a collaboration between the restaurant and Marvel in light of the movie's release. It was released first on YouTube on June 17, 2025, where it has garnered about eleven million views. Later, on June 20, 2025, it was released on American television. It is forty-six seconds long.

The fourth advertisement chosen is for the American desserts and ice cream chain Baskin-Robbins, featuring the American actress Sydney Sweeney. It promotes two new limited-edition menu items: a new ice cream and a new drink. It premiered on both the Baskin-Robbins official YouTube channel and American television on June 26, 2025. It has garnered 137,000 views on YouTube thus far. It is one minute long.

The fifth commercial chosen is for the American coffee and donut chain Dunkin' Donuts. It features American actor Gavin Casalegno and promotes a new tropical drink. It premiered on both Dunkin' Donuts' official YouTube channel and on American television on July 29, 2025. It has garnered almost 267,000 views thus far. It is thirty-five seconds long.

The sixth advertisement chosen is for Cheetos, the American cheese-flavored corn snacks. It features the character "Thing" from the Netflix TV show *Wednesday*. It was created as a collaboration between the snack brand and the TV show in light of the release of the new season. It premiered on both Cheetos' official YouTube channel and American television on July 22, 2025, as of the time of analysis. It has garnered approximately two million views on YouTube. It is thirty seconds long.

The seventh and final commercial chosen is for the American restaurant Wendy's. It features the character Wednesday from the Netflix series *Wednesday* in a collaboration between the restaurant and the show to promote a new meal called the Meal of Misfortune, as well as the new season of the show. It premiered on both Wendy's official YouTube channel and American television on August 4, 2025. At the time of analysis, it had garnered almost 178,000 views on YouTube. It is one minute long.

### **Advertisements Targeted at Middle-aged Adults and Senior Adults**

The first advertisement chosen is for McDonald's, promoting the McFlurry, a frozen dessert. It premiered on both McDonald's official YouTube channel and American television on May 16, 2024. It has garnered about 103,000 views thus far. It is thirty seconds long. The second commercial selected is for the American pre-made meal delivery service Mom's Meals. It was released on the Mom's Meals official YouTube channel on May 24, 2024, and has garnered 778 views thus far.

It is one minute long.

The third commercial chosen is for the olive oil brand called Graza. It premiered on American television on November 20, 2024. It was not released officially on YouTube, but was later uploaded to unofficial channels. Those uploads did not garner many views, with one reaching 146 views and another reaching seventy-seven views thus far. It is thirty seconds long. The fourth advertisement chosen is for Jenny Craig, a weight-loss program offering pre-made meals and personalized coaching. It was released on American television on April 8, 2025, but was not uploaded to YouTube. It is thirty seconds long.

The fifth commercial chosen is for the nutritional drink brand Boost. It premiered on both the official Boost YouTube channel and American television on June 30, 2025, and has garnered 625 views on YouTube thus far. It is thirty seconds long. The sixth and final chosen commercial is another advertisement for Boost. It also premiered on both the official Boost YouTube channel and American television on June 30, 2025. As of the time of analysis, it has garnered 516 views. It is thirty seconds long.

### **3.4 Rationale for Data Selection**

The commercials explored in this study were chosen from a recent time period, between 2024 and 2025, to depict current trends in advertising language across different age groups. All commercials pertain to food, which includes drinks, snacks, meals, and restaurants, thus guaranteeing that any identified variations are a result of age-targeting techniques rather than product categories. Moreover, all commercials are American advertisements aimed at American audiences, offering a unified cultural and linguistic framework for comparison. To guarantee comparability, all chosen commercials are between thirty seconds and one minute in length, presenting a consistent framework for assessing speech acts without substantial variations in duration.

Similarly, only video advertising displayed on American television, YouTube, or both was incorporated, disregarding alternative media like static social media posts, written promotions, or print. Commercials were additionally selected based on their apparent relevance to each age group; for instance, children's meals like Happy Meals were chosen to represent the children's age group, celebrity-endorsed or lifestyle-focused for Gen Z and youth, meal services or nutrition-focused commercials for middle-aged adults and senior adults. The above requirements provide a sample size that enables a valuable mixed-method evaluation combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches to compare how speech act strategies are modified according to different age demographics in contemporary advertising practices.

## 4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The commercials examined demonstrate varied patterns regarding the application of speech acts across various age demographics. The table below summarizes the

overall distribution, displaying the predominance of representatives in addition to the presence or absence of other types. This summary provides the foundation for the following discussion of how each age demographic utilizes speech acts distinctly.

*Table 3. Summary of the results*

Age group	Total utterances	Representatives	Directives	Expressives	Commissives	Declaratives
Children (7 ads)	53	28	15	10	0	0
Gen Z & Youth (7 ads)	116	58	34	22	2	0
Middle-aged & Senior Adults (6 ads)	51	38	11	2	0	0
Overall	220	124	60	34	2	0

### Advertisements Targeted at Children

In the seven advertisements aimed at children, the most prominent speech act utilized was the representative, which was featured in twenty-eight of the fifty-three utterances. It was primarily used to name products and explain their features using simple language. For example, in the Baby Bottle Pop Twisters commercial, statements like 'Light and crunchy on the outside' and 'Soft and chewy on the inside' emphasize sensory appeal, breaking the product into clearly understandable aspects. Similarly, in the Kinder commercial, the phrases 'creamy milky filling' and 'chocolate coating' describe the product in a simplistic descriptive way.

Directives, which were featured fifteen times in the children's commercials analyzed, illustrate an approach for promoting involvement and imaginative play. For instance, Lunchables commercial includes the phrase "What's your Lunchabuild?" to encourage children to engage with their meal in a creative manner. Similarly, McDonald's x Elio commercial incorporates silly and playful commands like "Abduct me, aliens" and "Journey out of this world with a Happy Meal" combining product promotion with imaginary adventures.

Expressives were utilized ten times. They convey amazement, wonder, and exaggerated happiness. In the Lunchables commercial, it can be seen in phrases like "Cool hippo" as well as in the Capri Sun commercial in phrases such as "Epic". They were also featured in the Kinder commercial in statements like "Spectacular" and "Simply wonderful". These expressives illustrate positive emotions towards the products in the commercials, like excitement and delight. This makes the products appealing to the children and shapes their perception of the product to be fun and rewarding.

When it comes to both commissives and declaratives, they were not utilized at all in the analyzed commercials. This absence highlights the communicative purpose of such commercials. They favor emotive appeal, fun, and

immediacy instead of invoking authority or promising future actions, which is more successfully delivered through representatives, directives, and expressives.

### Advertisements Targeted at Gen Z and Youth

The seven commercials aimed at Gen Z and youth had the most utterances, as they were 116 sentences. This demonstrates that this age group engages with lengthy and dialogue-heavy discussions. Representatives dominated with fifty-eight utterances, equating to half of the 116 utterances. However, their function went beyond descriptions to encourage culture alignment and identification. In the Taco Bell commercial, phrases like "This is Taco Bell's celebration of its fans", "Yeah, but celebs don't make Taco Bell, Taco Bell", and "Fans do" highlight inclusivity while presenting the brand as fan-centered. Similarly, in Wendy's x Wednesday commercial, statements like "My meal is a tribute to the suffering that awaits us all" and "It's pure torture for your taste buds" use intertextuality and dark humor to cater to Gen Z.

Directives, which were featured thirty-four times, often emulate social interactions, cultural participation, or competitiveness. In McDonald's Angel Reese meal, phrases such as "Let 'em know", "Let's get it", and "Let me see it" build a sports-like atmosphere. In the Little Caesars commercial, statements like "See Marvel Studios Fantastic 4: First Steps only in theaters" and "Get a fantastic 4 in one pizza, only \$7.99 at Little Caesars" connect the product to mainstream media, combining consumption with cultural identity. The Cheetos collaboration with Wednesday serves as a particularly noteworthy example, given that it uses a number of directives as seen in phrases like "Give me joy," "Regret," and "Just give us a bite and smile" to create a fictitious audition.

Expressives were employed twenty-two times, showcasing social interactions. Phrases such as "Sorry, big guy" from the Taco Bell commercial serve as a

lighthearted apology. However, the statement ‘Cheers’ from the McDonald’s advertisement, as well as “Thank you” and “Thanks for coming” from the Baskin-Robbins and Cheetos commercials, express friendliness and appreciation. Similarly, the phrases “That’s so cool” and “Oh my” from the Baskin-Robbins and Cheetos commercials demonstrate praise and surprise. These applications of expressives resemble genuine peer-to-peer interactions.

Unlike children’s commercials, commissives were additionally utilized with phrases like “I’ll play you for it” and “If I win, McDonald’s on me” from the McDonald’s advertisement, suggesting informal agreements and fun wagers. Declaratives were not employed at all in commercials targeting this age group. This illustrates that this type of speech act, associated with authoritative-driven speech, possesses no significance in advertising to this age group.

### **Advertisements Targeted at Middle-aged Adults and Senior Adults**

Representatives, which constitute thirty-eight utterances, dominate this age group as well, yet unlike children’s or Gen Z advertising, they serve as indicators of credibility, reassurance, and convenience. The commercial Mom’s Meals, for instance, emphasizes credibility and expertise with the statement “Our menus are designed by professional chefs and registered dietitians”. Similarly, Boost utilizes testimonial-style advocates, like “Boost gave me the fuel to get back on the stage”, “I’ve added Boost to my daily routine, and it gives me the nutritional energy I need”, and “Boost gives me the protein I need to keep living the life that I wanna live” which offer personal recovery stories to foster trust.

Directives were utilized eleven times. These advertisements are often straightforward and action-driven. In the Jenny Craig commercial, explicit directives can be seen in phrases like “Get started for less than \$66 a week”, “Call or go online right now”, “Get two daily Jenny meals nutritionally balanced under 300 calories and the freedom to choose your other meals to eat with your family and dine out with friends” which encourage immediate action from consumers. It can also be seen in the Mom’s Meals commercial in phrases like “Simply place your order, receive your delivery, heat and enjoy” and “To learn more or view the wide variety of refrigerated meals available, visit MomsMeals.com”.

Expressives were rare as they were employed twice. They convey sincerity and satisfaction. In the Graza commercial, the phrase “Oh yeah, that’s the good stuff” is utilized to demonstrate familial approval. In the Boost commercial, the phrase “I love the support” defines the product as emotionally comforting. Notably, no commissives were featured in commercials targeting

this age group, indicating that commitments and promises do not constitute effective techniques for appealing to this age category, who are more effectively reached through trustworthy information and clear calls to action. Declaratives were also not incorporated in commercials targeting this age group. This highlights an ongoing pattern across all age groups analyzed in which authoritative speech serves no part in modern advertising discourse.

### **Patterns Across All Age Demographics**

The findings of all three age groups emphasize both age-specific techniques and recurring patterns. All of the commercials featured representatives and directives, but their purpose differed depending on the target audience: commercials targeting middle-aged adults and senior adults focused on practicality, health, and reliability; Gen Z and youth commercials connected products to peer identity and lifestyle; and children’s advertisements emphasized fun and playful product attributes. Although they were rare in general, commissives were only found in commercials targeting youth, where lighthearted promises like “I’ll play you for it” displayed a casual and friendly tone. Declaratives were completely absent from all the commercials, highlighting how irrelevant they are in advertising discourse.

Expressives demonstrated the most variation across age groups. Children’s commercials often utilize exaggerated positive adjectives like epic to elicit enthusiasm and surprise. Youth commercials, on the other hand, valued friendly expressions like cheers, thank you, and sorry, big guy, which resemble genuine peer-to-peer interactions. Senior-focused advertisements utilize expressives scarcely, usually depending on soothing words and showing approval. As a whole, these results indicate that while representatives and directives constitute the core of advertising discourse across age demographics, commissives and expressives are the most versatile indicators of demographic targeting, adjusting emotional tone and communication style to suit target audience preferences.

## **5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This research has a number of limitations. The study examined a relatively small set of only twenty commercials, and considering that advertisements tend to be short in length, the accessible linguistic material could be considered limited. Therefore, the results cannot be widely generalized. Time restrictions also had an impact on the extent of data collection, limiting the incorporation of additional samples. Furthermore, all of the commercials were American, excluding cultural differences that may emerge in advertisements from other regions. A further restriction is that all the chosen

commercials represent products from the food and beverage industry, disregarding other product types like technology or fashion. This restricts the results' relevance to particularly food-related advertisements. Future research could address such constraints by investigating a diverse and broad range of commercials from other cultures and industries.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Using Searle's speech acts theory, this study examined pragmatic variations in language used in commercials directed at children, gen z and youth as well as middle-aged adults and senior adults. The study emphasized the dynamic relationship between language and age,

when it comes to advertising, through investigating how speech acts are used to fit the cognitive and social features of each age demographic. By linking sociolinguistics to speech acts theory, this paper highlights the vital role of adapting language for specific ages and target audiences.

In conclusion, this paper reinforces the importance of comprehending how speech acts are used to establish successful communication across different age demographics. Furthermore, future research should examine additional aspects, such as differences in culture or multimodal factors, in order to gain a more thorough comprehension of the way language functions in advertising and media.

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