Title of Article: The Discourse of Digital Deceptions and ‘419’ Emails.

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Abstract: This study applies a computer-mediated discourse analysis (CMDA) to the study of discourse structures and functions of ‘419’ emails – the Nigerian term for online/financial fraud. The hoax mails are in the form of online lottery winning announcements, and email ‘business proposals’ involving money transfers/claims of dormant bank accounts overseas. Data comprise 68 email samples collected from the researcher’s inboxes and colleagues’ and students’ mail boxes between January 2008 and March 2009 in Ota, Nigeria. The study reveals that the writers of the mails apply discourse/pragmatic strategies such as socio-cultural greeting formulas, self-identification, reassurance/confidence building, narrativity and action prompting strategies to sustain the interest of the receivers. The study also shows that this genre of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has become a regular part of our internet experience, and is not likely to be extinct in the near future as previous studies of email hoaxes have predicted. It is believed that as the global economy witnesses a recession, chances are that more creative and complex ways of combating the situation will arise. Economic hardship has been blamed for fraud/online scams, inadvertently prompting youths to engage in various anti-social activities.