

**STUDY OF LINGUISTIC DEVIATIONS USED IN
ADVERTISING SLOGANS OF CONFECTIONERY AND
BEVERAGES IN INDIA**

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A slogan becomes a mode of identification for any product, in the minds of the consumers, when a brand or company uses it consistently to represent or to advertise that product. Primary aim of a slogan of advertisement is to attract attention and the copywriters who create them use various devices to achieve this purpose. One of the predominant device used by them is liberal use of linguistic deviations. The catchy slogans captivate attention of every consumer segment especially children. The studies investigating the creative aspect of ads dealing with products related to children is very scarce. This paper aims at carrying out the content analysis of different types of linguistic deviations used in advertising messages of confectionery and beverages in India. This investigations reveals that grammatical deviations are majorly used as it provides ample creative liberty to create catchy and innovative slogans. Overall all the types of deviations are found in every advertising slogan.

Key words: Advertisement, Linguistic deviations, Copywriters

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Introduction

Widdowson (2000) defines human language as means of cognition and communication. As per his definition of language, it is something that empowers self-thinking and be responsible for us to be able to cooperate with other people in the community. It follows that advertisement is in a way a communication between the one who creates the advertisement and the one who watches it. It is a communication that has its own principles. Advertisements are smart, clever and entertaining puzzles that have been created to catch the immediate attention of the target and leave a long lasting impression in their mind. Of course not all of the advertisements that have been made are able to achieve this and end up being silly, unimaginative and sometimes even irritating for the audience. It is important to design the communication creatively and cleverly enough so as to stand out of this huge clutter of advertisements and make a mark in the target's cognitive structure, since the primary aim of advertising is to gain the attention of the target with the intention of stimulating the recognition and recall of the advertised brand. Today advertisements have to constantly compete with each other and their creators seek to find every conceivable way to attract the targeted in an innovative manner. As Featherstone (2001:76), cited by Shie (2005), observes "Most advertising is constantly striving for novelty, for effective and striking devices which will overcome the 'fatigue' of audiences over- exposed to advertising".

When creating creative and effective communication message copywriters (the individuals who are responsible for the creation of an advertising message) face another challenge and that is the time limit, i.e. the copywriters are given a very narrow time frame within which they have to say everything that has to be said about the brand, in a manner which draws customers attention and stays in their memory for long enough to make purchase. They must, as Arens (2004) points out, condense all that can be said about a product into a few pertinent, succinct points.

Angela Goddard (2002) lay emphasis on the idea of narrator and narratees. According to her the writer is the person who conceptualize and converts the idea into text in reality (in case of advertising texts, the real writers are referred to as the copywriters and are artists who work in an advertising agency's creative department), whereas the narrator is the one who is a storyteller within the text. Copywriters can construct all sorts of different narrators in order to convey the message to the audience. Copywriters are the ones with a job to visualize the ideas for the advertisements and convert those ideas into text by writing the Headlines, Subheads, and Body.

Apart from headline, subhead and body there is one another important term that is given special attention while writing any advertisement, it is the slogan of the advertisement. Usually slogan is a headline that has been so popular that it got stuck in minds of audience. Boyee and Arens (1994) observe that through continuous usage these headlines or slogans become standard statements that are used on an everyday basis. Slogans are responsible for stability in a campaign and help by summarizing the key idea or message, that company wants to be associated to its product brand or itself, into a brief statement. Boyee and Arens (1994) defines an effective slogan as “short, simple, memorable, easy to repeat, and helpful in differentiating the product or the company from its competitors”. Slogan is not synonymous with or a part of headline and vice versa, which suggests that the term slogan is ordinarily used in narrow sense. However, Greg Myers (1994) uses the term ‘slogan’ in a larger sense - for any catchy phrase, what a headline definitely is. In many cases, it has also been observed that the demarcations between slogan and headline dissolves. Despite the fact that most of the present-day advertisements rely heavily on visual content and design, it is still language that forms the critical part of advertising. In order to attract consumers’ attention and stay in their minds for long enough to induce a purchase, advertisers must usually do a bit more than just convey the message in a straightforward manner. This can be achieved through creativity. According to Wales, creativity is inventiveness in form, the departure of what is expected in language. While this is regarded as inappropriate in many assortments of English language, it is, according to Crystal (1990), a positive and desirable feature of communication in the world of advertising: “Most advertising slogans gain their effect by manipulating the linguistic norms of everyday language”.

Linguistic means used in advertising slogans

Leech has brought the notion of loaded language, suggesting that the advertising belongs to loaded language (Leech, 1972). Loaded language as per literature can be defined as the language that comprises of strong words with positive or negative associations that unfairly frame words into limited or biased contexts. The purpose of using such a language is to produce an emotional response in the minds of the audience, in order to affect their thoughts on the discussed subject directly. Hughes branded advertising as “linguistic Capitalism”, meaning that “advertising is from a linguistic point of view, a dubious manifestation of free enterprise in which the language, the common property of the speech community, becomes natural resource which is exploited by

the agencies in the sectional interests of the clients' marketing program" (Hughes,1987). He sees an additional advantage with the usage of words over images and sounds, and it is that words comes free however images and sounds require money and effort to make. Variation and creativity plays an important role in advertising language. The most distinctive feature of an advertising language can undeniably be accepted as its capability to stay in sync with the current trend and to re-invent itself continuously, in order to come up with distinctive shapes and to craft totally unforeseen surprise elements for receiving full attention of the audience (M. Vasiloaia, 2009). A copywriter while writing an ad must be aware of the fact that the language with deviations is commonly and widely used for the purpose of actual portrayal of the circumstances in which the advertisement is created. Geenwald and Leavitt (1984) states that a fundamental feature of the field of exposure condition is that the consumer has complete freedom to ignore an ad or to devote the barest minimum of processing effort to it. Since the reader is under no obligation to read any part of the ad namely: headline, body or subheads, neither is there any compulsion for him to finish reading what he has glanced at or what he started reading. Therefore, the usage of deviations in the language serves the purpose of influencing or motivating the potential reader to read through the advertisement. In this regard, Berlyne (1971) found that incongruity (i.e. deviation) is among those factors that attract and arrest attention. Hence, when the exposure of any advertisement is not mandatory, consumer is believed to contribute higher attention to the ad language with deviations present in comparison to ad language without deviations. The deviations also produce "pleasure of the text" (Barthes, 1985) i.e. the reward that comes from processing a clever arrangement of signs.

Cook (1997) defines the word discourse as a phrase or language which has text and context present together. He further suggests that we may categorize advertising as a form of discourse, this is because "it can tell us a good deal about our own society and our own psychology". Though to make the discussion complete we could go for the analysis of complete discourse of advertising, meaning, the analysis of interaction of all the elements that participate in advertising discourse namely: participants, function, substance, pictures, music, a society, paralanguage, language, a situation, other advertising and any other discourse. Such an analysis would be very difficult to elaborate given such limited space, as it will require an entire theory dedicated to itself. For this reason, in the present work we would only go for the analysis of language of

advertising from the linguistic, especially phonological, graphological, grammatical, lexical and morphological, syntactic and semantic point of view.

Phonological Deviations: There is not much scope for phonological deviations in advertising language, but it takes into consideration only those messages where the pronunciation of the word is different from the commonly accepted pronunciation. This deviation in the pronunciation might be due to the presence of deviation in spelling of the word.

Graphological deviations: Graphological deviations provides copywriters a freedom to go on making unlimited changes to the spelling of the words of interest while not disturbing the pronunciation at all. The orthographic devices such as selection of script, its colour, type and size are normally used to draw immediate attention of the consumers.

Grammatical deviation: Grammatical deviation permits copywriters to deviate from the basic system of rules while using the language for writing advertisements. The deviation comprises of rule omission or suspension, rule change or rule addition. Such as *frequent use of disjunctive grammar, liberal use of imperative sentences, frequent use of presupposition, liberal and widespread use of exclamatives, use of ellipsis.*

Lexical deviations: Lexical deviations is one of the richest source of new expression for copywriters. In this deviations copywriters use functional conversion i.e. the process of coining new words in a different part of speech without adding any derivative elements. Neologism is another technique of lexical deviations that means coining new words, most of which remain nonce words, which are made up for a few occasions and unabsorbed by the standard language. Coinage appears most frequently when making up names of a product. The change of the normal spelling is also a technique of coining new words. Anomalous lexical collocations and another technique, are the outcome of liberal usage of idiomatic expressions and collocations. Due to the familiarity of these idiomatic expressions to the target customers, copywriters freely make ample use of idioms and proverbs in advertising messages.

Semantic Deviations: Semantic deviation may be translated into “nonsense” or “absurdity”. Thus we often find some ridiculous sentences in some works. But “the very face-value oddity lends it abnormal power of significance” (Leech, 1969). That means the seemingly meaningless and ridiculous sentences have specific meanings in a certain context. Whenever faced with a new phrase the reader assigns a new meaning to that word if he or she knows nothing about the

context in which it is to be used. This literal meaning denotes what a word means as per the dictionary or common usage. Along with this the word might have figurative meanings as well.

Code mixing: Past studies on linguistic deviations in advertisements has considered the classification based on leech and Cook. However for this study code mixing is also considered as one of the deviations. This special inclusion is done on the basis of predominant use of bilingual languages in advertising slogans. This code mixing/code switching is a communicative strategy that is widespread in bilingual communities. India being a diversified country is one of the largest nations of bilinguals. Since the aim of this study is to analyze TV advertising slogans of confectionery and beverages in India, it would be highly unjust for this study not to consider code mixing and code switching. The variation in the terminology is due the variation in their definitions. Some authors refer code mixing as synonym for code switching (Lanz, 2011) whereas others use code mixing for code mixing and borrowings (Pfaff, 1979). According to Ardilla (2005) code mixing is alternation of two languages in single utterance.

Methodology:

The main aim of this study is to carry out practical content analysis research. Aim of undertaking such a research is to determine the rate of usage manifest and form contexts of linguistic deviations used in advertising slogans and the relative significance of these linguistic deviations in relation to product specialization. The category selection for the deviations was undertaken on the basis of the accepted and widely used categorization given by Cook (1997), IndubalaPandaya(1977) and Sangeeta Sharma. For the purpose of conducting this research two product categories namely: Confectionary and Beverages, were selected. Reason behind narrowing down on these two product categories is mainly because children are believed to have a purchase decision and power in these two category of products and therefore these two categories are most suitable for the study. Post selection of categories, the advertising slogans of all confectionery and beverages ads for Indian market were collected as research material from the official websites and video ads. After the complete list of slogans was prepared, a thorough linguistic analysis of these slogans was performed in order to determine the means of linguistic deviations used in each of these. These linguistic deviations were separated through a coding process, which involved allocation of a code to each of the deviation that is found.

Sample:slogans from 702 advertisements of confectionery and beverages product category within Indian market. The observation was done over a period of 5 years, from 2009 to 2013.

Hypothesis:

This study is analytical in nature with an objective of identifying and quantifying associations between slogans and linguistic deviations. Keeping the objective of the study in mind following hypothesis have been formed and tested.

H1: Advertising slogans have phonological deviations present in them

H2: Advertising slogans have graphological deviations present in them

H3: Advertising slogans have grammatical deviations present in them

H4: Advertising slogans have lexical deviations present in them

H5: Advertising slogans have semantic deviations present in them

H6: Type of linguistic deviations present in advertising slogans are significantly related to the product specialization

H7: Advertising slogans uses one type of linguistic deviation more often than others

Analysis:

The below table depicts the analysis of deviations done for the slogans of confectionery and beverages ads. For the convenience of the study the categories are further divided into snacks, chocolates and beverages. As the purpose of the study was to calculate the frequency of all the types of deviations present so as to establish the relevance of these in slogans, the analysis focuses on finding out the broad six types of aforementioned deviations.

Table 1: No. of deviations in advertising slogans

Product category	Total slogans	GD	LD	SD	GrD	PD	CD
<i>Biscuits and snacks</i>	595	452	174	218	38	13	56
<i>Beverages</i>	49	19	8	28	0	0	9

<i>Chocolate/ Candies</i>	49	29	10	31	0	2	16
Total	703	500	192	277	38	15	81

From the above table the hypothesis H1 to H5 were tested for all the three product categories Advertising messages use all the types of deviations as one of the important tool for catching attention and seem to have an acceptance for all these hypothesis, with exceptions for H1 and H2 in Beverages category and H2 for Chocolates and Candies category, as we observe an absence of phonological deviations and graphological deviations all together in beverages ads and of graphological deviations in chocolates and candy ads. Out of total 703 advertising slogans, all the six types of deviations were present. The majority of grammatical deviations across all the product category is one of the striking findings.

Deviations in Biscuits and Snacks category:

From the numbers seen in the table above, as well as from the pie chart below it is observed that in advertising slogans for biscuit and snacks, grammatical deviations, semantic deviations and lexical deviations takes up the majority of the chunk, whereas phonological deviations and graphological deviations are not much in number or percentage wise. Out of total 595 advertising slogans 75.96 percent slogans had grammatical deviation whereas semantic deviations were 36.63 percent. The number of lexical deviations is slightly less i.e. 29.24 percent, but it is more than phonological and graphological deviations.

The reason that can be inferred for this could be an extra challenge for the copywriters to come up with deviated spellings and pronunciation that is within the comprehensibility of kids. Moreover, inclusion of these deviations might also increase the possibility of making slogans complex more than the desired level.

Deviations in Beverages:

Similar to the biscuits and snacks category, here too the presence of grammatical deviations, semantic deviations and lexical deviations dominate the sample and phonological deviations and graphological deviations lack considerably. As per the figure given below, out of 49 slogans of

beverages ads, semantic deviations are 57 percent and grammatical deviations are 38.77 percent. Majority of the beverages ads consists of jingles and due to wish coining of new words and rhyming becomes quite predominant. This results in more number of semantic deviations in comparison to phonological or graphological deviations. Another predominant deviation appears to be code mixing in this product category i.e. 36 percent.

Most of the beverages ads are targeted towards not only kids but youth as well. This leads to usage of youth's language i.e. Hinglish in all the beverages ads. This observation can also be linked to the complexity of the advertisements that gets increased by using these deviations and the type of challenges these deviations provide to the copywriters.

Deviations in Chocolates and Candies:

As expected like the above two categories, since this category also aims at children the similar pie of deviations has been observed though with a slightly different mix here and there. Out of total 59 ads, semantic deviations were predominantly found carrying 52.54 percentage, whereas grammatical deviations were 49.15 percent. In this product category also the existence of phonological and graphological deviation was almost negligible. Copywriters like beverages ads, in this product category also use semantic deviations along with code mixing.

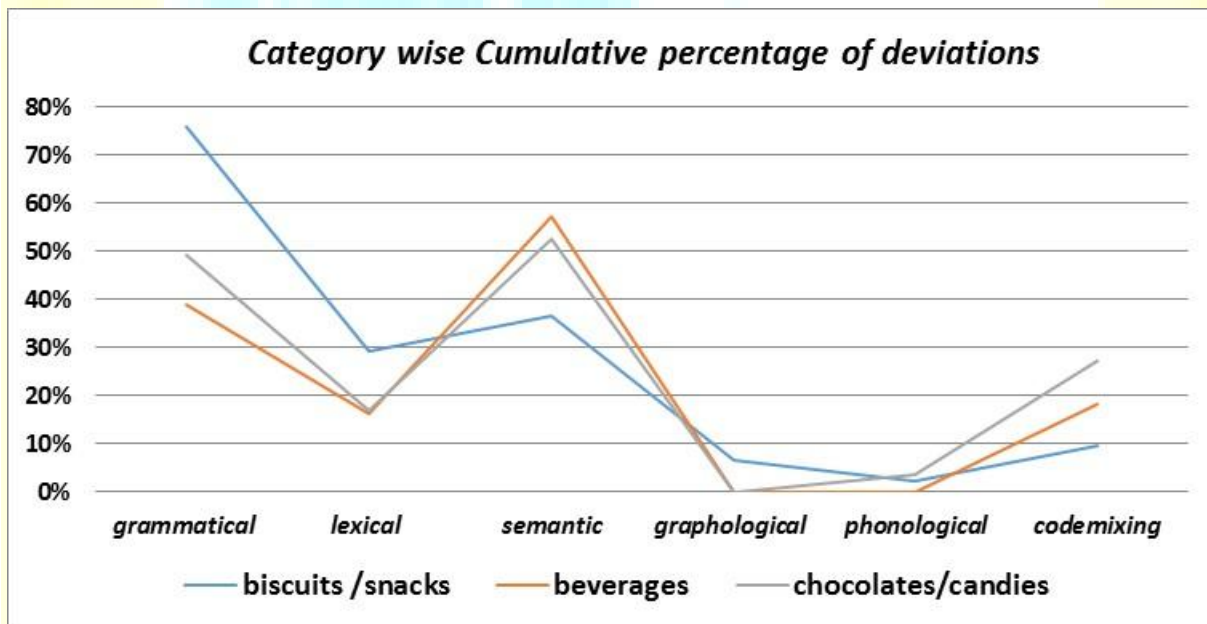
As stated earlier due to addition in the target consumers beverages ads are more oriented towards new words formations or conversions. However, it has been observed that chocolates ads are again no longer targeted specifically towards kids. These ads are freshly coming up with USPs that focus on adults too. Another reason is the dissolved boundaries of treating kids as different consumer segment. Due to their equal consumption potentials as adults, they are treated as a mature segment of consumers. This is reflected in the occurrence of semantic deviations and code mixing, that is further strengthened by the familiarity of associations created by grammatical deviations. Again the reason can be linked to the complexity as well as challenges to include these deviations in the advertisements that has been aimed for kids.

Category wise comparison:

By observing the category wise comparative line chart of cumulative percentages of deviations that are present in the tested advertisements, it can be said that the overall preferences for all the deviations move for these three categories under study. Grammatical deviations are more in

number in comparison to any other deviation, reason being its ability to provide novelty by disjunctive grammar and at the same time its ability to provide similar grammatical associations, thus making the consumers relate more with the message. Another deviation that provides ample scope for novelty associations is semantic deviation across all the product categories. The fewer occurrences of phonological and graphological deviations provide a new insight about the complexity of associations these create for the young minds. Slogans are meant to capture attention in a very short span of time, out of the clutter of several other ads filled with amalgamation of several components of ads. Due to this constraint copywriters feel restricted in the use of graphological and phonological deviations as it might easily get unnoticed especially by the children.

Figure 1: cumulative percentage of Deviations



This is in general can be linked to the same target audience for all these three categories i.e. children who lack the ability to comprehend and register the advertisements that are overly complex or innovative in nature. Therefore copywriters are keeping a check on the complexity of the advertisements within these categories in terms of using the deviations. This leads us to another belief that the level of and kind of deviations that are used by the copywriters depends to a certain degree on the target audience`s level of comprehension of the complex advertisements.

Reliability of the analysis:

To test the reliability of the findings of content analysis a significance test was run. After the analyses of all deviations in the form of pie chart, a crosstab for these deviations was formed and statistical significance of the data was established. For this chi square technique was used. This technique is widely used among researchers to check the reliability. With the help of this analysis, hypothesis H6 (Type of linguistic deviations present in advertising slogans are significantly related to the product specialization) was tested, and found out, as shown below in the result table, that the deviations and category are in fact significantly related.

Deviations	Chocolates	Biscuits /snacks	Beverages	Candies	Total
Grammatical	28	452	19	29	500
Lexical	30	174	8	10	192
Semantic	40	218	28	31	277
Graphological	10	38	0	0	38
Phonological	2	13	0	2	15
Codemixing	16	56	9	16	81
Total	126	951	64	88	1103
P	6.9252E-12				
Chi Square	0.235537276				
df	15				

The chi square value and Pearson correlation value clearly states the reliability of the observations made during the content analysis techniques. These results reinforce our analysis above by labeling the numbers and percentages of deviations observed as statistically significant.

CONCLUSION

The study can be summarized by stating the fact that copywriters very meticulously use deviations to form catchy and appealing advertising slogans. As per the target consumers, copywriters combine the categories of deviations judiciously. The findings across the product categories reinforce the findings of the previous research that establishes children as full fledged consumers. This is very much visible in the formation and the techniques used by copywriters in the messages that are targeted towards children. However, the broad conclusion can be drawn

from this study is that no advertising message is free from the usage of deviations. This establishes the relevance of studying the impact of linguistic deviations on the minds of children as consumers. As mentioned earlier impact of advertisements is long established but impact of only the language part is still under scrutiny and this study has undertaken the first step towards establishing the prevalence of deviations across the entire major product categories directed towards children.

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