Linguistic and Non-Linguistic Characteristics of Advertising and Marketing Language used by IIT-Coaching Institutes

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ABSTRACT

This paper scrutinizes the advertising language used by IIT coaching institutes in Kota, Rajasthan in advertisements, pamphlets, brochures, print and online papers magazines, websites etc. It presents an analysis of linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of the advertising language used. The investigation additionally uncovered that linguistic and non-linguistic methods were utilized to promote and publicize the services offered and to urge the students as potential customers to seek admission in the IIT coaching institutes, whether good or not so good. Based on the structure and context of stylistics, it was found that the advertisement was convincing, persuasive and credible. Moreover, they served the purpose of attracting the students and their parents’ attention towards the services offered by the coaching institutes. The linguistic forms and structures consist of the ways and styles of writings, lexical selection, phonological characteristics, semantic features, use of precise and concise words, utilization of proper names, figures and numbers and emotive articulations. The non-linguistic forms included the graphological and the graphetic, mainly used to attract the attention of IIT aspiring students and their parents towards the achievement of the institutes by the utilization of uncommon punctuations, accentuations, images, figures, chart, and graphs. The intention was to maximize the impact of the message for the potential customers. The language of these advertisements is unique and more research may be done on the language and its linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics.

1. Introduction

1.1 The language of advertising

Advertising targets consumers with a view of generating their interests in a product/ service and causing desired action, i.e. either purchase of a product or hiring of the services offered. Advertising and marketing language, thus, is a powerful tool of communication used for sending across message to the targeted audience, the prospective customers. It has a vital part to play in the marketing world, which is faced with a cut throat competition. It shapes the customers’ attitudes, and influences their thoughts and behaviours.
1.2 Advertising and marketing by IIT Coaching institutes in Kota
Situated approximately 250 km south of Jaipur, Kota is an educational hub. It has been drawing nearly 125,000 students from all over the country on a yearly basis, since 2003, when V.K. Bansal, a graduate from IIT-Delhi with a cureless progressive disease, initially started teaching IIT aspiring students. Now, Bansal Classes has eleven centers countrywide. Later, R.K. Verma, a graduate from IIT-Madras, started another institute named Resonance, which joined with HCL to start up a hundred coaching centers. J.C. Chaudhry, a graduate from BITS-Pilani started another institute called Aakash, which now had a hundred study-centers and a hundred and twenty five exam-centers. K. Goel, a graduate from IIT-Delhi, started FIITJEE, an institute which enrolls nearly on lac IIT aspirants every year. IIT coaching turned into an organized, million-dollar industry, in Kota with approximately 150 coaching institutes in Kota, according to Education, an online magazine dated 17 July, 2015. Allen Career Institute, Paradise, Career Point, Brilliant Tutorials, IIT-ians Pace, Career Launcher, etc. set up as many as one thousand centers since 2012 across India, with Kota as the center.

The study aims to scrutinize and study the advertising and marketing techniques used by these coaching institutes as a gap was noticed; no in-depth analysis of the linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of the advertising has been carried out till date. The present study aims to fill the gaps by focusing on the advertising language of these institutes which include flashy words, highlighting every accomplishment, and every rank-holder of the institute, in print and online media including the social media, Facebook etc., where coaching institutes have pages replete with photographs of ceremonies showing toppers being bestowed with awards by ex-IITians/ celebrities. The attractive advertisements promise the students success and the same are used for the present study.

2. Objective of the Study
The main objective of the study is to determine the language and linguistic and non-linguistic features of the advertising language used by IIT coaching institutes in Kota.

Advertising plays an enormously significant role in the contemporary market (Tellis, 2004). They are undoubtedly ubiquitous phenomena enticing students and their parents with messages every now and then, through television, internet, newspapers etc. Advertisements sway the opinions, outlooks, and choices of the people. A cursory glance at the advertisements show the cut throat competition which exists among the IIT coaching institutes, and the means by which they inform the students, their potential consumers of new and improved products/ services. Most institutes, ranging from small to large, rely on advertising to communicate with the students and to inform them of the services they provide to them by coaching them properly for IIT entrance test. The students and their parents give importance to these advertisements and are influence by them while making choices. Confirmation of the growing prominence of the advertisements is evident by the amount IIT coaching institutes spend on them.

The present study may be significant to advertising practitioners as well as educational institutes and policy makers in Kota, Rajasthan, by providing them with insight into the linguistic and language features of the advertisements, which may be successfully utilized for persuading the potential consumers. The study may also assist the policy makers in the advertising industry for improving the language in advertisements, which will consequently increase their effectiveness. The study may also be of value to researchers/ academicians exploring the areas of language and linguistics.

3. Theoretical Background
Advertisements influence on how we create our identity (Ang et al., 2006; Musolff, 2005; Toncar et al., 2001; Van Mulken et al., 2005). The functions of advertising are to encourage the awareness of the brand, to notify, convince and endorse marketing, (Kenneth Clow and Donald Baack 2012) as well as motivate to take action (Clow, Baack 2012: 143–145). Therefore, the language used in advertisements is informative, convincing, and emotional (Coulson, 1984). The linguistic characteristics of the language of advertising have been systematically studied (Leech 1966; Dyer 1988; Cook 1992), as the audience oriented language (Broom 1978) serves the purpose of acquainting the people about the availability of a product/service. Examples of emotive nature of the language abound extensively in the advertisements of IIT coaching, where one observes selected lexical items are used more often than others. The advertisements of coaching institutes assert they “help” or “guide” the students, thereby appealing to the emotions of the students. One perceives herein “a figure” which is “an art of deviation” (Corbett 1990), a deviation from the norm that makes sense; it only affects the form but not the content (Genette 1982). Advertising endorses a consumer culture (Sells and Gonzalez 2002: 166), and creates an apparent need for a product in the market (Ang et al., 2007; Iten, 2005; Jazczolt, 2005).

4. Methodology

For the present study, advertising texts from topmost IIT coaching institutes from Kota were selected. Data drawn from sources such as advertisements, brochures, pamphlets, websites, social media etc. and was analyzed. Under linguistic analysis of advertising language used by IIT Coaching Institutes in Kota, Phonological characteristics and Semantic characteristics, and emotive language were analyzed. For the graphological / the graphitic use of punctuations, color, images, figures and numbers and their usage was studied.

5. Discussion and Results

The study focuses on the linguistic and non-linguistic characteristics of the advertising language used by these IIT coaching institutes.

5.1 Linguistic Analysis: Phonological characteristics of advertising language

It was noted that the programmes which were called simply “one year”/ “two year”, were renamed as “Diamond Course for Drop Outs”, “Little Genie Course for Class VI Students”, “Einstein’s Special Batch”, “iTutor” and so on. The Bansal website reads: “Bull’s Eye Course: The best brains compete for this legendary two year course. The course, unmatched in its rigor and precision, raises you to the very zenith of your preparation.” “Acme: If you missed out on Bull’s Eye, don’t lose heart. This course can still help you shape your future.”

Advertising language at times resembles poetic texts (Mihaela Vasiloaia 2009), as many mnemonic devices (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, etc.) are used. The linguistic devises attract the students as prospective customers and help them to recall the information easily as it may be indelibly seared in their memories for a long time.

“Success in JEE needs many things – razor sharp precision, calm temperament and flawless knowledge” (BANSAL).

“…structured programme ‘EDGE’ to prepare students for the prestigious competitive exams...” (VIBRANT)

The attempts to form ‘a rhetorical bridge’ between the services offered/ the institute and the consciousness of the consumers (Sayer, 2006; Saussure & Schulz, 2005) are discernible. The advertisements also made use of multiple adjectives, as well as comparative and superlative degrees to
exhibit the excellent quality/superiority of the services. Whenever the string of adjectives appeared to be less efficacious, intensifiers were used, for example certainly, really, very, extraordinarily, etc. The techniques most recurrently used in advertising language for coaching institutes advertisements are:

5.1.1 Rhyme
The sound technique, rhyming, is frequently used for advertising purpose. Rhyme, “the formalized consonance of syllables” (Cuddon, 1999: 750), used at the end of lines adds beauty to the advertising language, makes the headlines seem more striking and more memorable (Leech 1972), adds a resonating quality (Xiaosong Ding 2003). Moreover, the rhymes help in transmitting information. As an example the Bansal slogan “Abki Baar, Bansal Chalo Yaar”, the information is presented in a simple way by using rhyming words, which catches the eyes of the potential customers. Moreover, the use of the word “Yaar,” meaning a friend, signifies bonding and brotherhood. It may be noted that the rhyme is used in the slogan, it reflects the brand. In this example the brand name is also a part and parcel of the rhyme.

5.1.2 Rhythm
The advertising language is replete with rhythmical arrangement of words, especially of stressed and unstressed syllables (Cuddon 1999: 753), which is perceived on a subconscious level (Leech 1972; Vasiloaia 2009; Cook 1996). For example, in a tagline used by an IIT coaching institute “Live your life, live your dream”, the stressed and unstressed syllables add rhythm and attract attention to the message, and make it more interesting.

5.1.3 Alliteration
A figure of speech, in which consonants, especially at the beginning of words, or stressed syllables, are repeated (Cuddon 1999: 23), is called Alliteration. The stressed syllable of a word may carry the alliteration (Leech 1969: 92). Alliteration may be used into the brand name or in the name of the courses for IIT examination. Instances of alliteration can be found in Resonance ad “Integrated program Elite for IIT” or “Coupled with quality of life at SaleQui… the student success rate” “building block”, “providing a solid conceptual foundation which builds the confidence and command” and “Preliminary Preparation” etc. The repeating of the first consonant sounds makes the message more attractive for the potential customers.

5.1.4 Onomatopoeia
A figure of speech where the sound reproduces the meaning is called Onomatopoeia or echoism. The “use of words to imitate sounds” (Cuddon 1999: 614–615) creates a special effect. An instance in advertising language was the use of “tick-tick”, indicating time was running out. The repetition of the words as well as the sound of the words reminds one of the sounds produced by a clock.

5.1.5 Synecdoche
A trope and a figure of speech, in which a part is made to represent the whole or vice versa, is called a Synecdoche. Synecdoche may denote an entity by the substance from which it is made or denote to the contents in a container by the container itself. In the following texts, Synecdoche is used:
“At this juncture, we offer you our helping hand.”
“The best brains compete to get admission to this foundation course.” (Bansal)

5.2 Semantic characteristics of advertising language for coaching institutes:
One of the most important things about advertising is emotional appeal; as such the coaching institutes
make use of content that to evoke people’s emotions, both positive and negative. It is of a vital importance to focus on how the advertisements target the emotions of potential customers, using the following:

5.2.1 Personification
“The impersonation or embodiment of some quality or abstraction; the attribution of human qualities to inanimate objects” (Cuddon 1999: 661) is called Personification. This rhetorical devise was used frequently in the advertisements by coaching institutes and inanimate objects were endowed with human qualities to make the message more dramatic and more attractive for the potential customer. Even the names of the institutes were personified:

“Change does not roll on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.”
“Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.” (Bansal)
“ALLEN stands proud on a very strong pool of well-qualified, experienced, dedicated and hardworking professionals who are passionate for teaching”. (Allen)
“Motion truly believes in nurturing potential through education”. (Motion)

In the first two examples abstract concepts and in the last two, the names of the institute, all inanimate objects are personified and attributed with abilities such as human beings possess.

5.2.2 Simile and Metaphor
A figure of speech, in which “one thing is likened to another… to clarify and enhance an image” (Cuddon 1999: 830), is called a Simile. While in another figure of speech, the metaphor the comparison is implicit; in a simile, the comparison is explicit. Simile is used by the coaching institutes to give emphasis to some features of the advertised service and reinforce the emotional appeal in an imaginative way (Ding 2003) using words “like” or “as”. In one of the advertisements from the IIT coaching industry, students are compared to “sparks of divinity” and teaching to “a dedicated service to divinity” (ALLEN), in another ROA IIT is “like a family”. On the other hand, metaphors contribute to the aesthetics of advertising and lay emphasis on the central notion indirectly. A metaphor is a comparison where an object is labeled as if it were another (Hicks, 1998, p. 63); two apparently distinct things are matched to show the resemblances or differences. Leech maintains metaphors “suggest the right kind of emotive associations for the product” (Leech 1972: 182). For example: hard work is called “the simple calculus of Karma.”

In this example calculus, literally “small pebble”, used for counting and calculations, also a part of modern mathematics education, devoted to the study of functions and limits, measures karma i.e. the spiritual principle concerning cause and effect, where intent and actions of a person impact the future of that person. In another example, “…every rough edge is smoothened, every small doubt is cleared…” (Bansal). The expression associates a rough edge with lack of skills of a person required to clear the IIT entrance examination.

5.2.3 Antithesis
Antithesis is the use of a striking contrast of words or opposition in a sentence for the purpose of emphasizing, for example, “come as a student, leave as a winner.”

5.2.4 Hyperbole
A figure of speech containing “an exaggeration for emphasis” is called Hyperbole (Cuddon 1999: 406). Hyperboles may be used for humorous or emotional purposes (Wales 2001: 190). Hyperbole was used often by the coaching institutes to highlight the best characteristics of the services and to sensationalize the marketing points: “If you have set your aims high, if you want to touch the stars and reach the sky and more importantly - if you have the courage to say that you shall settle for
nothing less than the best, then you - the XII pass student - are perfectly suited to this course” (BANSAL).

5.2.5 Metonymy
Metonymy is defined as “a figure of speech in which the name of an attribute or a thing is substituted for the thing itself” (Cuddon 1999: 510). It is “an indexical sign: there is a directly or logically contiguous relationship between the substituted word and its referent” (Wales 2001: 252). Myers maintains it is frequently used for advertisements “where the product is associated with some person or surroundings” (Myers 1997: 127–128), e.g. “I like motion” (Motion). Here, the brand name stands for any of the courses or services provided by the institute. However, examples of Metonymy were not very common in advertising language used by the coaching institutes as compared to other figures. The analysis of advertising texts showed the use of the visuals for advertising campaigns, for example the depiction of a medal stands for the success in IIT, the images of a bottle or utensils used in labs stand for practical training etc.

5.2.6 Euphemism
Euphemisms may be used in advertising language to avoid harsh or unkind words or expressions; these may be replaced with the mild or pleasing words or expressions. This figure of speech is quite common in broadcasting and newspapers (Cuddon 1999: 292). However, the advertising campaigns used by IIT coaching institutes seemed to have avoided using euphemisms, as no examples of euphemisms were found. The language used was found to be more direct and unambiguous.

5.2.7 Repetition
A literary device, Repetition, is used by the coaching institutes wherein the same words or phrases are repeated a few times to make an idea clearer and more notable. This rhetorical device, in some of the texts examined was a repeated word, a phrase, or a full sentence, or even a poetical line to accentuate its implication in the entire text:
“…the first step in the right direction at the right time…”, and
“If you think you are bright, if you think you are capable, if you think you can make it to the top, this course is precisely for you.”

5.2.8 Elliptical Sentences
An elliptical sentence is a sentence in which some word/words are intentionally deleted as they can be assumed from the context. Mostly, for the headlines such constructions are used. The use of Ellipsis, a series of dots, is noticeable in the tagline used by the same institute as they join three power packed sentences, indicating an intentional omission of words from the text without altering its original meaning:
“Our Inspiration marks Our Identity… Gives meaning to Our Past…Brings Success for Today and Creates Vision for Tomorrow”

5.3 Proper Names
Proper names are used by the coaching institutes for advertising purposes. It is the context of usage that gives meaning to the names. For example, the coaching institutes make use of the proper names of faculty and students selected in IITs for representing the services. It was observed that proper names were used meaningfully to depict the success of the courses/ course materials etc. offered. They direct the attention of the potential customers to the institutes and their services. Moreover, the testimonies of the students with their proper names and photos are also added for further giving authenticity to the institutes’ declarations.
5.4 Emotive Expressions
The use of emotive expressions in the advertising language used by the coaching institutes is noteworthy. Emotive expressions, here, denote words that appeal to the consumers’ emotions and feelings. Certain words that make the consumer to choose a particular service, instead of another, were used in the texts examined. From the data collected it was established that the coaching institutes make liberal use of emotive expressions/ persuasive language for advertising their services. They employ particular lexical items to influence the customers’ choice. For instance, Vision Institute claims its programmes are unique:
“VISION IIT KOTA provides broad range of learning programs and activities that's unique in itself.”
The data collected also revealed the words “special offer/ course... make the right choice” etc. being used excessively. Here, the coaching institute uses the words “choice”, “special”, “right”, etc. to motivate the potential customers into opting for the services offered by it. The word “special” point to the exclusivity of the services, “right choice” makes the services offered superior to other services being offered by other institutes. The services are made to look better by asserting better methods are used:
“Adopting methods that best suits our students to crack the JEE.” (Bansal)
“If, for some reason or the other, you missed out on the coveted first batch of admission, don’t lose heart: you can still avail the opportunity of shaping your future. There is a second course for you, precisely like the first one except that it will start in June.”
The words “missed out”, “the coveted first batch”, “avail the opportunity” and “shaping your future” indicate the limited nature of the services offered by the institute which is to be availed by the month of June. This tendency is found in the next text:
“Success in JEE needs many things – razor sharp precision, cool temperament and flawless knowledge. At times you find that though you have an adequate background, still gaps are left, and they need to be filled before IITJEE. An intense 3 months comprehensive course aims for the same. Nothing matches a focused approach – since time is less and work is more. At this juncture, you will find that the “little push” you need to get to be an IITian is precisely supplied by this course.”
Among the emotive expressions used, one observes “razor sharp precision”, “cool temperament”, “flawless knowledge”, “focused approach”, etc. The aim is to assert that course focuses on an approach and the “little push” is all that is required. Another course is introduced as:
“Come, resurrect your confidence, shape-up your ideas, strengthen your foundation and get in to the top gear of IIT-JEE preparation with a course that can easily claim to be at par with the best offered anywhere in India.”
The advertisement makes use of the word “resurrect your confidence”, “shape-up your ideas”, “strengthen your foundation”, “get in to the top gear” by simply using the service that is “at par with the best”. These words appeal to the emotions of the students by establishing that they can also be the best if they opt for the course. These encouraging words in this context bring the customers closer to the institute and indeed the services offered by them. The emotive devices and expression in the following text are also worth consideration:
“If you think you are bright, if you think you are capable, if you think you can make it to the top, this course is precisely for you.”
The words “bright”, “capable” and “the top” charm the readers’ feelings because therein lie the target of the advertiser. It is a means for capturing the interest and the attention of the potential customers to make them aware of the benefits of the course being offered. While in the next illustration the word “guide", adds to the emotive value of the text.
“...if you are desirous of becoming an Engineering professional through prestigious IITs, we take charge to guide you through it.”
5.5 Graphetic and Graphological Features of advertising language for coaching institutes:
Investigation of the data collected shows that IIT coaching institutes make special use of punctuation marks, colors, images figures and numbers for advertising purpose.

5.5.1 Punctuation Marks in Advertising Language
In the text “Hence Proved! The best team delivered the Best results.” the punctuation used here is an exclamation mark (!). The mark is indicative of the foremost concern of the coaching institute, which is to inform the prospective customer to make the correct decision and choice by opting for the best team which has delivered the best results by the Nucleus Education - A premier institute for IIT. The graphological effects of the marks of punctuation are comprehended in the use of the question marks for example: “Why BRILLIANT?” Here, the question mark is used to encourage the customers to opt for the services offered by Brilliant because “Brilliant’s formula for success is based on the belief that there is a winner in every student waiting to be discovered.” The advertising language makes use of the question marks to emphasize the need for the potential customer to make the right choice. Another interesting use of a punctuation mark was observed in “Best Education, Genuine Results”, which makes the services offered more alluring for the prospective customers. In another advertisement, the Octothorp or the hash tag marks out the most important part of the advertising language: “#Career_making… Not_for_money_making”. The colon after each phrase in “Authenticity of RESULT: Power of ALLEN” is used for telling the students that there is advantages to be accrued by opting for services offered by the coaching institute.

The use of parenthesis was also found to give the advertising language an informal tone: “The stimulating atmosphere of the institute, small batches (yes-we believe in quality) and one to one interaction with the instructor ensure that every rough edge is smoothened, every small doubt is cleared, that’s why most of our toppers are from this course.” Dyer (1982: 32) maintains personal, colloquial and unceremonious language is used to attract attention of the customers.

5.5.2 Use of Color
The analysis of the data collected revealed that color was used brilliantly to enhance the aesthetics of the advertisements, with the intent to catch the attention of the prospective customers. For instance the Career Point makes use of several colors. Along with ornamental and aesthetics appeal added by the colors, it may be used to indicate the objectives of the coaching institutes. The Rao IIT website all important headings appear in red color, so does the bar chart with red lines indicate the rising number of students opting for the institute, while Turning Point institute has used only white and blue. The other part in blue and red colors simply adds beauty to the site. This is also seen in the pamphlets and newspaper advertisement for the coaching institutes.

5.5.3 Pictorial Images
Several images are used, which add to the appeal of the advertising texts and the advertisements. In the analysis of the images, it was established that they are used for enhancing the message of advertising. The image of the top ranking students, are highly significant because they make the message more authentic for the potential customers. Several other clip arts and images are used including trophies, cups, medals, logos, charts, graphs, etc. The image of an airplane was also used, to promote the nature of courses offered. The image is used to elucidate and enlighten the prospective customers about the services being offered by the institute. The image shows a plane taking off, implying the students may soar/ fly in the air merely with the training offered by the institute.
5.5.4 Figures and numbers
From the data and texts collected, it was found that figures and numbers were used mostly to specify the results of the coaching institute and provide the cost of the services offered. Allen also uses a tag line “Do you know”, followed by details of all important information and statistics such as the year when the institute was set up, the ranking of students etc.

6. Conclusions
1. Advertising language used by the IIT Coaching institutes is an important part of their marketing campaign for attracting students as potential customers from all over India. As obvious from the above discussion, the advertising language is attractive, persuasive and convincing, and replete with short catchy phrases related to the institutes as brands. It is aimed at defining, presenting and distinguishing the main features of the institutes as a brand in the market.

2. The advertising language is used by the coaching institutes for informational purpose. It is a means of communication between the coaching institutes and the targets, the students preparing for IIT examinations. The linguistic characteristics promote awareness about the institutes, provide information to the students and their parents, expedites the process of decision making and persuades the students, the consumers that one coaching institute is superior to the other.

3. The linguistic analysis of the selected texts confirmed that the several techniques were used in commercial advertising language such as rhyme, alliteration etc. to aid the transmission of information and to make the text impressive, while rhythm, consonance and onomatopoeia were used sparingly. The analysis of advertising texts displayed phonological techniques, such as alliteration was used, while euphemism was prominent by its absence.

4. The advertising language used added to the texts” emotive value. The advertising language also revealed frequent use of metaphors, personifications, and hyperboles, while the use of apostrophe and metonymy was scarce.

5. From the examination of lexical characteristics, it becomes evident that the coaching institutes make use of expressions, words and phrases with the intent to add exquisiteness and attractiveness which will increase publicizing and advertising value of the texts, use names to add authenticity to the services they offer and use of emotive expressions to convince the customers for patronizing the services offered.

6. To sum up, the coaching institutes frequently use an assortment of different methods of expression and sound techniques, which make the advertising texts and messages memorable. They attract the attention of the prospective customers towards the commercial advertisement.

6.1 Limitations
As the small amount of data used in this paper, the method adopted for the analysis is limited. Firstly, there are valuable areas of advertising discourse which is not covered in this paper. The examples are also limited and this paper uses only a small amount of data taken from advertising language used by IIT coaching institutes from Kota, Rajasthan. Given the limitations of the material, the analysis section can only serve for qualitative purposes and the results cannot be generalized. The analysis of the materials aims to identify and examine linguistic features presented in the selected texts.

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