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مجلة جامعة الباحة للعلوم الإنسانية

تصدر عن جامعة الباحة

مجلة دورية — علمية — محكمة

الرؤية: أن تكون مجلة علمية تتميز بنشر البحوث العلمية التي تخدم أهداف التنمية الشاملة بالمملكة العربية السعودية وتساهم في تنمية القدرات البحثية لأعضاء هيئة التدريس ومن في حكمهم داخل الجامعة وخارجها.

الرسالة: تفعيل دور الجامعة في الارتقاء بمستوى الأداء البحثي لمندوبيها بما يخدم أهداف الجامعة ويحقق أهداف التنمية المرجوة ويزيد من التفاعل البناء مع مؤسسات المجتمع المحلي والإقليمي والعالمي.

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A Stylistic Analysis of Billboard Advertising on the Jeddah-Makkah Saudi
Arabian Highway
د. أمل محمد صالح شعيب الأستاذة / مي عبد القدوس أبو السمح

A Stylistic Analysis of Billboard Advertising on the Jeddah-Makkah Saudi Arabian Highway

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Abstract:

Every stretch of highway in the world attracts a special kind of consumer but not all roads can attract people of all walks of life and all year around. The Jeddah-Makkah Highway in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia is such a road. Millions of people use this stretch of tarmac, both locally and internationally, with the destination being Makkah; the holiest city in the Islamic world. This highway, which has free standing billboards running along its sides, is used by three types of consumers: Saudi citizens, expatriates, and Muslim pilgrims from around the world, with this latter group making up the biggest consumer percentage out of the three groups. As there is scarce research pertaining to billboard advertising in this country, to this area in specific, and to the Muslim pilgrim consumer in specific, a stylistic analysis of the language of billboard advertising was conducted to map out the terrain for a better understanding of this linguistic make-up of Saudi outdoor advertising. To achieve this end, 60 billboards were analyzed following Crystal and Davy's (1969) approach as a descriptive framework. The study identifies a number of linguistic characteristics that pertain to Saudi advertising geared towards Muslim pilgrims such as the use of the English and Arabic languages in one ad either via transliterating or translation; use of English as the lingua franca of choice; absence of rhetorical devices; and the use of Modern Standard Arabic in the absence of any dialectal expressions. It also lists a few recommendations copywriters should watch out for such as incorporating an English transliteration/translation within all Arabic ads; compulsory use of Arabic numerals; and the use of big font sized letters and high contrast colors.

Keywords: Billboard Bulletin Advertising; Jeddah-Makkah Highway; Linguistics; Linguistic Landscapes; Muslim Pilgrims; Stylistic Analysis.

دراسة أسلوبية للوحات الإعلانية على الطريق السريع بين مدينتي مكة وجدة بالمملكة العربية السعودية
د. أمل محمد صالح شعيب
الأستاذة/ مي عبد القدوس أبو السمع
أستاذ اللغويات التطبيقية المساعد في قسم اللغات الأوروبية وآدابها
محاضر في قسم اللغات والترجمة
كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية بجامعة الملك عبد العزيز
كلية التربية والآداب بجامعة تبوك
الملخص:

تتفاوت الطرق السريعة حول العالم في قدرتها على جذب المستهلكين من خلال اللوحات الإعلانية وبعد الطريق السريع الرابط بين مكة وجدة من أهم الطرق السريعة لاستهدافه فئات مختلفة من مواطنين ومقيمين ومعمّرين وحجاج. ولندرة الأبحاث التي تعنى بدراسة اللوحات الإعلانية التي تستهدف الحجاج بصفة خاصة في هذا الطريق هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تحليل تلك اللوحات وعددها واحد وستون (٦٠) لوحة من خلال دراسة أسلوبية تبرز خصائصها اللغوية منتهجة منهج كريستال وديفي (١٩٦٩). وقد أظهرت هذه الدراسة أبرز المزايا اللغوية التي تتسم بها الإعلانات موضع الدراسة في مخاطبتها المستهلكين من ضيوف الرحمن. كالجمع بين اللغتين العربية والإنجليزية في الإعلان ذاته، سواءً باستخدام الترجمة أو الكتابة الحرفية، واستخدام الإنجليزية بوصفها لغة مشتركة، وغياب الصور البيانية، واستخدام العربية الفصحى وغياب اللهجة المحلية. وانتهت الدراسة لبعض التوصيات التي ينبغي لكتاب المحتوى الإعلاني أخذها بعين الاعتبار كدمج الترجمة أو الكتابة الحرفية الإنجليزية في كافة الإعلانات العربية، والاستخدام الإلزامي للأرقام العربية، واستخدام الخطوط ذات الأحرف الكبيرة والألوان المتباينة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللوحات الإعلانية، طريق مكة-جدة السريع، لغوية، مناظر لغوية، حجاج بيت الله الحرام، تحليل أسلوبية.

INTRODUCTION:

In everyday life, people are exposed to different types of outdoor advertisements everywhere they go. Thus, linguistic landscapes play an important role in modern society. The latter term has been defined by Landry and Bourhis (1997) as the “visibility and salience of languages on public and commercial signs in a given territory” (p. 23). Therefore, it can include any kind of advertisement that reaches consumers outside their homes (Lichtenthal, Yadav, & Donthu, 2006). Examples of this type of advertising include: billboards, street furniture, transit, and alternative media forms (Taylor, Franke, & Bang, 2006). However, it is billboards that are, as many researchers claim, one of the most prevalent forms of outdoor advertising and in particular, bulletins (i.e. highways standard static billboards) as opposed to other forms of such advertising (Lichtenthal et al., 2006).

To achieve the purpose of advertising, consumers' attention is directed to specific products or services, via various techniques to ensure the effectiveness of delivering the advertising message (Giordano, 2000). Many researchers argue that language plays an important role in promoting the selling of products as well as increasing consumers' awareness of services (Gardner & Luchtenberg, 2000; Gully, 1996). This is specifically the case when it comes to outdoor advertising which is considered basically a rapid communicative medium (Osunbivi, 1999, as cited in Kayode, 2012). Accordingly, language should be simple, clear, and direct in order for consumers to comprehend the advertising message especially since they only have 2-3 seconds to take in the ad (Taylor et al., 2006). For such rapid comprehension to take place, the target audience should be considered because what seems comprehensible for one might not be for another. Therefore, advertising language as Leech (1972) claims, differs when the target consumer changes (as cited in Chafai, 2008).

Much research has been conducted on different kinds of advertising in general in different linguistic landscapes, but it is diverse (Giordano, 2000; Gorter, 2018; Zubcevic & Luxton, 2011). Some studies examine types of advertising from a marketing perspective as being an effective business tool in humans'

daily lives as opposed to other forms of advertising (Taylor et al., 2006) or their impact on drivers' performance and attention as a distracting tool that may have a role in increasing accident rates (Edquist, Horberry, Hosking, & Johnston, 2011). Contrastingly, other studies analyze the 'linguistic elements' of billboards in multilingual environments (AlAthwary, 2017; Fomukong, 2016). However, a quick survey of the literature reveals there are no previous studies that stylistically examine the language of Saudi highway billboards especially those geared to a large consumer population. The closest study is one that investigates electronic billboards and their effect on the pilgrim consumer in the same region (Gazzaz, Khan, & Iqbal, 2014) but does not provide a stylistic description for this type of advertising.

In response, this paper addresses this gap in the literature by analyzing the stylistic features used in the language of this type of outdoor advertising on a specific high traffic highway. Moreover, the analysis in this study will take into account the target audience, which these billboards are targeting as being the main factor behind their design. The motivation for this consideration is drawn from the fact that advertisements are regarded as a reflection of the societal values and cultural norms in which they occur (Chafai, 2008; Pimentel, 2000). According to Pimentel (2000), advertising language should pay attention to the linguistic competence and the sociocultural backgrounds of the target audience in order to successfully achieve its communicative function. This is quite a challenge for the Jeddah-Makkah Highway (also referred to as Highway 40), which is used by Saudis, expatriates, but mainly by Muslim pilgrims from different countries and cultures from all over the world. The importance of this road is derived from the importance of Makkah, which is located in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia. This city is considered the holiest city by Muslims worldwide because it is the home of Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām (the holiest Islamic site in the world) to which Muslims undertake pilgrimage throughout the year; Hajj (major pilgrimage to Makkah) and/or Umrah (the second lesser pilgrimage to Makkah).

According to the General Authority for Statistics in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (2017), in 2014/1435 there were 1,862,909 Hajj

pilgrims in total who used the Jeddah-Makkah Highway (69,929 domestic pilgrims and 1,792,980 foreign pilgrims). These pilgrims, who consisted of both Arab and non-Arabs, came from all over the world. As for Umrah, it is usually open 8 months a year for pilgrims from around the world. According to Eissa Rawas, Deputy Minister for Umrah Affairs, the 2013 Umrah season (4th December 2013 – 30th July 2014) witnessed about 6.15 million pilgrim visitors to Makkah (“Saudi Ministry”, 2014). Since both King Abdulaziz International Airport and the Jeddah Islamic Port are located in Jeddah which is considered the gateway to the holy city of Makkah, many of these pilgrims must use the Jeddah-Makkah Highway to reach Al-Masjid Al-Harām (Great Mosque of Makkah) which explains the reason for the thousands of Muslims who come through this highway every year. It is worth noting that there are other roads that lead to Makkah, but this is the one most used by pilgrims out of all the other ones (General Authority for Statistics, 2017) because of its strategic location.

Thus, the specific aim of this study is to analyze billboard bulletins guided by the following research questions:

1- What are the stylistic features used in Saudi billboards located on the Jeddah-Makkah Highway that are geared towards Muslim pilgrims?

2- Do these billboards reflect the sociocultural norms and values of the Muslim pilgrim consumer?

This study is considered the first study of its kind because it analyzes the linguistic landscape of billboards in a high traffic area in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia targeting multi-cultural, multilingual consumers who use the Jeddah-Makkah Highway. It hopes to contribute to the fields of linguistics and marketing with the aim of mapping out the terrain for a better understanding of the linguistic make-up of Saudi outdoor advertising. Moreover, the research findings may offer important implications for copywriters (i.e. advertisers) especially since the analysis of the language of these billboards will provide valuable insights into the linguistic techniques that are presently being employed in this specific country. Looking deeply into the linguistic characteristics of these ads can also enable a better

understanding of the people who use this particular highway. To sum up, the present study can provide helpful insights for companies situated in this part of the world who want their outdoor highway billboard ads to make an impact on such a big number of potential consumers.

Background:

Outdoor advertising is considered the oldest medium for advertising (Mair, 1952) and an effective marketing tool that is commonly used by most copywriters (Taylor et al., 2006). Recently, outdoor advertising has become as effective as other traditional kinds of ads found in magazines, radio, and TV (Lichtenthal et al., 2006). Being as such, Taylor et al. (2006) argue that quite a number of studies have investigated their major advantages compared to other forms of advertising. They point out that among the most important ones are: their placement near the target market, the ability of reaching many consumers, all day availability, and their economic affordability. On the other hand, they claim that one of their main disadvantages is the use of only a limited number of words. It should be noted that some researchers regard this disadvantage as a key characteristic that distinguishes them from other types of advertising. Lichtenthal et al. (2006), for example, argue that one of the main features of outdoor billboard advertising is that they address a “market in motion” (p. 238). They claim that the presentation of the advertising message should be carefully designed to attract the consumers’ eyes as they pass by quickly.

As with the distinctive advantages of outdoor billboard advertising, a considerable amount of research has recommended a number of techniques for their successful use (Pimentel, 2000; Taylor et al., 2006). In his study on billboards, Blasko (1985) points out that five major techniques should be employed in any outdoor advertising: (1) maximum use of eight words, (2) background simplicity, (3) brand identification, (4) simplicity of the advertising message, and (5) creativity (as cited in Taylor et al., 2006). According to Gardner and Luchtenberg (2000), the use of a few words is considered one of the most important techniques that should be employed in designing the advertising message in outdoor advertising. Therefore, researchers like Lichtenthal et al.

(2006) argue that outdoor advertising may function as a “reminder that helps register the brand to achieve a top-of-mind recall when the “want” in the buyer needs to be fulfilled” (p. 238). In other words, this medium is mainly designed for increasing consumers’ awareness or knowledge about a particular product or service more than for increasing immediate selling rates.

Other studies have also focused on factors such as emphasizing product performance, including price, and using visual effects, colors, and humor (Donthu, Cherian, & Bhargava, 1993). Furthermore, Taylor et al. (2006) identify other effective techniques in their study such as conveying the message in a “clear”, “interesting”, and “readable” way to the target audience (p. 24). They also claim that choosing a suitable location for billboards, displaying the product’s name and any other necessary information, and supporting the verbal message with powerful visuals are also associated with the effective use of this kind of advertising.

According to Leech (1966), advertising language is the language of persuasion. It is called as such, as Pui-yiu (1995) points out, because the main goal of any kind of advertisement is convincing consumers to act in favor of a certain product or/and service. Because of its important role, much research has focused on advertising language (Pimentel, 2000; Wenzhong & Jingyi, 2013). According to Giordano (2000), however, many studies only analyze one or a few aspects and do not pay attention to the others. He asserts that there are, for example, studies that concentrate on the language but ignore the visual effects or layout. Other studies, on the other hand, focus on images without paying attention to the language. Recently, advertising language has been examined as a type of discourse in which all components of the advertisement work together to effectively convey the advertising message (Chafai, 2008; Gardner & Luchtenberg, 2000).

As a type of discourse, the language of advertising tends to employ a number of innovative linguistic techniques (Cook, 1992, as cited in Pimentel, 2000). Among the most important ones is the copywriters’ tendency to manipulate many aspects of the language system producing what grammarians might describe as the ungrammatical usage of language (Pimentel,

2000). Pui-yiu (1995) claims that despite such manipulation, the advertising message is usually conveyed. One justification for this fact is offered by Gardner and Luchtenberg (2000) who argue that copywriters take advantage of consumers’ ability to rely on the knowledge of their language system. They also point out that incorporating visual effects into the verbal message plays a major role in the comprehension of the whole ad.

Linguistic innovation in advertising can also be reflected by the use of linguistic devices that are culturally dependent such as the use of puns and metaphors (Giordano, 2000). In order to infer the intended message, Vestergaard and Schrøder (1985) claim that the use of such devices depends on the ability of the consumers to understand the context and the sociocultural world in which the advertisement takes place. In the same vein, copywriters tend to use word formation processes to create new words that attract peoples’ attention (Anggraeni, 2011). In addition, other linguistic innovative techniques can be seen in the use of colloquial language (El-Daly, 2012) or the use of the English language in countries whose native language is not English (Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010).

Methodology:

The present study adopts a qualitative approach in stylistically analyzing the linguistic features used in the language of Saudi’s Western Region billboards located on the Jeddah-Makkah Highway, particularly from Prince Fawaz Bridge to the end of the highway at the Makkah Gateway Entrance, i.e. the approximate travel distance is about 42.4 kilometers in length (Google Maps, n.d.). Moreover, the analysis will investigate the connection between the stylistic features used and the target audience addressed. To achieve this end, data were first collected on the second of March 2014 using a Canon EOS 550D digital camera. The total number of digital photographs obtained were 65 billboard images promoting various types of products and services (see Appendix 1: Dataset- 60 Photographs). However, it is worth noting that five photographs were excluded because they were considered unclear. It should also be noted that the data for this study were collected on one way of the highway; from Jeddah to Makkah. It took about 6 hours to take the photographs but

because the final one was taken around dusk, it was too dark to take the ones on the other side. Three weeks after the first group of photographs were taken, one of the researchers went back to take photographs of the billboards on the other side (from Makkah to Jeddah) but found that many of the ones on the side already taken (from Jeddah to Makkah) were different. Thus, it was decided to only investigate one way as we wanted to keep the time frame the same for all the billboards under investigation. After collecting the data, 60 billboard photographs were analyzed but only 12 of them were used as examples in the actual paper due to page number constraints.

The data were analyzed following Crystal and Davy (1969) approach to stylistic analysis. Despite its age, it is referenced in the literature as being “pioneering work” and can be used as a methodological approach towards the analysis of texts (Křístek, 2012). The researchers’ aim was to find out the general stylistic characteristics of billboard advertisements and enable a thorough investigation of the advertising language as a discourse with both linguistic and non-linguistic features mixed together to convey the intended meaning. Therefore, this particular approach can help readers better understand and appreciate the language used in these specific advertisements. It is worth noting that some studies that have also dealt with the application of same theory (e.g., Kostková, 2008) while others used similar linguistic features and categorization (e.g., Bia, 2018; Linghong, 2009).

According to Kostková (2008), stylistic analysis is the study of linguistic features that characterize a text with a description of their functions and effects as opposed to other alternatives. On this note, the theoretical underpinning of Crystal and Davy’s (1969) work entails identifying a variety of stylistically ‘significant’ means of expression, then developing a method of analysis which will enable the organization and sorting of the identified text, and then finally, classifying what is found into categories based on their linguistic purposes. They argue that “Any use of language displays certain linguistic features which allow it to be identified with one or more extra-linguistic contexts” (Loc 323). To elaborate further, linguistic features refer to any

distinctive element that distinguishes the use of language whereas extra-linguistic context means any non-linguistic aspect that accompanies the use of the linguistic feature(s). They state that analysis of texts/utterances should be carried out at the following levels of language: phonemic/graphemic level, phonological/graphological, grammatical, lexical and semantic levels depending on what type of data one is analyzing; written or spoken. In our case, it is the former and because of that the phonemic/graphemic level is excluded.

The main goal of this type of stylistic analysis is to match the linguistic features of a specific text to what Crystal and Davy (1969) refer to as “dimensions of situational constraint.” According to these two researchers, these are as follows: 1) *individuality* of speakers/writers (pertains to all the features that distinguish language users from each other); 2) *dialect* (the language variety/varieties used within a specific text); 3) *time* - when a text originated and the stage of life of the author); 4) *type of discourse* (speech/written-monologue/dialogue); 5) *province* (where the text is used); 6) *status* (social status of the participants of the communicative act and their relationships to each other); 7) *modality* (the decision of using a specific type of means of expression over another); 8) *singularity* (the deliberate use of specific features within text) (Loc. 1285). They also stress the idea that different communicative acts need different degrees of functional participation from the dimensions mentioned above with the probability that a few categories of various dimensions will probably overlap sometimes. The latter constraints will be incorporated into the discussion at different intervals. To conclude, the advantage of using Crystal and Davy’s (1969) approach is that after identifying the most stylistically distinctive deviations from random occurrences in a text, partial descriptions are arrived at and then generalizations are made from the analyzed samples.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the phonetic transliteration of the Arabic consonants and vowels used in this study follows Brill’s simple Arabic transliteration system (Rietbroek, 2010). With regards to transferability, Merriam (1998) states that it is the degree to which a

study can be replicated. This study specifically aimed at following Crystal and Davy (1969) approach to stylistic analysis and it is a very straightforward process where there are different levels of analysis to go through and then analyze. It presents both the findings and analysis in a very detailed way to enable other researchers to understand the steps taken to reach the conclusions that were reached. As for validity, there are two researchers in this study, a fact that has been identified in the literature as a strength to any research (Merriam, 2002). It is also worth noting that a validity check was performed by other researchers as well. According to Gibbs (2007, as cited in Creswell, 2014), it is very important for researchers to check for validity in the accuracy of their findings. So, having someone other than the researchers go over the analysis of the data can be considered a very strong point for any study. Fortunately for this one, two fellow linguists and a communication colleague (all of whom are bilingual) were working at the time at the same educational institute; the linguists (two professors majoring in the fields of Syntax and Morphology) and a communication instructor (an associate professor majoring in Public Relations) all agreed to assist the researchers. All of them contributed to the study's validity by going over the different parts of data pertaining to their fields. Interestingly, the differences were minute; mostly in the form of terminology differences and only a few instances of differences as a result of their specialty within their fields of study.

Discussion

In order to answer the first research question, the data were first classified into two major types: product advertisements and service advertisements. However, unjustified variations between the different advertisements of the same category were noticed (e.g. telecommunication ads, which can also be considered service advertisements). Therefore, data were reexamined taking into consideration the target consumers for the different billboards as well as the type of products/services they promote. Doing it this way, helped in the identification of three major categories and these are as follows: (1) billboards that are geared towards Muslim pilgrims (see Table 1), (2) billboards that are geared towards Saudi

citizens and expatriates (see Table 2 below), and (3) billboards that are geared towards a mix of both groups (see Table 3 below). It should be noted that each category of ads shares a number of characteristics that distinguishes it from the other, but it is the Muslim pilgrim consumer in the first and last categories that will be the concentration of this study as they form the largest consumer population using this specific highway. Billboards that are geared specifically towards Saudi citizens and expatriates will be analyzed later in another study.

Table 1: Numbers and kinds of advertisements geared towards Muslim pilgrims

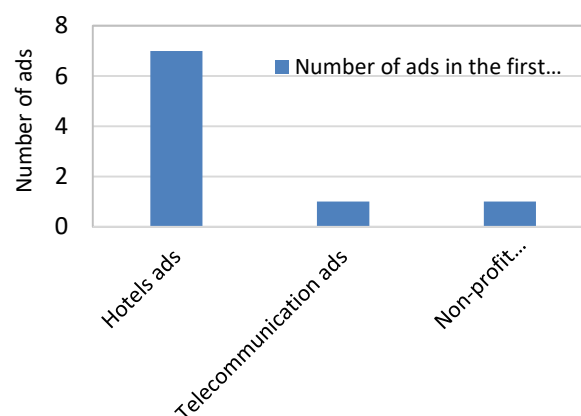


Table 2: Numbers and kinds of advertisements geared towards Saudi citizens and expatriates

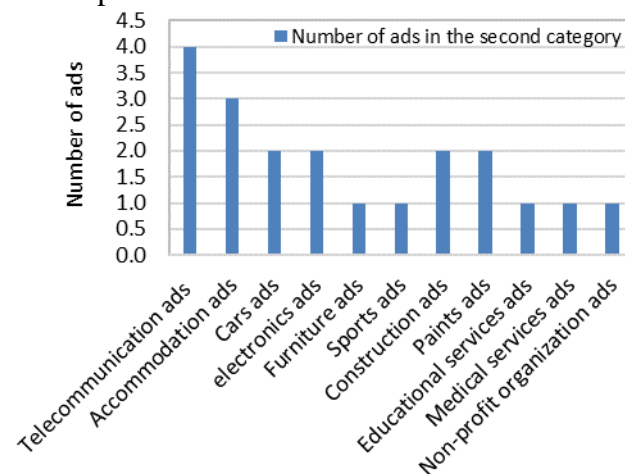
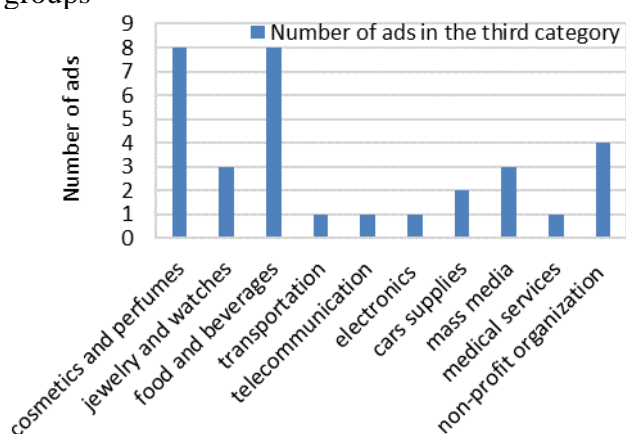


Table 3: Numbers and kinds of advertisements geared towards a mix of both groups



Thus, the features pertaining to Muslim pilgrims will be stylistically analyzed below according to the different levels of Crystal and Davy's (1969) approach to stylistic analysis. However, it is worth mentioning that due to the limitation of time and space, only major features that best reflect this specific consumer will be analyzed. Therefore, the stylistic analysis will focus specifically on the graphic, graphological/phonological, lexical, grammatical, and sematic levels of billboards.

As for the graphic level, most of hotels advertisements make use of visual images to successfully achieve their advertising messages. In outdoor advertising where the number of words are limited, they function as a cohesive devise that link between the product/service being promoted and the intended meaning (Gardner & Luchtenberg, 2000). One of the important examples is the way in which the Mövenpick Hotel billboard (Figure 1) presents the visual image of one of their rooms where the Holy Ka'ba can clearly be seen from the window of that room. This image successfully conveys the message that the hotel is very close to the Al-Masjid Al-Harām.

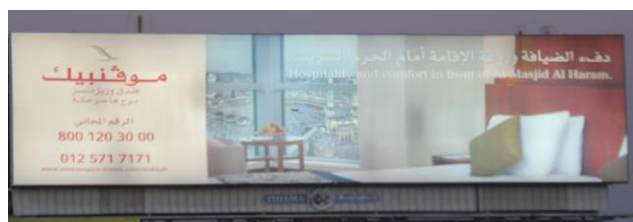


Figure 1. Mövenpick Hotel Billboard

Another example of the important role visual images plays in facilitating the comprehension of the advertising message is evident in Figure 2. It is a non-profit organization advertisement designed by the government to cultivate the behavior of Muslim pilgrims during Hajj by advising them not to sit on sidewalks or on the road as it can prevent the ease of movement and put their lives in danger. To convey the intended meaning, it relies on the role of image that clearly presents this message. Unfortunately, the verbal message is written only in Arabic despite the fact that it addresses pilgrims who may not be able to read this language.



Figure 2. Government Billboard.

In addition, the way copywriters design the layout of the whole billboard is of crucial importance. A good example of a well-organized billboard can be seen in Figure 3 where the copywriter succeeds in addressing the target audience by providing an English equivalent for each Arabic word in a clear and direct symmetric layout. Doing it this way, they attract the attention of pilgrims who are monolingual in one of the two languages or most probably, the attention of bilinguals.



Figure 3. Mobily Telecom Billboard

Regarding the graphological aspect, all the hotel advertisements exploit the use of different typeface and font size letters to add extra emphasis to the advertising message. Although they are regarded as nonlinguistic, both graphic and graphological features play a crucial role in the comprehension of the intended meaning within a short time span. Crystal and Davy

(1995) argue that although such features are regarded as non-linguistic, their use is meaningful as they can have important linguistic implications that are related to the semantic or grammatical structure of the text (as cited in Kostková, 2008). A good example of this is the use of punctuation in the Al-Shohada Hotel billboard (Figure 4). The two nominal sentences of the slogan “**Al-Ḥaram ġiwārunā**” (The Holy mosque is near us) “**rāḥatukum hadafunā**” (Your comfort is our goal) are separated by three dots instead of using just a full stop or the conjunction “**wāw**” (and). Using punctuation here is regarded as an eye-catching technique to emphasize consumers’ perception of the slogan as two independent messages rather than one.



Figure 4. Al Shohada Hotel Billboard.

Moreover, the use of color contributes to the comprehension of the advertising message. Most of the advertisements in this category attract their consumers’ attention by using high contrast colors as is evident in Figure 5 where only a black background and white colored letters are used. On the other hand, it is worth noting that not all ads used colors wisely. The choice of colors in the Mövenpick Hotel ad, for example, is inappropriate especially since white colored letters are placed on a light-colored background (see Figure 1 above). This violates one of the most important techniques of ad design, i.e. readability (Bolen, 1984, as cited in Gardner & Luchtenberg, 2000). Considering the short exposure time, using few colors is also another feature that might contribute to consumers’ recall of these ads. It should be noted that all billboards geared toward the Muslim pilgrim employ one or two colors in designing their verbal texts.

Not only is this feature found in hotel ads but also in other types of ads. In Figure 6, for example, the billboard is divided into two parts, each with a different background to attract consumers’ attention. The slogan “**ana dīkrayāt**

l- ḥayāt” (I am the memories of life) that is placed on a big image of Al-Masjjid Al-Ḥarām on the right part of the billboard might be perceived as vague since there is no definite reference for the first personal pronoun “**ana**”. However, shading this personal pronoun with the same color of the background of the left part where the picture of the product is visualized helps set a clear referent, i.e. the personal pronoun refers to the digital camera. This technique is commonly used in outdoor advertising because of the limited space provided and is given the term ‘exophoric reference’, i.e. an element referring to something outside the verbal context (Gardner & Luchtenberg, 2000). The effective use of colors and visual images with the verbal text conveys the advertising message that buying this digital camera is an excellent choice for the good memories it will give to the Muslim pilgrim during Hajj/Umrah. It should also be noted that placing a big visual image of the camera separately on the left part of the billboard seems to be a smart technique used to target not only pilgrims but also other consumers who use this highway as well and might be interested in such electronic devices.



Figure 5. Makkah Clock Royal Tower Fairmont Hotel Billboard



Figure 6. Nikon Billboard

Regarding the phonological aspect, on the other hand, the majority of advertisements that pertain to Muslim pilgrims do not employ the

use of rhetorical devices as a means of attracting consumers' attention. One justification can be due to the multilingual background of the addressed audience. Out of the nine hotel advertisements, only two hotels ads make use of the rhetorical devices in creating their slogans. Mövenpick slogan “**dif ' l- ḍiyāfa wa raw'at l-iqāma amām Al- Ḥarām l-ššarīf**” (Hospitality and comfort in front of Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām) is a good example of the use of parallelism (see Figure 1 above). The parallel effect is created by the repetition of the two parallel genitive constructions “**dif ' l- ḍiyāfa**” and “**raw'at l-iqāma**”. In addition, the two morphological similar words “**l- ḍiyāfa**” and “**l-iqāma**” are an example of an Arabic prose technique called “saj'” which is created by the assonance and rhyme that is based on the “fi'āla” pattern (Gully, 1996).

Moreover, the advertising language of Saudi billboards makes use of many important lexical features. Among the most important ones is the use of Modern Standard Arabic in the absence of any dialectal expressions (see Figures 2, 3, and 5 above and also Table 4 below). For many Muslim pilgrims, it is Classical Arabic (the language of the Quran) which is the closest variety to Modern Standard Arabic that they are most familiar with; not the different colloquial Arabic dialects which would explain its use by copywriters. Moreover, another lexical characteristic is the incorporation of the English language in many of the advertisements that are geared towards Muslim pilgrims who do not speak the Arabic language. Choosing English in particular is motivated by its use as a lingua franca in international communication in general (Hornikx et al., 2010). This incorporation can be seen, for example, in the tendency of transliterating the majority of hotel names into English so that pilgrims who do not read Arabic can identify the name of the hotel. Examples of this are evident in Figures 4 and 7 above.



Figure 7. Royal Dar Al Eman Hotel Billboard.

Table 4: Language Use on the Jeddah-Makkah Highway Billboard

Language Use	Total Number of Billboard Advertisement	Figures
Arabic Only	8	Figure 8; Figure 9; Figure 12; Figure 21; Figure 35; Figure 37; Figure 55; Figure 56
English Only	0	-
Dominating Arabic	41	Figure 1; Figure 2; Figure 4; Figure 5; Figure 6; Figure 7; Figure 10; Figure 13; Figure 14; Figure 15; Figure 17; Figure 18; Figure 19; Figure 20; Figure 23; Figure 24; Figure 25; Figure 27; Figure 29; Figure 30; Figure 31; Figure 28; Figure 33; Figure 38; Figure 39; Figure 41; Figure 42; Figure 43; Figure 44; Figure 45; Figure 46; Figure 48; Figure 50; Figure 51; Figure 52; Figure 53; Figure 54; Figure 57; Figure 58; Figure 59; Figure 60
Dominating English	5	Figure 26; Figure 36; Figure 47; Figure 49
Equal use of English and Arabic	6	Figure 3; Figure 16; Figure 22; Figure 28; Figure 34; Figure 40

Along with transliteration, most of them provide the English equivalents of the Arabic words “**funduq**” (Hotel), “**abrāğ**” (Towers), and “**muntağā'āt**” (Resorts) that can help pilgrims comprehend the advertising message. Others also tend to translate their slogans into English such as the Mövenpick Hotel ad (see Figure 1 above) and the Makkah Clock Royal

Tower - Fairmont Hotel ad (see Figure 5 above). In fact, the latter billboard is interesting because without using the hotel name, its slogan is translated into English and written in big font sized letters. One justification can be the copywriter's intentional desire to emphasize the description of the hotel as the tallest hotel in Makkah. The slogan **"manāra fi l-madīna l-muqadassa"** (Beacon in the Holy city) with the visual image of the Makkah clock protruding out of the billboard to help identify the hotel more than using its name **"funduq sā'at Makkah"** (Makkah Clock Hotel).

However, it is worth noting that while some ads incorporate the use of English (see Figures 4 and 7 above), others did not as is evident in Figure 8. This is an interesting example since it is a non-profit organization ad that is designed by the government to advice drivers (non-pilgrims and pilgrims) to check their tires before traveling. It seems that the copywriter depends on the interaction between the Arabic verbal text with the role of image to convey the intended meaning. However, incorporating the English language with the image would have been a better technique since there are many pilgrims who do not read Arabic. It should also be noted this was not only restricted to hotel ads but also to a few other types of ads as well such as that in Figure 9 (i.e. non-profit International Islamic Relief Organization Billboard) where their only use of English was restricted to small font sized letters mainly to provide a website and nothing more.



Figure 8. Government Billboard.



Figure 9. International Islamic Relief Organization Billboard.

The use of Arabic numerals is also another important feature in which almost all billboards targeting Muslim pilgrims employ with the only exception being the Makkah Clock Royal Tower - Fairmont Hotel ad (see Figure 5 above) where the copywriter uses Indian numerals. Considering the target consumers, this can be regarded as an ineffective technique that might have a negative effect on delivering the advertising message because not all pilgrims of all the different nationalities that visit Makkah can read such numerals. The last lexical feature that most of the ads make use of is the use of adjectives, particularly superlative adjectives such as **"al-ūla"** (The first) (see Figure 10).



Figure 10. Alsalamu Alaikum Radio Station Billboard.

Finally, it is worth noting that intertextuality that can be defined as "texts [which] are recognized in terms of their dependence on other relevant texts", is absent in the language of billboards pertaining to this specific consumer group (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p. 120, as cited in Gully, 1996). In fact, it is a frequently used technique in advertising that helps people remember the ad because of its underlying connection with another text that is familiar to the target audience (Gully, 1996). However, considering the multilingual background of the target consumers justifies the copywriters' tendency in all the ads constituting this category not to employ any element that needs sociocultural knowledge for its interpretation.

From a grammatical point of view, Leech (1966, p. 93) argues that the predominant feature that characterizes billboards is the use of "disjunctive grammar" or "block language". He states that disjunctive grammar is the use of verbless clauses that are regarded in disjunctive, as opposed to discursive language, as grammatically independent. It is, as he points out, one of the main features of English advertising language. Contrastingly, it is

different in the Arabic language as it is acceptable to form a grammatically complete sentence without the presence of a verb, i.e. verbless sentences (Gully, 1996). An example of this use can be seen in Mövenpick Hotel slogan (see Figure 1 above) “**dif ’ l- ḍiyāfa wa raw’at l-iqāma amām Al- Ḥarām l-ššarīf.**” (Hospitality and comfort opposite the Al-Masjid Al-Ḥarām.) which can be considered a complete verbless sentence and is even emphasized by the use of the full stop at the end.

Considering sentence structure, both nominal and verbal sentences are used in many of the ads. It should be noted that usually nominal sentences are used in slogans such as those in Figures 1 and 4 above. It is also worth noting that when verbal structures are used, there is a tendency to reverse the order of the sentence for an emphasis effect. According to Pimentel (2000), this is a predominant feature of Arabic language advertising in general where SVO is preferred over the standard VSO. This tendency is clear in Figure 3 above where the verbal text starts with the prepositional phrase “**ma’a bāqat l-ḥağ wi l-’umra**” (With the Hajj and Umrah package) instead of the verb “**itaṣil**” (Call). This reverse structure attracts the attention of the target consumers immediately because it places the phrase “**Hajj and Umrah**” in the first line and thus conveying the message that this package is especially provided for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims. Moreover, using simple sentences seems to be another feature that characterizes most of the advertisements with the only exception being the complex sentence in the government billboard ad in Figure 2 above. The declarative structures are also preferred over the imperative ones in which only three imperative structures are used in the whole dataset, i.e. “**kun sbbaqan**” (Be the first) (see Figure 11).



Figure 11. Zamzam Charity Billboard.

Regarding sentence type, declarative sentences which convey information about the services they promote are the type most used. Imperative sentences, on the other hand, are only used in two ads with the imperative verbs “**ihḍar**” (Be aware of) in Figure 2 and “**itaṣil**” (Call) in Figure 3 above. Unlike everyday language, imperative verb use in advertising does not function as a command. Instead, they appeal to the emotions by evoking a sense of personal relationship between copywriters and consumers (Giordano, 2000).

Moving on to the semantic analysis of the dataset, both persuasive and informative functions are employed in the advertising language used for Muslim pilgrims. On the one hand, many adjectives are used to attract consumers’ attention and persuade them to act in favor of the product/service. Figure 12, for example, uses the adjectives “**filfil aḥḍar ḥaqiqi**” (real green chili) to entice spicy food lovers on the go. One must remember that some pilgrims speak fluent Arabic while for others it is the image that tells it all.



Figure 12. Indomi Noodles Billboard.

Regarding images of speech, only one metaphor is found (see Figure 5 above) where the Makkah Clock Royal Tower – Fairmont Hotel is described as a beacon. This association is evident in the height of the tower which is clearly presented in the figure; the conveyed meaning is expressed by an interaction between the verbal text and the visual image. Finally, the language chosen in all the ads is based on simple and direct words. It would appear that copywriters are motivated by the diverse sociocultural backgrounds of the consumers using this particular highway in addition to adhering to advertising protocol (Taylor et al., 2006).

Finally, the analysis also helped answer the second research question as it was very apparent

that many of the copywriters who made ads for this specific highway were aware of the sociocultural norms and values of the Muslim pilgrim consumer. Many of them apparently understood what is required for successful advertising targeted towards this specific consumer and it showed in the characteristics of these ads: (1) use of the English and Arabic languages in one ad either via transliterating or translation; (2) use of English as the lingua franca of choice; (3) absence of rhetorical devices; (4) use of Modern Standard Arabic in the absence of any dialectal expressions; (5) use of Arabic numerals; (6) absence of intertextuality; (7) preference of SVO over VSO in Arabic ads; (8) preference of declarative sentences; (9) employment of persuasive and informative functions; and (10) use of simple and direct words/phrases.

Conclusion:

This study has analyzed the linguistic landscape of Saudi billboards located in the Western Region of Saudi Arabia on the Jeddah-Makkah Highway from a linguistic marketing perspective focusing specifically on the Muslim pilgrim consumer. The study investigated the interaction between linguistic and non-linguistic features at the following levels: graphic, graphological/phonological, lexical, grammatical, and sematic. The findings of this study confirm the fact that advertisements are a reflection of the societal values and cultural norms in which they occur as the advertising companies in this country, for this specific highway most of the time really do understand how to gain their potential consumers' attention. So, based on the analysis of the five linguistic levels above, a few recommendations that can help create better and more effective highway billboard ads for Muslim pilgrims can be put forward. These recommendations came about as a result of the billboards' design violations that some of the advertising companies were making; not gearing ads towards the linguistic competence and sociocultural backgrounds of the target consumer or not adhering to outdoor advertising protocol. Among them are: (1) incorporating an English transliteration/translation within all Arabic ads; (2) compulsory use of Arabic numerals; and (3) the use of big font sized letters and high contrast colors.

As mentioned previously, this study is only mapping out the terrain and further research is needed. For example, researchers can conduct a longitudinal study to investigate the effectiveness of billboards on potential consumers on this particular stretch of highway throughout one calendar year. Another research idea would be to identify the characteristics of Saudi billboard advertising in other regions of this country especially one similar to the one studied (e.g., the Medina Highway which targets practically the same consumers). Further studies can also consider the use of focus groups and surveys to look deeper into the effect these ads have on their potential audience. On a final note, billboard advertising is a significant type of marketing that should be given high importance especially in high traffic areas such as the one used in this study as it can make or break the marketing goal it was designed for.

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ردمك (النشر الإلكتروني): ٧٤٧٢ - ١٦٥٢

ردمك: ٧١٨٩ - ١٦٥٢

مُجَلَّةُ جَامِعَةِ الْبَاحَةِ

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