

Analysis of Language of Public and Private Sector Billboards in Rural Rajasthan

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Abstract: Billboards are an ancient informatory tool of our businesses. A billboard is a large outdoor board for displaying advertisements or information about the product/service. The study has focused on Billboards from various industries - furniture manufacturing industry, services industry, tourism industry, banking industry have been studied. Language of these billboards has been analyzed and then it is seen what characteristics have affected the usage of language of the billboards.

Key Words: Advertisements, Advertising Strategies, Public sector of India, Private sector of India , Modern usage of languages, Hinglish, Billboards, Signboards, Hoardings, Hindi, English.

1. INTRODUCTION: Components of a Billboard

A billboard is a large outdoor advertising structure. It usually has two components - Images and language. Focus of the authors for this study is language, usage of images can be further scope of study. Management scholars have been exploring the innovations in language usage in all types of business communication as it establishes the rapport between the organization and prospective customer. Y. P. Prasoon in his book on business communication, writes, "The benefit which can be realized from using language more effectively come from recognizing the role it plays in communicating with customers."

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- Do the advertisers convey the message of manufacturers to the mass viewer appropriately?
- Does change in usage of different languages and scripts help in conveying the message better to the product/service users?
- Are different linguistic approaches, industry specific in private and public sector?
- What are main characteristics affecting the language of these billboards?

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study proposes to analyze the language used in hoardings, billboards etc. which are carriers of message from the manufacturer to the customer. The study is exploratory by nature. It is based on primary data collected by clicking photographs of billboards in the state of Rajasthan. The data has been categorized and qualitatively analyzed to check if different linguistic approaches used by advertisers make any difference on viewership of the billboards and on sales of the advertised product or service. By analyzing the data a list of characteristics affecting linguistic approach of modern advertisers is obtained.

4. BILLBOARD AND ITS COMPONENTS:

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5. ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR IN INDIA:

Public Sector was the main player of economic growth when India got independence. All the major businesses were in the hands of Government, especially heavy industries like oil, steel and also necessary services like water, electricity etc. This sector has helped in economic growth and stability in India since then by generating employment opportunities, research and development etc. A balanced development of all the regions could be observed under this dominance of public sector because it does not work for merely profits nor is it charitable, in stead it is striving towards making India a self-dependent economy. Major plants to be mentioned in this context are Steel plants, fertilizer factories, Machine Tool plants etc.

6. ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN INDIA :

Indian private sector has played a great role in increased GDP and economic growth in India. It was only after few years of independence that private sector showed its participation in major economic public sectors. If given correct direction this private sector can create a lot of employment opportunities for Indian youth and hence can help in eradicating poverty from the country. Though growth of private sector has seen new horizons of innovative entrepreneurship but it is to be kept in mind that the journey from innovative entrepreneurship to a successful business is not an easy task. Lack of finance, lack of required skills for the job, lack of efficiency and proficiency of professional language and communication are the factors which affect their profits. Even when designing a billboard or while approving the design of a billboard, gauge used in the body message is important. The study focuses on a few skills demonstrated in the use of language in billboards.

7. BILLBOARDS AS AN IMPORTANT MEANS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION:

According to Matthew T. Zakaria, "Business Communication is communication used to promote a product, service or organization." According to this definition billboard is surely an important means of business communication. Language of a billboard is a special channel of this communication; hence all the theories related to communication apply on the messages conveyed through billboards. Simplest model of communication is:

Sender → Message → Receiver

For the purpose of this study the authors have taken up the communication through billboards. Sender in this means of business communication is the seller (or advertiser working for the manufacturing/selling bodies) and receivers are all viewers, who can be converted into a prospective customer after decoding the message of the seller. Focus of this study is the message and language of the message which is being studied from the point of view of a linguist. Matthew T Zakaria opines that "It is a fact that image and appearance play important role in business success."

8. LANGUAGE IN PROMOTIONAL TEXTS OF PUBLIC SECTOR INDUSTRIES: A LINGUIST'S ANALYSIS:

8.1 Indian Tourism – Public Sector



Public sector (Rajasthan Tourism) avoids using blend of the two languages in one message unnecessarily, uses pure Hindi most of the time but exceptions like Beti Bachao messages are also seen in the state. And the same policy is swayed away when the message is to be decoded by rural population who are not interested in reading and understanding sanskritized Hindi, instead they would like to be called modern by using English terminology in their intellectual talks with peers and colleagues.

8.2 Spiritual Billboards



Spiritual promotional texts are seen in pure Hindi most of the times.

8.3 Services Industry Billboards



Language at the point of sales in a Marriage garden

8.4 Services industry uses blend of languages



Billboards of Furniture Manufacturers/Traders



Private Banks



Banks prefer using people friendly and easy to understand messages

8.5 Public and Private sector billboards at a glance



Banking, education and medical industries together in one click.

9. CHARACTERISTICS AFFECTING LINGUISTIC APPROACH OF MODERN ADVERTISERS: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR:

Communication through billboards is non-personal; it is directed towards a mass audience but meant for each and every reader individually as in the case of personal selling. Characteristics of these individuals directly affect the language used in the billboards. The author has tried to enlist a few here:

- Type of industry: Medical industry cannot avoid the use of English terminology as most of the terminology of medical products and services is in the language English, but when it is written on a billboard for a rural viewer, It is written in Hindi script- Hospital is converted into हॉस्पिटल or x-ray has been converted into एक्सरे. Education industry sticks to the use of same language and same script.
- Quality of viewers of the message : Customers of public and private sectors are divided into two types of customers : Rural and Urban customers. For rural viewer, the script is Indian while the language is English. Use of Hinglish is also very common in rural billboards.
- Location : If a billboard is placed in deep rural areas, then it is seen that local script and languages are used.in cities, use of English is common.
- Quality of the author of the message : If the author of the message has good knowledge of the language he uses in the billboard, then the messages are displayed correctly as far as grammar is concerned. But if the author is illiterate or less educated, then language of the billboards is affected badly. In public sector such grammatical mistakes are found less because there is a sealing of minimum qualification for government jobs , but in private sector billboards, such errors are commonly seen .
- Quality of the painter/artist who prepares the billboards: It is a difficult. expensive and time consuming process to correct the language of a billboard. Hence if the painter or artist commits a mistake in writing the message because of his/her lack of knowledge, then it is at times shown on the board as it is. In such cases , the author might have written it correctly but the painter's mistake spoils the language of the billboard.

10. CONTRIBUTION:

The study is useful for the advertisers as it identifies the language better understood by the customer or viewer of their messages. Further scope of the study can be to explore linguistic approaches of various industries separately so that each and every advertiser is guided for language to be used in the message coded for the receiver in this mode of mass communication.

11. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Scope of study is not all the industries of India; the data has been collected as per the convenience of researchers. Whatever billboards could be photographed and analyzed, do not cover all industries of India but a serious effort has been made to analyze both the sectors- public and private with this limitation too. Further scope of the study can be a linguist's analysis of language used in promotional texts of Private Sector Industries.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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