

Lilit MOVSESYAN
Julia AVETISYAN
Brusov State University

A JOINT LINGUISTIC-MARKETING ANALYSIS OF ARMENIAN BRAND AND PRODUCT NAMES

The present paper discusses the role of linguistics in marketing while communicating the brand story framed as a marketing content. Since the very primary origination of marketing, linguistics has taken a hand-in-hand approach with marketing leading to pre-defined gains of its strategic objectives. The paper attempts to display branding in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind, to showcase the heavy reliance of branding on language with its implicitly strategic influence on the customer's perception, memory, attitudes and behaviour. In today's global markets, in which companies seek to reach geographically and culturally distant groups of consumers, brand-naming processes require even greater attention than in the past.

Key words: *marketing, linguistics, Armenian brands, Armenian products, naming strategies, language features, pragmatics, pragmatic value, neuromarketing*

In the 21st century there is no way to underestimate the role of advertisement in nearly all the spheres of any possible industry. Advertising as a means of communication informs the prospective customer about products or services in a visually or verbally attractive way and helps them make an informed decision. Advertising uses persuasive techniques to explain to potential customers what is best for them. As the advertising message is usually limited by space and time, it is very important for advertisers to use effective language to attract their target audiences and make them react to the advertisement in a positive way, as *language has a powerful influence over people and their behaviour* /Kannan, Tyagi, 2013: 3/.

It is certain that branding itself is an effective advertisement creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers' mind. A brand image is not stable and must be maintained and reinforced over the years through the exploitation of different tools. Some companies deliberately choose not to communicate their identity at all as a precise and distinguishing marketing choice /Rossiter, Percy 1998: 518/. It is obvious that a product is built by the company while the brand is either successfully built or completely destroyed by the consumers. And it is *the power of communication that builds a brand*.

The marketing literature has recognized that the linguistic nature of a brand has tendencies of international markets /Cotticelli-Kurras, 2012: 14/. According to

Tufi and Blackwood /2010: 204/, the transnational status and cultural boundaries sometimes enable advertisers to rely on a common set of cultural models, of behaviours, of aspirations and of aesthetic and individualistic values /Tufi, Blackwood, 2010: 204/.

Usunier and Shaner, professors of marketing, offer a framework to evaluate the linguistic value of a global brand based on three categories which are *name*, *visual imagery*, *textual identity* /Usunier, Shaner, 2002: 211/. They also highlight the related linguistic characteristics, among them specifying *spelling*, *ethnic meanings*, *name*, *visual*, *denotative*, *connotative*, and *rhetorical values*.

Similarly, brand and PR communication specialists Miller and Toman /2016: 474-493/ have studied the relation between linguistic devices in slogans and their effectiveness in eliciting favourable responses from consumers. Among others, *alliterations*, *initial plosives*, *word-phrase repetition*, *puns*, and *well-known phrases* turned out to be the most common /Miller, Toman, 2016: 474-493/.

While discussing the key components and tools in brand communication and marketing usually *brand name*, *logo* and *motto* are specifically highlighted. Generally, a *brand name* is the part of a brand that can be articulated and reproduced working as a mind marker and identifier for what it offers to customers /Kotler, Bliemel, 2001: 171/.

Marketing and brand management specialist T. Lowrey has explored consumers' responses to brand names. He specifically looked at the relation between the presence of particular linguistic features in brand names and memorability. His exploration showed that for the most part, the memory advantage for the linguistic categories occurred only when brands were less familiar. Semantic appositeness, paronomasia, and initial plosives to affect memorability positively were found /Lowrey, 2003: 7-14/.

A brand name is seen as a designation unit that is difficult to categorize – being a hybrid between a proper and common noun – and that can access the common lexicon just like neologisms would do /Altmanova, 2013: 35/.

According to C. Kurras, brand associations are labelled as *attributes* – which are all the brand characteristics related or not to a product, *benefits* – the advantages gained, and the *attitudes* – customers' impressions and feelings /Cotticelli-Kurras, 2012: 27/.

Hundreds of companies assume that building a brand is more of an art than a science. Brand manager and marketing specialist G. Diehl suggests that human beings make decisions based not on the reality of things, but on the stories that fill their heads about how things are /Դիլ, 2019: 124/.

However, recent studies show that the best companies use a combination of both strategies to make decisions that appeal to the customers on both emotional and logical levels. This takes us to the extension to the scope of our study with the

focus placed on neuromarketing as an emerging interdisciplinary field, situated at the borderline between neuroscience, psychology, and marketing. Neuroscience is much about the behaviour of the brain, while *neuromarketing explores how companies can adapt their brand awareness strategies to influence customers on a psychological level*. When one considers how much work marketing specialists put into influencing the human brain, approaching branding from a scientific perspective makes sense:

1. 90% of buying decisions are made subconsciously.
2. Human beings process visuals 60,000 times faster than text.
3. Up to 70% of the time, marketers struggle to get customer attention (both offline and online) /Vlăsceanu, 2014: 753/.

The findings of our study come to confirm that language truly cooperates with marketing making boosting a product or a service an easy task to complete. Linguistics helps to build a strong identity via product name and brand slogan or motto, and besides, the logo comes to support what language has already established. Brand positioning and recognition are done with linguistics because it is mainly the language usage which contributes to brand recognition.

We have already discussed that the central purpose of branding is to guide the consumer to choose the product among the dizzying array of alternatives. The brand name is used every time the company is referred to, so it should not be constructed merely as a device which grabs attention, but as a vital part of the positioning process contributing to the brand difference from its competitors and to its value proposition offered to consumers. The most important for a brand name is the impression it creates while being listened to or pronounced. To become really distinctive takes lots of time and strong marketing efforts, but having a catchy name is a solid starting point.

The study of Armenian brand and product names with linguo-marketing perspectives reveals those strategic ways those brand names are set with falling into different classifications:

Per communicative value

- DESCRIPTIVE names that directly communicate what makes the brand/product unique.
Examples:
Light Affect (Clothes Store)
Elegant Store (Clothes for elegant consumers)
- DIRECTIVE names which command the target audience to do something, i.e. calling to action.

Examples:

Color Me (Armenian Cosmetics)

Go Travel (Armenian Travel Agency)

DareToWear (Armenian Fashion Brand)

- EXPRESSIVE names that cite the psychological state for the consumer to experience with the brand/product.

Examples:

Grand Candy – having great quality

Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts – experiencing a beautiful life which seems to approach perfection

Scrubella (Store selling scrubs) – getting beautiful with the scrub

BoomBest (Energy Drink) – feeling awesome with the drink

- PROMISSORY names that communicate a promise to the consumer.

Examples:

Garun (Restaurant) – spring mood and environment

Greenhouse (Lounge) – healthy and clean eating

Per language features

- NEOLOGISMS – new brand names are created by respelling or combining existing words.

Examples:

Beeline (Telecommunication company), “bee” + “line” (supported on the logo)

Picsart (Armenian Photo/Video Editor), “pic” / picture/ + “art”

AltaCode (Software development company), ‘alta’ + ‘code’

EliteBus (Bus rental agency), “elite” + “bus”

Scrubella (Store selling scrubs), “scrub” + “bella” (meaning ‘beautiful’ in Italian)

BoomBest (Energy Drink), “boom” + “best”

UCom (Telecommunication company), “universal” (u) + ‘communication’ (com)

Arigato (Fashion design), “Ariga” (Ariga) + “Torosyan” (To) (the founder’s name and surname)

Andriaveti (an Italian brand with Armenian roots), “Andreasyan” (Andri) + “Avetisyan” (Aveti)

- LATINATE names – these are created from the Latin translation of core words that relate to the brand.

Examples:

Aquatek (Swimming pool complex), from the Latin word “aqua” (a shade of water) and “tek” (tech)

Decora (Furniture manufacturer and materials), from the Latin word “decorare”

- RHYMING names – these names suggest much fun to utter. These name are much easy to recall.

Examples:

NoteMote (Armenian souvenir store)

Armi-Marti (Clothing store)

Gourmet Dourme (Chocolate house)

- ACRONYMS – these are most effective when arranged in a way to communicate a message.

Examples:

SAS Group – Sargsyan Artak Samvel (Supermarket chain)

Z.G.EST. – Zero Gravity Established (Fashion design)

- ABBREVIATIONS – these names are widely applied in brand naming to save space and time

Examples:

MBG Hospitality – Margaryan Business Group (Restaurant chain)

STM – STepanyan Mary (Fashion brand)

UATE Union – Union of Advanced Technology Enterprises (Non-governmental organization)

Abbreviations are much found in bank names:

BB – Byblos Bank

CBA – Central Bank of Armenia

ACAB – Acba Credit Agricole Bank

ABB – Arm Business Bank

Per other criteria

- VISUAL names that evoke an image we associate with certain characteristics.

Examples:

Shen (Holding) – standing for the *stable* structure

Pregomesh (Jewelry store, jewel brand) – an animal representing the human as *strong, honest, who never gives up*

Brabion (Flowers) – a very *spiritual* person who often relies on intuition for decision making

Burmunk (Store) – scent, aroma (selling perfume)

Naghash (Wine Design) – something artistic, aesthetically pleasing (a combination of art and wine)

- GEOGRAPHICAL names which associate a brand with its spatial origin or the characteristics of a region:

Examples:

Jermuk (Armenian mineral water)

Ashtarakats (Restaurant and winery)

2nd Floor (Café and Restaurant)

Ararat (Brandy)

- FOUNDER names can communicate heritage and history. The way they are used in the Armenian market much intends to bring its founder into highlight. These names are among the frequently observed cases.

Examples:

Legal and consulting firms: Nersessian Law Firm, Ghulyan and Partners, Nahapet & Co., Davit & Partners, Knyazyan & Partners, Grigoryan & Partners, Madatyán Psychological Center

Fashion brands: Faina, Aram Nikolyan, Shatveryan, Shadoyan, Anahit Simonyan, Matevossian, Tateossian, STM Meri Stepanyan

- FUNNY names help get brands stand out in an interestingly memorable way.

Examples:

Chir (Gourmet boutique)

Koriz (Advertising agency)

To mention that, according to *MartinRoll.com*, there is a classification which is devoted to the brand names starting with B, D, K, P, and T; this type is called PLOSIVE names. They are mainly used to achieve higher recall rates by using letters that “pop” when spoken. Some examples from Armenian brand plosive names are *ProDigi* (Advertising agency), *Kilikia* (Alcoholic beverages), *Kivera Naynomis* (Fashion brand).

Our next observation refers to the type of UNCOMMON FIRST-LETTER names that make it more difficult to confuse the brand name with its competitors because they begin with some of the least frequently used letters in the alphabet. The five least common letters for a brand name, to begin with, are X, Z, Y, Q, and K. One of the obvious examples for this type is *Zara* Spanish fast-fashion retail conglomerate, also having its branches in Armenia. Other examples are Armenian brands *ZigZag* Store chain and *Zatik* Cakes.

In addition to the already discussed criteria, we have observed cases with THERONYM as a brand naming strategy to derive it from the name of an animal which implicitly suggests the inherent quality (characteristics) of the offered product or service, for instance, *Pregomesh* (animal representing the human that is strong, honest, and never gives up), *Kovik* (small cow), *Pantera Security*.

Sometimes common, general names do not sound catchy from the marketing objectives and the strategic gap is filled through MIMETICS, i.e. an alternative spelling. It comprises changing one or two letters in a word (or phrase) so that it is visually different, but sounds the same when pronounced.

For example, the name *Braind* (Branding agency) is created in a way that it is difficult to say whether the core element here is *brain* or *brand* (or maybe both). And apparently this is done on purpose to render the offered services in branding as brainy activities.

ColorEat (Fruit jam collection) is another good example to showcase. *ColorEat* is a DIRECTIVE name calling the customer to color and then eat' it. At the same time this is pronounced like the word *ColorIt* with the command to “color it”. Moreover, this name resembles the word “colorita”, from the Italian word “colorito”, in Latin 'color' (color), makes the concept of the product (traditional Armenian fruit jam) more coherent with the name.

It is undeniable that by engaging with culture more directly, brands can become a part of that culture, with deepening their relevance and connection with their customers. It is far known that each culture represents different backgrounds, therefore this may affect the brand names of the exact country as well. In recent years it has become rather popular to promote Armenian culture through brand naming. Armenian culture is especially represented by Armenian restaurants as most of them have names that characterize something typically Armenian, i.e. CULTURE SPECIFIC names, for instance, *Lavash*, *Sherep*, *Kuj*, *Kchuch*, *Losh*, *Kamancha*, *Chinar*, *Vostan*, *Tsirani*. Here the brand creator intends to strengthen the connection between the costumers and the brand by reminding the locals about their historical-cultural background and presenting it to tourists.

When scrutinizing the local market of Armenian brands, we come to see that most of them are named after the founder. This is pretty easy technique to name a brand without much pragmatic considerations (*Nikolyan*, *Faina*, *Tarakhchyan*, *Anahit Simonyan*, *Zaqaryan Jeans*, *Nshanyan*, *Nelly Serobyanyan*, *Vahan Khachatryan*, *Lilit Margaryan*, *Kyokchyan*, *Karapetyan's Jewelry*, *Kara Silver*, *Vantsyan Shoes*, *Shadoyan Fashion*).

One more thing to discuss here is our observation on the Armenian brand names with their CLASSIC orthography. Specifically, where a stressed vowel [e] is uttered at the end of the word, the Armenian word carries the letter “Է” (classical spelling, Western Armenian), instead of “ե” (modern spelling, Eastern Armenian). Among the Armenian brands there is a fascinating differentiation for the brand names which end with “EH” / “E” (Armenian letter “Է” (meaning; *essence*, *being*, *life*), “Էh”). Utilizing the classic spelling in the modern context, the brand name strategists seek to highlight the preservation of the Armenian cultural ethnicity.

Among such names are “Gineh” (ԳինԷհ), Maneh (ՄանԷհ) Blog, RUZANĒ (ՌուզանԷ), Tsirane (ՇիրանԷ), Luse (ԼուսԷ) ArtRoom.

It can be concluded that the brand naming field is rather hard and challenging, and the brand naming process is one of the most critical parts of the brand-building strategy. Without a memorable name, it is almost impossible for a company to attract the attention of its target audience. Brand name criteria may vary. Some companies prefer a name that will sound attractive, while others might decide to put stress onto its meaningful and symbolic content. It may also depend on the cultural background of the brand naming consultant. A name interesting and popular in one country might sound rather dull and hard-to-pronounce in the other one. Our study suggests creating a brand name that will both sound good, be catchy to the representatives of different cultures, and still communicate a positive message through the symbolic content. And for the success of the strategic objectives, one should hire *a linguist to do marketing. As linguistics can offer marketing.*

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Լ. ՄՈՎՍԵՍՅԱՆ, Զ. ԱՎԵՏԻՍՅԱՆ – Հայաստանյան բրենդների և ապրանքների անվանումների լեզվամարքեթինգային վերլուծություն. – Սույն հոդվածում ներկայացվում է լեզվաբանության դերը մարքեթինգային տեքստերի հաղորդակցական համատեքստում: Մարքեթինգի սկզբնավորումից ի վեր լեզվաբանությունն ու մարքեթինգը գործել են ձեռք ձեռքի տված՝ ի նպաստ նախապես մշակված մարքեթինգային ռազմավարական նպատակների իրականացմանը: Հոդվածում քննարկվում է բրենդինգի գործոնը հաճախորդի ենթագիտակցության մեջ առաջարկվող ապրանքի տարբերվող և տպավորվող պատկերի ձևավորման մեջ: Աշխատանքի նպատակն է օրինակներով հիմնավորել բրենդինգում լեզվի ներակա ռազմավարական կարևորությունն ու ազդեցությունը հաճախորդի ընկալման, հիշողության, վերաբերմունքի և վարքագծի վրա: Ներկայիս ժամանակաշրջանում, երբ կազմակերպությունները փորձում են դիրքավորվել տարածքային և մշակութային համեմատաբար մեծ շուկաներում, բրենդի անվանման գործընթացն առավել է կարևորվում, քան երբևիցե:

Բանալի բառեր. մարքեթինգ, լեզվաբանություն, հայաստանյան բրենդներ, հայաստանյան ապրանքներ, անվանման ռազմավարական միջոցներ, լեզվական հատկանիշներ, գործաբանություն, գործաբանական արժեք, կյարդամարքեթինգ

Լ. МОВСЕСЯН, ДЖ. АВЕТИСЯН – Лингво-маркетинговый анализ наименований армянских брендов и продукции. – В статье обсуждается роль лингвистики в маркетинге, а также рассматривается стратегия представления и продвижения бренда в виде маркетингового контента. Следовательно, язык играет центральную роль в достижении стратегических маркетинговых целей. В статье делается попытка показать брендинг при создании уникального имени и образа продукта в сознании потребителей, чтобы продемонстрировать сильную зависимость брендинга от языка с его косвенно стратегическим влиянием на восприятие, память, отношения и поведение клиента. На сегодняшних глобальных рынках, охватывающих географически и культурно разнообразные группы потребителей, процессы наименования брендов требуют еще большего внимания, чем когда-либо.

Ключевые слова: маркетинг, лингвистика, армянские бренды, армянские продукты, стратегические способы наименования, языковые особенности, прагматика, прагматическая ценность, нейромаркетинг

Ներկայացվել է՝ 8.06.2020
Երաշխավորվել է ԲԴՀ Լեզվաբանության և հաղորդակցման
տեսության ամբիոնի կողմից
Ընդունվել է տպագրության՝ 19.06.2020