

“Utterly Butterly”: Language and Culture in Indian Advertisements

Advertising and marketing are often evaluated according to negative assumptions regarding consumerism and capitalism. The debate on advertising in post-colonial India has often focused on the dichotomy of “global consumerism and postcolonial nationalistic patriotism”,¹ often defining Indian advertisements as emulations of British advertising traditions or postcolonial mimicry, which is understood as “antagonism, irony, and alterity in emulation”.² The general assumption regarding advertising is that it is a necessary evil – the consumer needs it to be informed but the producer needs it for business and profit. Numerous studies on advertising text types in different post-colonial countries have called for a consideration of the following questions: What is the advertisement trying to sell the hapless consumer? What is the argument in the visuals? How is the caption appealing to the emotions, attitude and demographics of the target audience? Nevertheless, the aesthetics, the creativity and persuasive language of advertisements make them an extremely appealing and attractive genre to study. Yet Lynne Ciochetto, in “Advertising and Globalization in India”, observes that “[a]dvertising lies at the juncture where culture and the economy interact: its primary purpose is to sell products and services by stimulating purchasing behavior and it does this by using strategies that rework culture, creating aspirations and new desires for products”.³ Therefore, apart from its transactional and trading elements, advertising is also an important element of popular culture and figures prominently in TV series and movies. (Apart from the extremely popular American series, *Mad Men*, Victoria Leigh Miller, recipient of the 2011 Yahoo Contributor Award for Entertainment and Y!CA Contributor of the Year 2012, has compiled a list of TV series and movies that features ad agencies: *Bosom Buddies* [1980-1982], *Bewitched* [1964-1972], *Kramer vs. Kramer* [1979], *Melrose Place* [1992-1999], *Who’s The Boss* [1984- 1992], *Mr. Mom* [1983], *Don Rickles Show* [1972], *On Our Own* [1977], *What Women Want* [2000], and *Full House* [1987-1995].)⁴ Advertising provides a glimpse not only into contemporary times and cultural practices, but represents and commodifies the values that people hold important, their desires, expectations, disappointments, and social roles. The aim of the article is to map advertisements in post-colonial India through a consideration of the cultural diversity of the country, the demands of the advertising agencies, and the language used in these which is a mixture of the English language and regional languages.

The history of Indian advertising may be seen as “an enquiry into how many of the cultural symbols that we now see as ‘Indian’ came about”.⁵ The history of professional advertising in India initially followed the trends in Britain. As outlined by Anand Halve, co-founder and Director of Chlorophyll Brand and Communications Consultancy (Mumbai, India) and Anita Sarkar in *Adkatha: The Story Of Indian Advertising*,⁶ when

¹ Manu Madan, “It’s not just Cricket! World Series Cricket: Race, Nation, and Diasporic Indian Identity”, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 24.1 (2000), 24-35.

² Rohit Varma, Juilen Cayla and S. Hari, “Mimicry and Postcolonial Advertising” (Abstract), *Advances in Consumer Research - European Conference Proceedings*, 9 (2011), 544-544.

³ Lynne Ciochetto, “Advertising and Globalization in India”, *SASNET (Swedish South Asian Studies Network)*, 14 (June 2004), 1, <http://www.sasnet.lu.c/EASASpapers/7LynneCiochetto.pdf>, 30 October 2013.

⁴ Victoria Leigh Miller, “Ad Men: 10 Movies and TV Shows About Advertising Agencies”, *Yahoo Voices*, July 8, 2011 <http://voices.yahoo.com/ad-men-10-movies-tv-shows-advertising-agencies-8761689.html?cat=2>, 30 November 2013.

⁵ Ajit Balakrishnan, “Utterly Butterly Indian Ads”, *Business Standard*, May 3, 2012, http://www.business-standard.com/article/opinion/ajit-balakrishnan-utterly-butterly-indian-ads-112050300069_1.html, 30 November 2013.

B. Duttaram set up his agency in Mumbai in 1905, it clearly targeted Anglo-Indian society. As Halve and Sarkar observe, the advertisements in the 1930s and 1940s “often had a quaintly British, almost Wodehousian, flavor – surprisingly, because the medium catered largely to the Indian elites, who took their cues from the British. The ads were therefore often filled with contemporary English slang and Latin quotations”.⁷ An example of this is the Horlicks The Original Malted milk ad.

Some exceptions did exist, as in the case of Larry Stronach, a commercial artist in the Mumbai office of Alliance Advertising, set up to serve the British India Corporation after the end of World War I, who wanted to gain a better understanding of the Indian market did exist.⁸ Stronach took a year off, and “buying himself a specially designed Standard Saloon car to negotiate the rough roads, he drove 7,500 miles from Peshwar [in modern-day Pakistan] to Tuticorin [also known as Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu, India], and from Quetta [capital of Balochistan province in Pakistan] to Kolkata”.⁹ This was the first market research study ever done in India.

Yet, shortly after advertising began in India, it reflected the “preferences and aspirations of the Indian society as opposed to the Anglo-Indian society”.¹⁰ Today, as Ciochetto has found, “[t]he National Council for Applied Economic Research has identified the ‘very rich and consuming classes’ in India as part of an international class with similar lifestyles and consumption habits. This group is educated, travels, owns houses, cars, consumer appliances, and in India has household helps. Advertising in certain media, especially magazines, is likely to target this group”.¹¹ With the opening of the Indian economy in the 1990s through liberalization, foreign multinationals have realized the huge potential market of India.¹² Leela Fernandes argues that “[a]dvertising and media images have contributed to the creation of an image of a ‘new’ Indian middle class, one that has left behind its dependence on austerity and state protection and has embraced an open India that is at ease with broader processes of globalization”.¹³

Companies usually apply local ideas to global products since there is a basic difference between the consumer profiles of India and the West, “[t]he Indian



Fig 1. J. Walter Thomson, *Horlicks The Original Malted Milk*, Print, *The Times of India Annual*, 1930, in the public domain.

⁶ Anand Halve and Anita Sarkar, *Adkatba: the Story of Indian Advertising* (Goa: Centrum Charitable Trust, 2011).

⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁸ Halve and Sarkar, *Adkatba*, 39 and 41.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

¹⁰ Arun Chauduri, *Indian Advertising: 1780 to 1950* (New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill, 2007).

¹¹ Ciochetto, “Advertising and Globalization”, 7.

¹² Indian advertising has gained international recognition. The Gunn Report for Media (<http://www.gunnreport.com/>), the global evaluation of creativity in media agencies launched in 2004 shows that India ranked at No. 3 in Country of the Year with 181 points and was preceded by the United States and the United Kingdom. The previous year, India was ranked at number five. The Gunn Report is based in London and combines the winners’ lists from all of the world’s most important award contests.

¹³ Leela Fernandes, “Restructuring the New Middle Class in Liberalizing India”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 20.1-2 (2000), 90.

¹⁴ Ciochetto, *Advertising and Globalization in India*, 3.

¹⁵ Fernandes, "Restructuring the New Middle Class in Liberalizing India", 8.

¹⁶ "McDonald's Happy Price Menu", 2004, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvjK5FJJjrQ>, McDonald's Corporation, 17 November 2013.

¹⁷ Salikoko Mufwene, *Language Evolution: Contact, Competition and Change* (London: Continuum, 2008), 210 and 240.

¹⁸ William M. O'Barr, "Advertising in India", *Advertising and Society Review*, 9.3 (2008), 7.

¹⁹ See "Paisa Vasool" (2005), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8qjtADutfNc>, 20 July 2014; and "Arranged Marriage" (2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OqWhBD-TLFE>, 17 November 2013.

²⁰ O'Barr, "Advertising in India", 8.

²¹ Nike World Cup Cricket Campaign (2007), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvJPTbFssZo>, 17 November 2013.

²² William Mazzarella, *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 4.

²³ "Arjuna the Archer", 2008, Sulekha.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ppxQdNuejY>, 17 November 2013.

consumer profile differs from profiles in the West, being very needs driven".¹⁴ Thus, a key challenge "for foreign markets in India has been called 'decommodification', changing the pattern of consumer buying from traditional unbranded products to branded products".¹⁵ By way of example, McDonald's Happy Price Menu' ads feature past actors of the Hindi film industry to show the low prices of the menu and a girl agreeing to see a prospective groom while getting lost in the burger.¹⁶

As noted by Salikoko Mufwene, McDonald's ads countervene common assumptions about the globalization of English, by employing local varieties of English and vernaculars.¹⁷ William O'Barr reasons the success of McDonald's expansion in India as

(1) successfully adapting the menu to local culture and food preference, (2) respecting the feelings and taboos concerning certain meats as well as India's strong vegetarian tradition, (3) placing Indians in ownership and top management positions, (4) demonstrating its concern for environmental issues both in the restaurants and in the communities where restaurants are located, (5) participating in sport-related and educational programs in the communities, and (6) adhering to its global strategy of thinking globally, acting locally.¹⁸

McDonald's has successfully used language and certain cultural assumptions to create a brand that is welcoming, pocket-friendly, and innovative. Some examples include the 'paisa vasool' idea of getting the most for the money spent, and love in arranged marriage.¹⁹

A similar example is the Nike ad by J.W. Thomson that features a group of boys playing cricket on top of buses and rooftops when traffic grinds to a standstill. William M. O'Barr in "Advertising in India" corroborates that "Nike, which had never targeted the cricket market previously ... [made] a commercial for the 2007 Cricket World Cup".²⁰ The ad features two Indian cricketers, Zaheer Khan and S. Sreesnath as onlookers.²¹ Cricket, despite being a remnant from the British colonizers, has been successfully appropriated by independent India. Cricket, especially, is a part of growing up for most boys, irrespective of locations, cultures, religions, and financial standing.

Thus advertisements in India reflect the changes that the country has gone through. William Mazzarella, in *Shoveling Smoke: Advertising and Globalization in Contemporary India*, notes: "As an academic interface of postcolonial capitalism the everyday practice of advertising constantly calls into question the conceptual alignments that ground business discourse: local and global, culture and capital, particular and universal, content and form".²² A brilliant example of the dilemma of post-colonial capitalism is the 2009 Famous House of Animation advertisement of the Indian version of Sulekha.com,²³ a website for online classifieds and Yellow Pages, similar to Craig's List but catering to the Indian diaspora community in the US and Canada as well the locals in India. The ad shows an ancient warrior whose chariot breaks down.

However, to complete the errand, he shoots an arrow in the sky, possibly hinting at an exchange through Sulekha.com, and gets himself a motorcycle instead to complete the errands of his beloved. He then buys numerous things for himself, his

beloved, and his family like furniture, jewelry, house, food, and even hires a priest to perform his wedding, the underlying idea being that Sulekha.com provided for everything. The protagonist looks like Arjun, one of the Pandavas in Mahabharata, an important Hindu epic, who was famous for his brilliant archery skills. The whole ad is an animation in a traditional Indian style with modern motifs.

The problem of diverse needs often leads to the solution of appealing to only a specific section of society and adding in the information required to understand the ad for the audience outside that particular section and language. This has been a problem since the early days of Indian advertising. As in the case of the founder of JWT, J. Walter Thomson, who arrived in India in 1929, the dilemma was, “the sheer complexity and size of the country, and the profusion of languages it had to work with”.²⁴ Peter Fielden, the head of JWT in India, recalled that they had a team of language copywriters covering every major language but they wondered how they could make sure that the translations were accurate. They set up a system whereby one person would translate the line into an Indian language and a different person would translate it in English, later checking both.²⁵

An example of this complexity is the *Times of India's* ad, “A Day in the Life of Chennai”, which is rooted in the regional sentiments, language and demography of the southern metropolitan city yet has managed to be a big hit with the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity, winning a Gold Lion in 2008.²⁶ The city is known for its movies, “for the state’s superstar chief Minister (Jayalalitha) and ... the Oscar-winning composer A. R. Rahman”.²⁷ Further, “from zero to hero – anything can happen in Chennai, throbbing, pulsating with energy. Local color, local idiom – all you need to do is catch the beat”.²⁸ So someone from Chennai will instantly understand the jokes and the references but there is enough information added in that someone from outside Chennai can also understand the advertisement. The advertisement caters to an international audience but often there are some inside references and jokes that only a certain section of the readers, usually from the Indian subcontinent, will understand.

A further problem that ad agencies face in India is how to appeal to a wide demographic because what is amusing in one part of the country may be completely offensive and stereotypical to the other. This can be traced back to colonialism when, as Boehmer asserts, “depending on context and imperial interest, certain categories of people or cultures were deemed to be closer to the European self than others”.²⁹ This hierarchy and othering has resulted in stereotypes corresponding to the geographical regions in the country. The MD and CEO of Futurebrands India Ltd., author of *Mother Pious Lady: Making Sense of Everyday India* and columnist of “City City Bang Bang” in *The Times of India*, Santosh Desai states that “[t]he great North-South debate rages” and the resulting stereotypes are often exploited to appeal to particular audiences. As Desai notes, “[t]he North thought of all of South India as Madrasis ... stereotyping their attire, accent and personality. All Madrasis were mild ... conservative and overly concerned with religion. The South thought of the North as a place full of crude hustlers, intent on loud display of material

²⁴ Halve and Sarkar, *Adkatha*, 45.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁶ Sentil Kumar, “A Day in the Life of Chennai”, 2008, *The Times of India*, JWT Chennai, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEU_qyiQmYQ, 15 November 2013.

²⁷ Halve and Sarkar, *Adkatha*, 187.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁹ Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 82.

³⁰ Santosh Desai, “The Great North-South Debate Rages”, *The Times of India*, 14 April 2008, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/The-great-North-South-debate-rages/articleshow/2949925.cms?referral=PM>, 3 December 2013.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ O’Barr, “Advertising in India”.

³⁴ “Fevicol – the Ultimate Adhesive” (2001), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RuGa0kqnVu0>, 15 November 2013.

³⁵ Halve and Sarkar, *Adkatha*, 157.

³⁶ Arpita Khare, “Impact of Indian Cultural Values and Lifestyles on Meaning of Branded Products: Study on University Students in India”, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 23 (2011), 370.

wealth, lacking refinement and culture”.³⁰ Desai further argues that the South has been described “as the lesser other – a strange being from another world, to be looked at with patronizing curiosity and to be referred to in broad brushstrokes of crude humor” because of the “stranglehold the North has had on national politics as well as national modes of popular representation (cinema and hence music)”.³¹ In fact the colors, noise, and chaos which is often associated with India is largely due to a North Indian construct where, “[t]he North Indian way of life, particularly that of the Punjabi persuasion is a pervasive force that colors the Indian imagination”.³²

As O’Barr notes, “[i]n managing brands and targeting consumers, advertising must understand and contend with the social and cultural diversity of India. Thus, if advertising is to reflect society, the question in India becomes: Which India? The contrast between what is manufactured at home (and thus, Indian) and what is imported (and thus, global) touches the very heart of Indian national identity”.³³ Nevertheless, some emotions and situations are shared by all Indian communities. An example is the Coca Cola Campaign (2002) featuring Aamir Khan, a famous Hindi film actor. He disguises himself impersonating different roles, loosely corresponding to different communities through clothes and mannerisms. The ads were favorably received since everyone could arguably identify with the communities which were portrayed through cultural markers and Bollywood usually acts as a great equalizer across regions except the South that has its own different film industries.

A similar case may be the 2001 advertising campaign for Fevicol, a type of super-strong glue that can bind almost all surfaces. The ad features a load of passengers who have been glued to the truck, hence appealing to a shared experience.³⁴ The slogan is “Fevicol – the ultimate adhesive”, winning a “Golden lion at the ad fest in Cannes in 2001”.³⁵ The concept of space is somewhat alien in India. The psychological space is missing because of strong family ties where children are smothered with love and affection. The physical space is absent because of the burgeoning population with overcrowded public transport, long queues, and a sea of humanity everywhere. So, this advertisement where people are all over a bus that has an ad for Fevicol painted on its sides resonated with people, who face this over-crowding every day in different forms. Fevicol’s other ads also feature rural population, craftsmen and laborers, and Indian values, like marriage, the joint family held together, and children.

Another study by Arpita Khare, Marketing Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Rohtak, India, “Impact of Indian Cultural Values and Lifestyles on Meaning of Branded Products: Study on University Students in India”, suggests that “Indian consumers give high relevance to family values and traditions when choosing brands. The brand connotes family values, group values, status, self-identity, and personal values. Group and family acceptance are significant when selecting brands, and it is supposed to fulfill their social needs for group conformance and self-identity. Self-identity is affected by group approval”.³⁶ She gives the examples of “Nestle, Dulux Paints, Unilever, Pepsico, Coca Cola, Nokia, McDonald’s, and Britannia” that “endorse these values, and their brand

identity reflects family and group values. The brands that personify strong Indian values are considered a part of the Indian system. The youths may appear to endorse Western values, but Indian cultural values still play a significant role in their lifestyle and brand meanings. Their lifestyle and values are governed by family traditions and group norms”.³⁷

A significant example of long-lasting globalization is Lux soaps, developed by Unilever. Michael H. Anderson, in *Madison Avenue in Asia: Politics and Transnational Advertising*, endorses for “great sensitivity on the part of the admen for India with its wide range of social, economic, religious, linguistic, and regional differences”.³⁸ Lux ads had to follow the transnational advertising guidelines, formalized by Unilever and JWT headquarters decades ago. In India, and elsewhere, Lux is sold by the film-star endorsement theme, and Hindustan Thompson uses at least thirty stars to reach various regional audiences. In addition to English, any Lux ad must be implemented by ten different major Indian languages. The stars have to be carefully chosen to conform to regional popularity. For example, a star who is popular in Kerala State by virtue of her work in Malayalam-language cinema may not be known in Tamil Nadu where Tamil is spoken.³⁹

O’Barr states that “Lux soap went on sale in India in 1929” and the “advertising style for Lux was used in England, America, Australia, South Africa, and India”.⁴⁰ For Lux’s seventy-fifth year anniversary in India, JWT came up with an innovative twist by which a famous Bollywood male superstar, Shahrukh Khan, “was placed in a large bath filled with flower petals and surrounded by four actresses who had previously endorsed Lux in ads.... Khan ... [repeated] the famous tagline, ‘Lux is the secret of my beauty’”.⁴¹

The different kinds of language used in the advertisements testify to the ‘chutnification’ of the English language in India. English is still the preferred language of discourse in the public sphere. A majority is also trilingual as they have to learn the local language for interacting with people on a regular basis. This is especially true for people who move out of their home states for work or education. The common person selling vegetables or gas may not know English leading some people to learn a third language. What the majority of the people speak is a mixture of at least two languages. The reasons behind speaking Hinglish, Tanglish or Minglish are ease or convenience where sometime the correct word(s) in the native language are lost or unknown, and the combination of words act as shorthand for status and comprehension. As O’Barr argues, “English is the only common language throughout all of India, but it is unknown in many sectors of the population. Television, radio, and newspapers rely on more than two dozen languages, thus limiting the communicative reach of many advertisements to certain geographic regions or some sectors of society. When addressing India’s elite, advertising uses English”.⁴²

Aradhna Krishna and Rohini Ahluwalia, in “Language Choice in Advertising to Bilinguals: Asymmetric Effects for Multinationals versus Local Firms”, have traced the geography and frequency of bilingualism:

³⁷ Ibid., 374.

³⁸ Michael H. Anderson, *Madison Avenue in Asia: Politics and Transnational Advertising* (Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 123.

³⁹ Ibid., 374.

⁴⁰ O’Barr, “Advertising in India”.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

several countries in Southeast Asia (e.g., Singapore, Japan, and India), Europe (e.g., Holland, Belgium, and many Western European nations), North America (e.g., United States), and North Africa (e.g., Morocco, Algeria, Chad, and Tunisia) have bilingual populations. Many of these populations are fairly fluent in a ‘foreign’ language (typically English or French) as well as at least one local or native language.⁴³

⁴³ Aradhna Krishna and Rohini Ahluwalia, “Language Choice in Advertising to Bilinguals: Asymmetric Effects for Multinationals versus Local Firms”, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35.4 (2008), 692.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Arvind Rajagopal, “Advertising, Politics, and the Sentimental Education of the Indian Consumer”, *Visual Anthropology Review*, 14.2 (1998), 20.

⁴⁷ Halve and Sarkar, *Adkatha*, 140.

⁴⁸ Nigam, “Lost in Translation”, 254.

⁴⁹ Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 206.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 235.

⁵¹ Krishna and Ahluwalia, “Language Choice in Advertising to Bilinguals”, 693.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

Krishna and Ahluwalia also emphasize the complexity of the problem of which language to use for advertising and outline the options, “the ads could be in either one of the primary languages or could have a bilingual format containing a mixture of the two languages (e.g., Spanglish, Hinglish, or Singlish, which combine English with Spanish, Hindi, and Malay/Cantonese, respectively)”⁴⁴ This is a significant dilemma for multinational corporations because they “need to weigh the advantages of single language use (i.e. English) across markets versus the complexities of communicating their message in the local language or a mixed language ad”⁴⁵ On the other hand Arvind Rajagopal, in “Advertising, Politics, and the Sentimental Education of the Indian Consumer”, argues that “whereas most domestic companies have chosen to use translators to convert English language campaigns, newly entering multinationals have commissioned vernacular copy, and carried out consumer research on dialectal idiom for use in campaigns, departing to some extent from prevailing Anglophone biases”⁴⁶ In this question of translation, Halve and Sarkar ask the question of how puns translate when a campaign has to run in several languages; the answer is, “it doesn’t have to. Original ads, as catchy and with the same underlying message, were developed [in the 80s] in Indian languages”⁴⁷ Nevertheless, as Rekha Nigam argues in “Lost in Translation”, “the breach between those who spoke and wrote in English [the copywriters], and those who did not, served mainly to widen the gap between the advertiser and the consumer, on a national scale”⁴⁸ Consequently, hybrid languages such as Hinglish are an ulterior option for advertising which, as Boehmer emphasizes, “crosses, fragments, and parodies different narrative styles and perspectives. Local contexts are reflected in the inclusion of pidgin English, untranslated words, obscure proverbs A similar effect is created where a work cites cultural information – jokes, fragments of oral epic, indigenous film, vernacular histories – which cannot be deciphered without background knowledge”⁴⁹

Hinglish and other hybrid languages can also be seen as “the *mélange* which has resulted from immigration – the fragmented and mixed-up histories, the *kebhichri* or goulash of languages”⁵⁰ It is difficult to navigate this *kebhichri* of languages and both companies and advertising firms constantly face the problem of which language to use to appeal to consumers. Krishna and Ahluwalia have identified two important factors “of language choice on persuasion . . . the country of origin of the company and the product category of the brand”⁵¹ Moreover, they point out that in advertising “in urban India, even when the ad language is Hindi or mixed (Hindi and English), the written script is typically roman for both languages”⁵² Their research showed that “there may be a higher level of belongingness associated with Hindi, while English may symbolize sophistication and modernity in India”⁵³ Their

other finding was that “the Hindi language is associated with belongingness (close, personal, friendly, and family), whereas English is associated with sophistication (global, cosmopolitan, urban, and upper class)”.⁵⁴

Krishna and Ahluwalia assert that “in most bilingual societies, expectations regarding language use are based on perceptions of the speaker’s background For a foreign company, English is the expected language since it is the dominant language of communication with foreigners and is also the formal language in urban India”.⁵⁵ Language in any society has different meanings and associations whereby certain words and phrases act as codes and meanings:

Hindi is associated with the family and with being close and friendly, or in other words, a sense of belongingness; therefore, Hindi would be more relevant for evaluating necessities, as discussed above. In contrast, the sophistication, upper class, and exclusivity associations of English ... are relevant for the evaluation of luxury products. In other words, the associations of the English language are likely to be relevant for evaluating luxury products, while the associations elicited by Hindi are relevant in judgments relating to the necessity type of products. Note that we focus on belongingness and sophistication associations of language and not of products. In other words, it is not essential that all necessities (e.g., detergents) have a strong association with belongingness; it is just proposed that belongingness (e.g., as conveyed via language) is likely to be an important criterion when consumers evaluate necessities.⁵⁶

Their finding is important for multinational corporations who use mixed language ads as these ads “might be the most feasible (and low risk) option, if a product does not clearly fall in the luxury/necessity distinction, since they are likely to elicit relevant and favorable associations for both languages”.⁵⁷ Two examples of these are the slogan for Domino’s Pizza, “Hungry *Kya?*” that translates as ‘Are you hungry?’ but in a more colloquial tone because of the juxtaposition of the two words form two different languages and McDonald’s “What your *bahana* is?” that translates into ‘What is your reason (to eat at McDonald’s)?’ Perhaps the mixing of languages may be seen as fun, colloquial, pedestrian, rather than formal or serious. It can be seen as a failing on the part of the speaker who has to use words form an alien language as he cannot come up with the equivalents of those words in his native language. Hinglish became the choice for a new generation in the 1990s, “Hinglish, Hindi/English communication Indian *ishstyle* [Indianised style], had arrived”.⁵⁸

An example of lexical expansion through suffixation deriving from the creativity of Indian advertising in English is Amul brand’s commentary on contemporary events in India and the globe. Amul specializes in butter and other dairy products and was a result of the White Revolution in India. This was the result of Operation Flood project started by Dr. V Kurien as a means to financially support the villages through the production of milk. India became self-sufficient in the production of milk and was the largest producer as of 2010-11. In the Amul ads, the ‘utterly butterly’ girl has been a familiar figure for decades. She has been the spokesperson for India on numerous subjects and turned fifty years old in 2012. She has spoken on politics, sports, society, law, feminism, popular culture and controversies. An

⁵⁴ Ibid., 696.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 697.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 703.

⁵⁸ Halve and Sarkar, *Adkatha*, 154.

archive of the advertisements can be found on the Amul website. Interestingly, “‘Utterly Butterly’ was initially ridiculed for being ungrammatical. Except for Dr. Kurien who remarked to me [Sylvester da Cunha, the creator]: ‘You’re mad. But go ahead, if you think it’ll work.’ And that is how the blooper ‘butterly’ entered English”.⁵⁹ In conclusion, as the latter example demonstrates, Indian advertisements largely draw on tradition and history often keeping the contemporary situation in mind. Cultural and regional stereotypes are avoided, yet Hinglish is preferred as a medium, especially for multinational corporations to reach a wider urban and educated audience.

⁵⁹ Sylvester da Cunha, “The Utterly Butterly Story”, *Business Standard*, September 12, 2012, http://www.business-standard.com/article/management/the-utterly-butterly-story-112091200663_1.html, 17 November 2013.