The Deviant Features of Trade Advertising Register in Arabic

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Abstract—Arabic, like all the world languages, has different regional varieties (dialects). Ferguson puts such dialects under the term LOW VARIETY of a language which generally deviates from the standard language model. The language of advertising, for example, deviates from the standard language. It has fore-grounded linguistic features and carries a style of language characterized by being persuasive and attractive. The linguists formulate a systematic and scientific model for this highly idiosyncratic use of language. In this paper, I collected some planned linguistic deviations in the written form of trade advertising in Arabic. These advertising expressions are analyzed at different linguistic levels; namely, phonological, morphological, syntactical and semantical. This study aims to throw lights on: 1- How the language of trade advertising in Arabic is constructed. 2- The extent in which the trade advertising variety in Arabic is different from the standard variety. 3- The purpose and role of inviting the trade advertising register. 4- Whether we can use the register of trade advertising in any other register.

Index Terms—advertising register, deviation, nonce-word, fore-grounding

I. INTRODUCTION

Needless to say, language is the best way to convey messages either through written or spoken forms. The written form (standard) is generally based on the high variety of language. However, the low variety is often accompanied by the spoken form (dialects). The literate native speakers of a language are able to cope with the spoken and written forms of the high variety of that language while those who are illiterate can communicate through only the spoken form of that variety. The low variety of Arabic, for example, has different regional dialects. Each dialect has linguistic features which differ from those of the others. This sociolinguistic phenomenon makes the people who belong to different geographical areas unable to fully cope with some linguistic items of the other communities. This, as I guess, is attributed to the peculiarities of those varieties and their being linguistically away from the norms of the standard (High Variety).

Institutional linguistics has witnessed a great development in realizing that the study of sub-languages and registers deserves greater scholarly attention than ever. Mehrotra (2000) says:

It is particularly so when the stylistic, pedagogical and descriptive views are involved. This clearly indicates a shift of emphasis from the "universalist tradition" to the tradition often termed as "particularist" stressing variation and change within a language in accordance with the divergences in communicative situations. (p. 18)

Crandall (1992) mentions that in the field of professional use of languages, each profession has its own code that has some items which cannot be easily deciphered by some people who are outside the circle of that profession. i.e., the members of each profession use a variety of a language which may not be understood by the hearer/ addressee. The farmers of specific region, for instance, have some linguistic items understood by them exclusively because these items are circulated among them only. The same idea applies to physicians, businessmen, journalists, politicians, etc. The reason behind the difficulty in understanding the linguistic items by lay-persons is due to their deviation from the standard norms. In other words, the members of each profession communicate with each other by using a specific linguistic repertoire. This observable fact is not a defect in a lingo but I consider it a healthy phenomenon for any living language.

Linguists have examined communication among members of the same profession as well as between professionals and laypersons. They analyze the special register, discourse or speech involved. Generally speaking, members of different professions focus on content in a message, while linguists are more often interested in the language used in conveying messages. However, in those professions where a major objective is persuasion, language and techniques of communication are as important as the content of the message (ibid).

What concerns me here is the planned deviation, as Chapman (1987) calls it, in the written form of trade advertising. First, let us define the term "advertising". According to the definition of the Committee of the American Marketing Association (CAMA) advertising is non personal communication of information usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature about product, services or ideas by identified sponsors through the various media. Advertising is a style of immediate impact and rapid persuasion. The word “advertise” originates from the Latin word “advertere”, which means “to turn one’s attention to”. The point of an advertisement is to persuade you of the merit of a particular product or
service, in order that you will part with some of your money. In general, whether the medium is print, radio or television, the advertiser can rely on your attention for only a very short time, and therefore the sales message must be short, clear, distinctive and memorable (Gove, 1976). Accordingly, linguists concentrate on studying the linguistic features that add power to the language of advertising. The producers and sellers of goods linguistically use a fore-grounded language to market their products. Such a language is not understood by only a specific group of people, but the advertisers try to select a style of a language that makes all people with their different classes, cultural backgrounds, and education levels understand it to buy those products. Leech (1966) says that the linguists who analyze the language of advertising point out to some features of the language of advertising. They share the same impression about it as simple and contain a strong verb. Advertising often pretends to be talking to the prospective customers. There is, therefore a heavy use of second person pronoun (you), especially at the beginning of clauses (imperative clauses). Others like Bollinger (1979) note the use of metaphors to unite product with admired concepts and of creative spelling and prosodic cues. Ogilvy (1983) points that the advertisers advise adhering to similar principles: holding attention, involving the audience in the message, and using language which is edited, purposeful, simple, direct and rich. The visible meaning of that advertisement sounds strange, bizarre and amazing. The advertisers have potential ability to depend on shared assumptions and expectations. The investigation of these two senses supports us with some insight into how to be more communicated with the hidden meaning than what is written. Pragmatically speaking, the invisible meaning is the cornerstone in the trade advertising. That is to say, when we read a trade text, we think about what is meant even when it is not actually written (Yule, 1997).

The example below is a name of a store written in the English language. It shows how the clear meaning in the language of advertising is not as vital as the invisible one.

A- BABY AND TODDLER SALE

Pragmatically, the advertiser here wants us to think not only about what words mean, but also about what he intends them to mean. In the normal context of our present society, we suppose that this store did not go into the business of selling young children from the store, but rather, it advertises clothes for babies. In short, this sentence is semantically deviant, because there is no collocation between BABY, TODDLER and SALE and surely babies can not be sold. This deviation lets the readers think about the invisible meaning.

Interestingly, I may say this sentence is also syntactically fore-grounded. The advertiser violates the rules of grammar by omitting the possessive phrase (s & clothes) and the form of the sentence would be:

B- BABY AND TODDLERS' CLOTHES SALE.

This form is still odd grammatically because the subject of the sentence is missing. The correct form of the sentence according to the rule of grammar is:

C- WE SELL BABY AND TODDLER'S CLOTHES.

The sentence in the correct form (C) looks normal because it follows the grammatical norm of English language. The advertisers think that this method of constructing the language does not suit the advertising register because it has no power to attract the customers. However, the form (A) is more persuasive and suits the trade register. Trade advertising belongs to the category of short-text registers where a mere peripheral glance can put forward the form and the content of the message (Mehrotra, 2000). The analysis of this blurb shows that writers normally make their style conform to the social function and formal conventions of a particular text type or genre. They do that because they want the readers to be socially tuned in to them.

Trade advertising in Arabic is the same. The advertisers make an effort to choose a peculiar register of language that persuades, attracts and magnetizes the customers for the purpose of marketing the products. Such a register which comes under the low variety is linguistically fore-grounded.

II. METHODOLOGY

In this paper, I present some samples out of a huge number of planned deviant trade advertising texts which are used in Arabic. They are analyzed at various levels of linguistics namely; phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and stylistics to identify the extent they are against the language norms of Arabic.

1 A blurb is a text the publisher prints on the jacket or cover of a book or name of trade houses to give the potential readers an idea of what it is about, though obviously its primary purpose is to stimulate sale.
III. Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>transcription</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>طع011 على كيفك</td>
<td>Ta’amiah ala kifek</td>
<td>Ta’amiah suits your mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>شوراوما على كيفك</td>
<td>Shawarma ala kifek</td>
<td>Shawarma suits your mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>علئ كيفك</td>
<td>Ta’amiah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>فطخ011</td>
<td>Takhfidha</td>
<td>discounts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ليوال فيك</td>
<td>Shorawma</td>
<td>The workshop for diagnosing and repairing the cars’ diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>علئ كيفك</td>
<td>Dallluny alayk</td>
<td>They guided me to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مايلاق الأسم</td>
<td>City Max</td>
<td>City Max</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>هو ده شعبان بتاع السمك اللي بيقولوا عليه</td>
<td>Is this Shaaban’s fish store the people talk about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>كورش لوفر والحب</td>
<td>Lover tablet and the love grow. Quick start, slow end and the best tale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نهية أجمل حكاية</td>
<td>Lover tablet and the love grow. Quick start, slow end and the best tale</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>دلوني عليك</td>
<td>Dallluny alayk</td>
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<td>Is this Shaaban’s fish store the people talk about?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>اسمينا بنفسك</td>
<td>Sammina binafsak</td>
<td>you name us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بدون اسم</td>
<td>Bidan ism</td>
<td>without a name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أكبي اسناق: أطفال ليس لديهم إرث轼</td>
<td>Brother Driver: The children are without brake, this is your responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These data of trade advertising will be investigated linguistically as follows:

1. (Ta’amiah suits your mood - طع011 على كيفك).

This advertisement language is written in this way so as to attract the viewers. One should read it three or four times with concentration to decipher and understand its invisible meaning. If we analyze it morphologically, we note that this blurb violates the word formation norms. The writer invents orthographically a new word by combining the numerical item with alphabetical letters to create a new word (100 طع011. Wales (1989) in his Dictionary of Stylistics calls this process "NONCE-WORD" where the writer coins a word which is used only once and never accepted through wider circulation. Here for a commercial purpose, the new orthographical shape of the word (طع011) is replaced by another attractive and funny one which is (طع01). Syntactically, this advertisement breaks down the structure of the language. Only the object of the sentence is mentioned. The other parts of the sentence (subject + verb) are deleted for the advertising purpose. The correct form would be:

-نحن نقدم طع011 على كيفك

_We provide Ta’amiah suits your mood_

S V O

Stylistically this planned fore-grounding is called ellipsis. It helps to focus on new or more important information. It is common in registers where economy is highly needed.

2. (Discounts)

Morphologically this word is coined in a deviant way. It is formed against the rules of word formation. The writer intentionally inserts the mathematical sign (X) in the middle of the word to stand for the deleted letters (في in) to create a nonce word called (discounts طخ011 سمن011). Phonologically, the correct word is (تخفيضات طخ011 سمن011) which is plain alveolar, is the correct one instead of (طخ011 سمن011) which is emphatic alveolar. However, the writer violates the phonological norms of the word by using the low phonological variety of Arabic instead of the high one.
Syntactically, only the object of the sentence is mentioned. The subject and the verb are deleted because such blurbs belong to the category of short-text registers where a mere word can put forward the form and content of the message (see the advertisement No. 1)

Qurs lover walhub yekber. Asraa bidaiah, abttaa nihayah, ajmel hikaiah-

Phonologically, this advertisement has the final rhymes with the words (Lover tablet, and the love grows. Quick start, slow end, best tale). The phoneme /t/ is repeated finally in the words (lover - yekber). Similarly, the words (Lover tablet, and the love grows - lover /yekber) have the same final sound /-aiha/. The advertiser makes creative use of language by using the phonological possibility of a language to serve his business purposes.

Syntactically, this blurb has parallelism where the texts (Qurs lover walhub yekber. Asraa bidaiah, abttaa nihayah, ajmel hikaiah-) are all noun phrases. The syntactic structure of the parts of the sentence is identical. These parts are in close sequence and their structure is (Adj + N). Leech (1969) defines this register which carries an emotive function as a kind of fore-grounded regularity.

Semantically, the metaphorical design is impeded where the tablet (Lover - lover) has the super power to give quick start slow end and good tale. Form the pragmatic point of view this visible meaning carries another invisible meaning that can be deciphered if it is purchased or asked about.

شوارما علئ كيفك جربها مره. انت نحبها كل مره. - Good Shawarma... Try it once, you/shawarma always will come.

From the syntactic point of view, the final part of this blurb is ambiguous. It accepts two subjects (YOU and SHAWARMA). The first sentence (A) shows that the subject of the sentence is YOU, whereas the second one (B) shows that SHAWARMA is the subject of the sentence. See the sentences below:

A - شوارما علئ كيفك جربها مره. انت نحبها كل مره - GOOD SHAWARMA, try it once, YOU will always come.

B - شوارما علئ كيفك جربها مره. الشوارما جربها كل مره - GOOD SHAWARMA will always come

Of course sentence (A) is more acceptable but the way in which the text is written gives the possibility to accept sentence (B) as well. This linguistic deviation, which is used to create the advertisement targets, the customers' attention to try that food item.

The use of second person addressee “you” tends to shorten the distance between the product or the producer and consumers, as if the producer or the advertisement is speaking to you face to face and making sincere promises and honest recommendations. In so doing, the advertisement slogans stand a better chance to move the receiver or customers to action. Because the receiver feels that he is being thought of and taken care of and he is the center point of the producers.

They guided me to you (They guided me to you).

The advertiser sees that these two words are enough to be the name of a very big store. Semantically, the writer here uses a deliberate overstatement or exaggeration to an illogical degree. This process is called hyperbole. Galperin (1977) defines hyperbole as a device which prevents people from explaining things in their true dimensions. The advertiser uses the plural pronoun (they) as the subject of the sentence to tell the readers that a huge number of people, with their different social backgrounds, always visit this shop and are interested in buying its items. In short, this place is known to all and all people advise me to go to see it. Metaphorically, we infer that the writer of this advertisement depicts the store as a man we are talking to and telling him that “they guided me to you”

This is the name of a fish store written in the Egyptian dialect. It is constructed in a conversational way. Semantically, as Ullman (1951) mentions that this text contains an interjection which acquires emotive meaning to arouse emotion. There is also metonymy in this text. The writer displays the abstract notion (the fame and reputation this store has all over the town) by using a concrete deviant linguistic register that is represented in the name of the shop.

The workshop for diagnosing and repairing cars diseases
Semantically, this funny name is deviant where the writer uses the device of metaphor. He transfers the quality from one object to another. He displays the cars as if they were human beings suffering form diseases and characterizes the mechanic as a physician who diagnoses and treats the illness of the cars. Such linguistic deviation is intended to serve the business interest.

Stylistically, the advertiser here uses a psychological method to catch the customers’ attention. He asks the sightseers to visit the store first and then select a name for it. Though the store is one, the object of the sentence is written as a second person plural (you name us) to show that there are many branches for this shop. He bets that the visitors will be highly attracted and will be regular visitors to that store.

The use of first person addresser “we” and “us” is the most direct way to inform the receiver about the ideas, views and credit of the sponsor of an advertisement. It is a little bit like a self-introduction to the potential customers to let them know you, recognize you, believe you and trust you.

The title above, semantically, indicates that no name can rank their position. They are above all names.
Semantically, this text carries an ironic meaning. It addresses the driver to take care when driving nearby children's school. The words CHILDREN and BRAKE have no collocation because it is the cars not the children who have brake. Metaphorically, the text means that the children do not take care when crossing the streets. However, the driver himself should be highly alert and careful about kids when they are crossing the streets.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Every profession has its unique register. Each register is characterized by having linguistic items. These items have no model in the high variety of a language and linguistically do not follow the norms of the standard variety. The language of advertisement in Arabic, which is the main concern of this paper, is alike. It is featured by being unique and constructed in a way that serves the business purposes. It is fore-grounded and it deviates from the rules of the standard Arabic as well. The linguists call this “planned deviation”. Without being deviant, the language of advertisement would never be suitable to be used as an advertising register. Accordingly, they try to make a scientific study for the advertising register. Scientific study means to study the language of advertisement at different levels of linguistics particularly; phonologically, morphologically, syntactically semantically and stylistically. We try to shed light on the extent the language of advertisement deviates from the system of Arabic. The researcher finds that, the language of advertising in Arabic is constructed in an idiosyncratic way suits the marketing purposes only. This register is only used in advertising. We cannot use it in other purposes because it is not applicable. That is why the linguists agree on the idea that each profession has a specific, unique and exclusive register. The language of literature, for example, is different from the language of elections, and the language of religion is different from the language of policy, etc. That means we cannot use the linguistic features of advertising in any other profession because the linguistic features of the language of advertisement is totally different from the linguistic features of other registers. Accordingly, the gate of research is open to make linguistic studies on the deviant registeral features of each profession individually.

REFERENCES

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