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THE CONTRIBUTION OF PHONETICS TO THE POWER OF PERSUASION IN ADVERTISING

Abstract. The aim of the present paper was to investigate phonetic elements contributing to the persuasive effect of brand names and popular advertising slogans in commercial campaigns. The segmental level included the analysis of the phonological structure and the possible sound symbolic value of brand names, while the suprasegmental level analysis incorporated advertising slogan ranking and investigation of advertising slogans manipulated in terms of pitch, speech tempo, and intensity. The participants were 26 second-year English-major students performing different tasks pertaining to the analysis in question. The results showed front vs. back vowels, as well as sonorants vs. obstruents preference depending on the size and shape of the products, which confirmed the idea of sound symbolism prevalent in brand naming. All three chosen suprasegmental variables proved to be relevant in determining the persuasive effect of advertising slogans. In general, the results of the study, though preliminary in concept and conclusions, underscored the significance of phonetic research in deeper understanding the language of advertising.

Keywords: power, persuasion, phonetics, advertising, sound symbolism

1. Introduction

Following the traditional structuralistic framework, a phoneme is regarded as the smallest unit of language that has a distinctive function, i.e., a building block that can bring about a difference in meaning, yet ~~it~~ does not convey meaning by itself. The other fundamental notion of structuralism, of course, is the arbitrary nature of the relationship between *le signifié* and *le significant* (Saussure, 1959, p. 69). Hence, the development of language is conditioned by twofold oppositions – arbitrariness vs. motivation of a linguistic sign, and conventionality vs. creativity of language use (Langacker, 1991). If iconicity is defined as a form that imitates meaning (and the form, as well), the assumed imitation can be regarded as a reflection or creation of similarity, and this similarity is later either created or reflected. For iconicity to exist in the first place, this similarity has to be perceived by a human cognitive apparatus, thus it is regarded as subjective and can only be present to a smaller or larger degree (Monaghan et al., 2014). On the other hand, subjectivity opposes the theoretical, the purely linguistic, i.e., the definition of language as an objective system of signs designed for communication.

Sound symbolism is the notion that directly opposes the idea of arbitrariness and allows phoneme to be the carrier of meaning merely by the form and sound of

it. Even if we disregard the fact that the first mentions of sound symbolism date as far back as the work of Ancient Greek philosophers, the actual empirical evidence in linguistic research can be found as early as 1929, when Edward Sapir demonstrated that people associated large objects with the /a/ sound in 81%, and small-sized objects with the sound /i/ in about 73% (Sapir 1929, p. 225-234). Moreover, the more similar vowels were in terms of tongue height or advancement, the less certain participants were on which one of them indicated largeness, e.g. /i/ vs. /e/. Following the same methodological concept, Newman (1933) found that back vowels were perceived as larger and darker, while front vowels were seen as brighter and smaller. In a study where the participants' task was to associate different geometric figures to non-words comprised of front or back vowels, there was a strong preference for non-words containing back vowels if the figure was larger, and vice versa (Tarte, Barritt, 1971). More recent studies have confirmed the previous findings that front vowels are related to lighter, thinner, weaker, friendlier, and more feminine objects than back vowels, which are regarded as harsher, slower, uglier, stronger, and more masculine (Imai et al., 2008; Guevremont, Grohmann, 2015).

When it comes to the connection between acoustics and sound symbolism, Brown (1968) assumed that, since large creatures in nature usually have deep voices, low frequency sounds would be associated with largeness and high frequency sounds with smallness. He was later proved wrong due to certain exceptions (Tsur, 2006). Ladefoged (2001) demonstrated that angrier and more aggressive utterances had a lower fundamental frequency, larger changes in pitch, and ended in a falling tone, while happier, more submissive utterances had a higher frequency, smaller pitch changes, and ended in a rising tone. The results could be related to the fact that we need a larger oral cavity opening for the pronunciation of the low back vowel, while the vocal space is narrower in the case of the high front vowel. Therefore, the associations made through sound symbolism are both acoustic and kinaesthetic (Feist, 2013, p. 107).

The presence and effects of this phonetic phenomenon have been noted in different languages, including English, French, Chinese, Modern Greek, Japanese, etc. (Hinton et al., 1994; Klink, 2001). Even though there is a renewed interest in the phenomenon of sound symbolism in the world (e.g. Klink, 2000; Svantesson, 2017; Dingemanse, 2018), especially in advertising, Serbian scientific context lacks substantial research on the matter. Having this in mind, the present paper aims to investigate both the segmental and suprasegmental elements contributing to the persuasive effect of brand names and popular advertising slogans, thus connecting the very nature of sound symbolism and the effect it achieves on the listener.

2. Sound Symbolism in Past and Current Research

Sound symbolism is often defined as a direct link between the sound and meaning of a word or expression (Hinton et al., 1994, p. 1; Nuckolls, 1999, p. 228). It seems convenient to begin the discussion on sound symbolism with a few important

clarifications of basic terminology, especially bearing in mind that there is an appreciable disagreement among researchers regarding many aspects of sound symbolism, such as their morphology, semantics, distribution, etc., including terminology. Phonetic symbolism as a term has been used synonymously with the terms *phonaesthesia* and *phonosemantics*, although all three of them can be considered hyponyms of a broader term of sound symbolism, which can be iconic or non-iconic. Iconic sound symbolism usually refers to ideophones, even though the term *ideophone* has been used to represent any kind of iconicity (Dingemanse, 2011; 2018), whereas non-iconic refers to exclamations. Numerous dictionaries containing ideophones from Asian, Australian and African languages at least partially defy the unmotivated association of form and meaning in language (Childs, 1994; Ivanova, 2006). The lexicalization of expressions characterized as sound symbolic is not limited to onomatopoeia and conative exclamations, yet they may be classified as a separate part of speech or word category (Hinton et al., 1994). Furthermore, sound symbolic words can represent an integral part of a linguistic system possessing specific morphological and syntactic features (Hamano, 1998; Svantesson, 2017). It is particularly this integration within the linguistic system that directly confronts Saussurean views, even though the founder of structuralism did indeed recognize the existence of a fairly limited number of onomatopoeic words. Onomatopoeias, of course, remain the least controversial examples of sound symbolism. Phonaesthesia is related to the association between the signifier and the signified, while ideophones also go by the name of expressives or mimetics, descriptive words, echo-words, emphatics, etc. (Childs, 1994). They are characterized by unconventional phonological elements and deviation from prescribed rules of orthography and phonotactics (Casas-Tost, 2014).

Sound symbolic expressions are usually made using partial or total reduplication, or unusual segmental and suprasegmental elements (Hinton et al., 1994, p. 9). The same authors suggested four different types of sound symbolism (corporeal, imitative, synesthetic, and conventional), however, the criterion they based the classification on is rather controversial, since the only yardstick they mentioned was some degree of direct linkage between form and meaning. Albeit there is a considerable number of empirical studies that confirm the influence of sound symbolic nature of words, the idea of arbitrariness still prevails since there has not yet been a solid theoretical framework to ground the findings in. The matter is further complicated by the fact that definitions of sound symbolism rely on vague expressions such as imitation, reflection, or relation. Furthermore, the cognitive mechanisms behind sound symbolism are yet to be explained, whether there are iconic mappings between the acoustics of sounds and the referential object, between articulatory movements and the referential object, or the shape of graphemes and the referential object. It goes without saying whatsoever that there have been numerous successful attempts at demonstrating the connection between the sound of words and the associated meaning in the human perceptual system, and this connection is cross-cultural (Shrum et al., 2012).

Sound symbolism is also a prevalent topic in the studies of early language development which demonstrated that toddlers rely on the mechanisms of sound

symbolism to help them learn verbs (Imai et al., 2008; Imai, Kita, 2014). Children at the age of three are able to decide on the meaning of words that are sound symbolic more efficiently than on the ones that are non-sound-symbolic. Since sound symbolism is considered to be a form of cross-modal processing, it is related to the phenomenon of synaesthesia (Bankieris, Simner, 2015).

3. Sound Symbolism and the Language of Advertising

Whether we regard phonemes as segments combined to form words, or as elements that, through sound symbolism, convey meaning on their own, we must agree that they represent indispensable elements especially of brand naming and advertising. This, as well as the fact that the phonological makeup of a brand name, unfamiliar in particular, contributes to the effect and buying intentions of consumers, has been confirmed in relevant studies (Klink, 2000; Yorkston, Menon, 2004). The product name should serve as a "mind marker" or a reminder of what the product offers (Platen, 1997, p. 162). The phonetic symbolism of a brand name can suggest product attributes and, via a specific effect on the consumer, eventually increase sales. Lowrey and Shrum (2007) found that consumers associated heavy and slow products with back vowels, and light, fast and sharp products with front vowels, which is reminiscent of the research by Sapir (1929), Newman (1933), Imai et al. (2008), etc. Phonetic symbolism works well especially if brand names are non-words. Since brand names convey meaning and information, they directly contribute to favourable product perceptions. Brand name failures can sometimes lead to product failures, as well (Hartley, 1992).

A company may perform various promotional activities in order to reach the target, i.e. consumer trust and loyalty, since a brand image stability may change over time and must be reinforced (Kotler, Armstrong, 1997). What consumers associate the brand with will affect their feelings and impressions and ultimately determine the sales and profit (Cotticelli Kurras et al., 2012). In naming their brands, companies rely on phonology, morphology, and semantics, and in phonology in particular, they rely on sound symbolism (Lerman, 2007). For example, names that begin with a plosive are more easily remembered and recognized than names starting with a different consonant class (Vanden Bergh et al., 1987). Advertising relies on authenticity in the first place, especially when it comes to food or drink marketing (Stewart, 2013). The results of a study by Yoo et al. (2000) point to the important fact that high advertising spending, high price, and good store image contribute to brand equity more favorably than price promotion. One more indispensable aspect of advertising is multimodality, since ads are often a combination of pictures, sounds, and different text types that consumers perceive as a whole and as part of face-to-face interaction (Cook, 2001).

Since the main aim of advertising is to convince the consumer to buy the product, research has underlined various linguistic means of persuasion employing referential, emotive, conative, phatic, metalingual, and poetic functions of language

in unity (Vestergaard, Schroder, 1985; Cook, 2001; Goddard, 2002). Advertising slogans must attract attention and convince, but they must also be readable or memorable, including both verbal and paralinguistic communication. Some of the attention-seeking devices at the phonological level are alliteration, rhyme, anaphora, etc. At the orthographic level, brand name and slogan creators resort to divergent spelling, and at the lexical level to puns, polysemy, idioms, and colloquial expressions in order to achieve desirable connotations. Sentences are usually fairly simple, and exclamations or questions prevail over declaratives. According to the aforementioned authors, allegory, metonymy, antithesis, allusion, oxymoron, and paradox are the most frequently used rhetorical devices.

What remains under-researched, however, especially in the Serbian scientific context, is the level of prosody in advertising, i.e. the level above the individual segments, and its effect on the consumers. This of course has to be related to the advertising campaigns presented either as audio recordings on radio stations, or both visual and auditory commercials on TV or the Internet. Past research has focused on intonation and voice intensity and demonstrated a strong effect on consumer attitudes and product credibility (Gélinas-Chebat et al., 1996). Moreover, Komar (2015) underlined that short commercials demonstrated simple linguistic patterns so as to avoid complex processing and effort in the audience. Furthermore, the results showed that greater emphasis was placed on the actual oral delivery by means of intonation and prosodic variation.

4. Methodology

4.1 Aims

Abiding by the relevant research findings in the previously presented literature overview, the aims of the present paper pertain to investigating certain segmental and suprasegmental elements contributing to the persuasive effect of brand names and popular advertising slogans in commercial campaigns.

4.2 Research Questions

Having the proposed aims in mind, we were interested in the following research questions:

- Does sound symbolism present in brand names affect Serbian EFL students' perception of product qualities?
- Which phonetic features are chosen by Serbian EFL learners to represent particular products and brand names?
- Which suprasegmental features (pitch range, speech tempo, or intensity) are relevant indicators of the persuasive effect of advertising slogans among Serbian EFL students?
- Ultimately, what is the persuasive effect of sound symbolism and prosody of advertising in a foreign language on foreign language learners?

4.3. Participants

The sample of participants comprised 26 second-year English-major students at the Faculty of Philology and Arts, University of Kragujevac, attending the *English Phonology* course during the spring semester of 2017/2018 academic year (male=9, female=17; average age=20.31; *Phonetics Exam performance* mean=68.8/100, max.=87/100, min.=51/100). The particular sample was chosen due to the fact that they were familiar with the English sound system and prosody, since they had all successfully passed the exam in *English Phonetics*.

4.4. Instruments and Procedure

The instrument employed in the research was specifically designed for the purpose of the present study by the author of the paper, adapting and modifying the methodological design of the previous studies (Sapir, 1929; Klink, 2001; Lowrey, Shrum, 2007; Guevremont, Grohmann, 2015). The primary instrument was a test with a series of different tasks divided into two parts.

The first part, related to the level of segments, consisted of three tasks – a two-alternative forced choice task, a ranking task and an open-ended creative task with examples and guidelines. In the first task, the participants were presented with a picture of a product, and they were supposed to circle the name of the product (two options of nonce words combining front vs. back vowels, initial plosives vs. fricatives). The nonce tokens were created by the author of the paper using English sounds. There were four examples in total. Even though the choice of monosyllabic nonce words may have been preferable and more straightforward, the idea behind presenting polysyllabic words was to divert the attention of participants from the obvious vowel preference and further investigate what happens if the word contains more syllables. In the second task, the participants had to rank ten different, existing, yet less familiar brand names, based on whether or not they liked the sound of them. The brand names were selected so that the name does not actually exist as a lexeme, but is a brand-specific coinage. We analyzed the sound structure of the five highest-ranked tokens. In the third task, the participants were asked to invent the name for two products differing in shape, size, and texture, with the guidelines provided in terms of the specific vowels (only front and back vowels were suggested) and consonants. It seems important to note here that they were advised to use English sounds only. The participants were asked to transcribe the created brand names using IPA symbols so as to avoid possible mispronunciations in the analysis of sound structure.

The second part, related to the level above the segment, contained two tasks overall: the first one was a ranking task, and the second one was a three-alternative forced choice task with audio recordings. In the first task, the participants listened to nine advertising slogans and had to rank them based on the persuasive effect. The persuasive effect criterion meant ranking the slogans based on which product the participants were likely to buy first. The recordings were played twice and no sound manipulation was implemented to the original commercial. This first task served as a guide for the second task, which is why the first and the second tasks were done on two separate occasions.

Out of all the advertising slogans that the participants ranked, we chose three that were ranked the highest based on the persuasive effect criterion selecting them for the second task. Using the relevant options in *Praat*, *version 6.0.43* (Boersma, Weenink, 2018) and *Audacity*, *version 2.2.1*, we manipulated the original recordings in terms of pitch, speech tempo (which included overall duration), and intensity (loudness). The manipulated recordings were then played twice for the multiple choice task, which formed the second task of the second part of the test. The participants were asked to choose the more persuasive option and they also had the option to choose "they are equally persuasive"). The second task contained nine examples in total (three slogans across three acoustic manipulations), thus comprising a corpus of twenty-seven played recordings (the original recording and two more versions manipulated to lower and higher values across different variables). We originally included pause duration as the fourth variable, but it made the chosen recordings sound unnatural so we excluded this variable from further analysis.

The audio recordings for the second part of the test were prepared in advance and included some, presumably, less familiar advertising slogans. Even though the chosen slogans are quite popular in the world, they are not so prominent on Serbian radio or television stations. By refusing to opt for well-known advertising slogans we aimed at avoiding bias due to product preference in the ranking task. The visual elements of advertising were excluded from the second part of the testing in this particular occasion, in order to help the participants concentrate on the auditory perspective solely. All the slogans were uttered by a male speaker. Some of the limitations we encountered while gathering the slogans are related to the fact that many of the slogans are sung or written on the screen during the actual advertisement is played, and we wanted the participants to concentrate only on speech, i.e., on audio stimuli.

The practical research was performed on two separate occasions during the spring semester of 2017/2018 academic year during the *English Phonology* course, in May 2018. The participation was voluntary with no assigned course credits.

4.5 Data Processing

The obtained test results were analyzed quantitatively using basic descriptive statistics and percentage calculations, which was followed by qualitative interpretations and analysis of results. The relevant acoustic manipulations were performed using *Praat*, *version 6.0.43* (Boersma, Weenink, 2018) and the percentage counts were performed using *SPSS*, *version 20*. Audio recordings were prepared using *Audacity*, *version 2.2.1*.

5. Results and Discussion

The examples of brand names in Task 1 were designed so that there were always two options, one in which front vowels prevailed, whereas the other one contained back vowels. The task was to choose between the two depending on what

name would suit the product type more favorably. The results of participants' brand name preference are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Task 1: Brand Name Preference

Product Type	Brand Name Preference (%)	
	Nonce Brand Name	
a wood chopping tool	Faacus /'fɑːkʊs/	Dilines /'dılınıs/
	17 (65.38%)	9 (34.62%)
a spoon	Gusdra /'gʌzdrʌ/	Trikem /'trıkem/
	5 (19.23%)	21 (80.77%)
hot sauce	Toorhop /'tuːrhɒp/	Fehend /'fihend/
	16 (61.54%)	10 (38.46%)
ice-cream	Shoondas /'ʃuːndʌs/	Tistili /'tıstıli/
	12 (46.15%)	14 (53.85%)

Judging by students' answers, there is a strong preference for back vowels when the product attributes are large, rough, heavy, as could be seen from the percentage for the wood chopping tool (65.38% opted for double-back-vowel combination in a nonce word). In the case of a spoon (defined by smoothness, small size, and light weight), the participants strongly preferred a front vowel combination, up to even 80.77%. It seems important to note here that /ʌ/ was chosen as the symbol for the vowel in *Gusdra* to emphasize the short pronunciation (to avoid confusion by adding a more adequate symbol due to the participants' unfamiliarity) rather than the quality of the vowel that tends to be more mid-central in native speakers. From our experience with the chosen sample, the participants generally pronounce this particular monophthong as more back (a short counterpart to low-back /ɑː/). Back vowels are preferred for the brand name representing a hot sauce, while, interestingly enough, the participants were almost equally divided when it comes to their opinion regarding a brand name for ice cream, even though there is a slightly higher percentage opting for front vowels (53.85%). These findings mostly agree with the results of previous research (Klink, 2001; Lowrey, Shrum, 2007; etc.), indicating that the sound preference of a name may be connected to the size and shape of a referent object.

The brand name ranking results are shown in Table 2. For the sake of reminding the reader, it was the sound of the brand name that was the primary and most important criterion for the participants' ranking choice.

Table 2. Task 2: Brand Name Ranking

Brand No.	Brand Name	Ranking Mean
B1	Benelli /benˈneli/	2.42
B2	Refmex /ˈrefmeks/	2.58
B3	Tornel /tɔːˈnel/	3.5

B4	Costco /ˈkɔːstkəʊ/	4.42
B5	Peloton /ˈpelətɒn/	5.3
B6	Manuhrin /məˈnuːhrɪn/	5.85
B7	Chiappa /tʃɪˈæpə/	6.77
B8	Jawara /dʒɑːˈwɑːrɑː/	7.19
B9	Sarsilmaz /sɑːˈsɪlməz/	8.07
B10	Nvidia /enˈvɪdɪə/	8.88

The ranking results demonstrate a slight front vowel preference (58.33% of the first five brand names contain front vowels), and the word-initial plosive preference (80%), especially of voiceless plosives. 57.89% of all consonants are obstruents (fricatives and plosives), while 47.37% of all the consonants in the first five examples are approximants and nasals (more sonorant sounds than obstruents). Thus, we could say that there is an equal distribution of sounds both low and high on a sonority scale. Based on this, we could conclude that the sound of brand names without the existing referent does not actually follow a particular pattern, yet it has to be related to a particular product attribute (cf. Klink, 2000; Shrum et al., 2012; etc.).

In Task 3 the participants were supposed to create new brand names for the suggested products. Understandably, the product attributes corresponded to shape, size, and texture differences with industrial truck on one side, and a creamy soap on the other. The aim of this task was to establish whether there is a preference for a certain phonological structure when creating names for particular products, which would ultimately point to the existence of inherent sound symbolism. The phonological makeup details of the created words is provided in Table 3.

Table 3. Task 3: Creating a Brand Name

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Phonological Structure of Invented Words</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Industrial Truck</td><td colspan="2">Creamy Soap</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Total: 175 (100%)
Consonants: 97 (55.43%)
Vowels: 78 (44.57%)</td><td colspan="2">Total: 188 (100%)
Consonants: 86 (45.74%)
Vowels: 102 (54.26%)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Word-initial:
/s/ 8 (4.57%)
/d/ 5 (2.86%)
/t/ 3 (1.71%)</td><td>Word-final:
/s/ 6 (3.43%)
/k/ 4 (2.29%)
/p/ 3 (1.71%)</td><td>Word-initial:
/g/ 7 (3.72%)
/l/ 4 (2.13%)
/v/ 3 (1.6%)</td><td>Word-final:
/m/ 9 (4.79%)
/i/ 6 (3.19%)
/n/ 5 (2.66%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Fricatives: 41 (42.27%)
Plosives: 35 (36.08%)
Nasals: 9 (9.28%)
Approximants: 8 (8.25%)
Affricates: 4 (4.12%)</td><td colspan="2">Fricatives: 24 (27.9%)
Plosives: 16 (18.6%)
Nasals: 25 (29.07%)
Approximants: 19 (22.09%)
Affricates: 2 (2.33%)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Front Vowels: 26 (33.33%)
Back Vowels: 40 (51.28%)
Other: 12 (15.38%)</td><td colspan="2">Front Vowels: 48 (47.06%)
Back Vowels: 36 (35.29%)
Other: 18 (17.65%)</td></tr>
</table>

Comparing the total number of consonants and vowels for both products, we notice that there is a slight preference for vowels in the case of the second product which is smaller, smoother, and rounder, and the overall number of sounds was slightly higher in the second case, as well. The longest created brand name for an industrial truck was *Sonvolved* /sɒnˈvɒlvd/, and the shortest was *Soldus* /ˈsɒldʌas/. For a creamy soap, the longest name was *Scoopgrance* /ˈskuːpgræns/, and the shortest was *Liapop* /ˈlɪəpɒp/. The names often included morphological bases of the already existing words in English, but they were combined in a different fashion.

The interesting finding was that for the industrial truck the /s/ sound is preferred both in the beginning and at the end of the word, otherwise no significant differences were noticed in terms of initial or final sound preference. However, the manner of articulation classifications point to the difference in the preference for obstruents in the first case (82.47% out of all the consonants), and for nasals and approximants in the second case (51.16% out of all the consonants). This could mean that the participants opted for more sonorous sounds when the product was smaller, smoother, and rounder. Furthermore, more than a half of the participants preferred back vowels when designing a name for an industrial truck (51.28% out of all the vowels), and front vowels for a creamy soap (47.06% out of all the vowels). Hence, when product attributes are available, the participants show evident preference for back vowels if the object is larger in size, and front vowels if the object is smaller in size, which was found in previous studies (Sapir, 1929; Newman, 1933; Imai et al., 2008; Guevremont, Grohmann, 2015).

When it comes to the persuasive effect of advertising slogans, based on audio recordings only, the results we obtained are presented in Table 4. The task was to determine which of the products the participants were most likely to buy or use first based on the persuasiveness of the slogan in the advertisement.

Table 4. Task 4: Slogans Ranking

Ad No.	Slogan	Ranking Mean
Ad 1	American Express *Don't leave home without it.*	2.54
Ad 2	M'n'Ms *So good, they're back.*	2.85
Ad 3	Capital One *What's in your wallet?*	3.85
Ad 4	Chia Pets *The gift that grows.*	3.88
Ad 5	Floam *It's fun you can feel.*	4.35
Ad 6	Chef Boyarde *Boy, this stuff is good.*	6.12
Ad 7	H&M *Recycle your clothes.*	6.96
Ad 8	Sprite *When you're thirsty, trust your gut not some actor.*	6.96
Ad 9	Chocolate Factory *Treat your family to chocolate creations*.	7.38

The most persuasive slogan was by *American Express Card* given in the form of a command, which is followed by an *M'n'Ms* slogan in the form of a declarative.

The third preferred slogan is a wh-question pronounced by Samuel L. Jackson for *Capital One* (but the students did not know that). What is interesting for the three best ranked slogans is that they are all characterized by the falling intonation (low head + low-fall pitch contour for the first and third slogan, and rising head + high-fall for the second slogan). It seems worth noting that there was a greater mean difference between the second and the third slogan (one entire value point), and the difference between the third and the fourth slogan was significantly smaller. The first three most persuasive slogans were subjected to further analysis, the results of which are presented in Table 5. The investigated suprasegmental features included pitch range, speech tempo, and sound intensity.

The participants were presented with four options to choose from in Task 5. The options contained the original recording, the manipulated versions (*Manipulation 1* meant manipulation of the original to a lower value, and *Manipulation 2* meant manipulation of the original to a higher value), as well as *No Difference* option which meant that all the provided recordings are equally persuasive for the participant. The latter option was particularly significant for us, since it helped us determine the actual effect of sound manipulation on the persuasiveness of the slogans.

Table 5. Task 5: Manipulating Advertisements for Persuasive Effect Decision

Ads	Persuasive Effect Answers (%)			
	Manipulation 1	*Original*	*Manipulation 2*	*No Difference*
Pitch Range (Hz)				
Ad1	50-90Hz	74-115Hz	90-135Hz	x
	6 (23.07%)	8 (30.77%)	8 (30.77%)	4 (15.38%)
Ad2	50-170Hz	64-238Hz	90-250Hz	x
	5 (19.23%)	9 (34.62%)	7 (26.92%)	5 (19.23%)
Ad3	40-180Hz	60-230Hz	90-250Hz	x
	5 (19.23%)	7 (26.92%)	10 (38.46%)	4 (15.38%)
Speech Tempo (words per sec. (w/s)) + Duration (time in sec. (s))				
Ad1	3.44 w/s / 1.45s	4.35 w/s / 1.15s	6.25 w/s / 0.8s	x
	10 (38.46%)	7 (26.92%)	2 (7.69%)	7 (26.92%)
Ad2	1.08 w/s / 3.37s	1.3 w/s / 3.07s	1.6 w/s / 2.5s	x
	9 (34.62%)	10 (38.46%)	3 (11.54%)	4 (15.38%)
Ad3	2.16 w/s / 1.85s	2.67w/s / 1.5s	4 w/s / 1s	x
	8 (30.77%)	10 (38.46%)	0 (0%)	8 (30.77%)
Intensity (dB)				
Ad1	40dB	88 dB	100dB	x
	0 (0%)	8 (30.77%)	8 (30.77%)	10 (38.46%)
Ad2	40dB	65 dB	100dB	x
	2 (7.69%)	4 (15.38%)	6 (23.07%)	14 (53.85%)
Ad3	40dB	75 dB	100dB	x
	2 (7.69%)	7 (26.92%)	9 (34.62%)	9 (34.62%)

Judging by the results, we may conclude that all three chosen variables proved to be relevant for determining the persuasive effects of the chosen advertising slogans. The only one that had more participants selecting the *No Difference* option was intensity (even up to 53.85% in the case of the second best-ranked slogan), yet in the majority of cases we can still detect that the participants opted for different values which points to the relevance of this variable, too. Furthermore, slogans manipulated to low intensity proved to be non-persuasive for our participants (0-7.69% range). Since we deliberately chose male speakers in the recordings, the pitch ranges started as low as 60Hz, and the participants showed slightly higher preference for the higher-pitched manipulation, yet the answers were distributed across other options as well, which points to the conclusion that pitch range is a relevant factor in determining the persuasive effect of advertising messages. Less than one fifth of the total number of participants found pitch range to make no difference in determining the persuasiveness of the slogans in question. The percentage is slightly higher for speech tempo, i.e., the number of uttered words per second (a quarter up to one third of the participants). The participants showed higher preference for slower speech tempo compared to the faster one in terms of persuasiveness, which may underline the overall understandability of the message in the advertisement.

6. Conclusion

The conducted investigation had the aim of demonstrating the relevance of phonetics in the research related to the language of advertising. Hence, the proposed methodology concentrated both on segmental and suprasegmental levels of speech production.

The results of the analysis derived from three different tasks on the segmental level showed a strong preference for back vowels when the product attributes are large, rough, and heavy, and a preference for front vowels when the product attributes are small, smooth, and light, which underlines the existence of sound symbolism proven in previous studies (Klink, 2000; Lowrey, Shrum, 2007; Shrum et al., 2012; etc.). What is important to note, as well, is the fact that, for sound symbolism to be put into effect, the brand name has to be related to the referent product. Even in the creative task of finding a brand name for the given product, the product attributes, hence the name itself, likewise corresponded to shape, size, and texture. The manner of articulation classifications point to the difference in the preference for obstruents in the first case for a larger and rougher product, and for nasals and approximants in the case of a smaller and smoother object. More than a half of the participants preferred back vowels when designing a name for a large object, and front vowels for a smaller object.

When it comes to the level of prosody, the participants displayed preference for the slogans characterized by falling intonation. The investigated variables of pitch range, speech tempo, and intensity proved to be relevant determinants of the persuasive effect of advertising slogans. Higher pitch and slower speech tempo

were chosen as more persuasive, and low intensity slogans were selected as non-persuasive at all.

The methodology issues encountered in the paper need to be addressed more thoroughly here. Namely, investigating the concept of sound symbolism requires quite a complex methodological design which in turn causes a complex interpretation of results. The possible limitations thus include the choice of advertising slogans and their classification in terms of speech act types and intonation contours. Furthermore, the choice of participants could yield different results in the sense that linguistic laymen could have perceived persuasive effects and sound symbolic values of words differently.

Future suggestions include investigating whether sound symbolism works in the same way in the native and non-native languages, and whether there is a difference between male and female speakers in terms of brand name and slogan preference depending on the type of the product. The present study, though preliminary in nature, underscores the importance of studying phonetic features of advertising language since it proved to be relevant both at the segmental and suprasegmental levels.

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ДОПРИНОС ФОНЕТИКЕ МОЋИ УБЕЂИВАЊА У ОБЛАСТИ МАРКЕТИНГА

Циљ рада јесте истражити фонетске елементе који доприносе ефекту убедљивости назива брендова и популарних рекламних слогана у маркетиншким кампањама. Сегментни ниво је обухватио анализу фонолошке структуре и могуће звучно-симболичке вредности назива брендова, док је истраживање на супрасегменталном нивоу подразумевало рангирање и анализу рекламних слогана манипулисаних у погледу висине тона, темпа и интензитета говора. У истраживању је учествовало 26 студената друге године англистике који су радили различите задатке релевантне за спроведену анализу. Резултати су показали да испитаници преферирају вокале предњег насупрот вокала задњег реда, или сонанте наспрам опструената у зависности од величине и облика производа на који се назив бренда односи, што је потврдило идеју звучне симболике присутне при брендирању производа. Све три анализиране супрасегменталне варијабле показале су се релевантним у одређивању ефекта убедљивости код изабраних рекламних слогана. Уопштено говорећи, резултати рада, иако прелиминарни по концепту и закључцима, подвлаче значај истраживања фонетике у циљу бољег разумевања језика рекламирања.

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