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ABSTRACT

The Language of Advertising in Billboards across Palestine

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Businesses around the world communicate and advertise for their products through different modes, such as billboards. While there is research on the language of advertising in the Arab world (Al-Olayan& Karande 2000; El-daly 2011; Kalliny& Gentry 2007), there is no research on the language of advertising or more specific advertising using billboards in Palestine. This paper analyzed the language of advertising in billboards throughout various Palestinian regions. The aim of this study was to answer the following questions: What languages or language varieties are used on billboards in various areas of Palestine? How do these billboards seek to persuade consumers in Palestine to buy products or services? Thirty-two distinct billboards across Palestine were analyzed according to Bhatia's (1992) and Piller's (2003) frameworks (as cited in Baumgardner& Brown's, 2012) for analyzing English in magazine advertising using tools from sociolinguistics, linguistics, and multimodal discourse analysis. The results showed that Arabic was used mostly on the billboards for both international/multinational and local companies. International/multinational companies used Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), while local companies used Palestinian Arabic. Applying Schrank's manipulation of language techniques (as cited by Preliceanu, 2013) on the data revealed that Palestinian advertisers tended to use the same techniques as other advertisers around the world to persuade consumers to buy products or services. Furthermore, certain dimensions of the Palestinian culture were depicted on the billboards. The study revealed that Palestine is not as receptive to foreignism as expected, and that the billboards were not inclusive of the entire Palestinian culture. This study emphasizes the need to conduct a future research on a larger number of billboards in different places in Palestine and to study language use in other forms of advertising in Palestine as well.

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