

PHONETIC PECULIARITIES IN SLOGANS

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Abstract

The topic of the paper is phonetic peculiarities in slogans. Like any other living organism, language has its linguistic peculiarities, making it a unique and universal tool for everyday use. Sharing thoughts, considerations, and information may be a pivotal portion that marks the crucial role of language. Most of the time, communicating with companions, relatives, and colleagues does not bring a parcel of troubles. Still, it gets interesting and complex when it comes to communicating and sharing thoughts with a group of onlookers to arrange a business deal.

For companies/organisations to adequately convey their messages, they have to use written-language tools to succeed while trying to sell a product. This is where the help of slogans comes into play. The problem question of the paper is what phonetic peculiarities are typical while creating slogans. The paper aims to identify the phonetic peculiarities found in business and political slogans.

Keywords: *phonetic peculiarities, slogans, business, politics, linguistics*

1. INTRODUCTION

The “speech” is a noticeable way to communicate sentiments and feelings. In business the use of an effective language is as important as the accountancy. We could classify the “language” into two main parts: spoken and written. The written part is widely used in business, marketing, public relations, creating slogans, etc. To convey the messages appropriately, companies must use written-language tools to succeed while trying to sell a product. This linguistic phenomenon is widely used today, but not every single company gets the desired result from using slogans. It is because they are easy to create, but it takes a lot of time to master them in a way which would give excellent results. This paper aims to analyse the phonetic peculiarities used in business and political slogans to attract attention.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Materials

To conduct the research, a theoretical background was formed to classify the peculiarities used in creating slogans. The problem question of the research is, what are the main phonetic peculiarities typical in creating slogans? The research objectives are to perform a descriptive analysis of phonetic slogan peculiarities; to reveal the phonetic features peculiar to business and politics-related slogans. In the practical part, the authors analysed which phonetic peculiarities are applied to slogans created for business and political spheres. The analysis is based on 160 slogans (80 politics and 80 business discourse) with phonetic peculiarities. The paper provides a statistical chart demonstrating the tendencies of phonetic peculiarities in business and political slogans.

2.2. Methods and theoretical background

The research methods include analysis of theoretical sources and descriptive comparative analysis.

2.2.1. Phonetic peculiarities of slogans

Ratree Wayland (2018) describes the human ability to generate speech as one of the best mediums to exchange experiences and emotions. This human ability is developed with the help of a specific coherence in human muscular activity, producing sound in the end. Phonetics is the linguistic branch that accurately describes how human verbal sounds are generated.

Hangrong (2003) explains that rhymes are one of the main phonetic techniques used nowadays when it comes to connecting slogans with the products that should be promoted. In his book, Tom Hood (2017) describes **rhymes** as a phonetic element that generates repetitive patterns of sound that sound similar to each other with a certain structural form. This phonetic phenomenon can be frequently seen in the world of advertisement. A slogan can only be efficient when it stays in the reader's mind and influences one's perception of something. Using rhymes with the brand name included is one of the best methods to capture the reader's mind. Using this technique, the company easily reflects on its brand identity and forms a strong signal to the reader. It also signals that the company using this type of slogan phonetic peculiarity is undoubtedly modern and innovative. Henceforth, this technique is highly popular among slogan users and creators. For example, the famous potato chip brand "Pringles" also fell for the bandwagon of rhyme slogans during their commercial campaign in the late 90s. This potato chip brand released a relatively successful ad slogan:

- "Once you pop, you can't stop,"
- Once you pop, the fun don't stop".

Even though the rhymes that were created had nothing to do with the rhyming of the product name, it still struck the head of the consumer because it perfectly summarised the process of opening a can of Pringles, which in the words of the company itself, is "addictive" and "satisfying".

According to the research by Angela Goddard (2002), some slogans use a different rhyming technique called the "fallback" position rhyming. A fallback position rhyme is when the slogan mentions the brand title without rhyming it. However, it is not as successful as it sounds since the brand title isn't highlighted in the slogan itself. Because of this, the verbal ad is likely to lose its character since other companies can utilise the same portrayed in the following example:

- Jaguar: "Grace, space, pace."

Hamlin (2014) explains that **alliteration** can assist the slogans in accomplishing the solid beating cadence required to create a repeatable and attention grasping verbal ad quality. In this way, sentences can have more slogan-styled qualities. According to Lee Pallmann (2014), the phonetic peculiarity of alliteration helps the target audiences absorb the selling information better and gives the character trait of professionalism to whatever sphere that alliteration is being applied. The idea of a slogan can be easily memorised by the consumer/reader. Also, the use of alliteration peculiarity can significantly impact the meaning of the slogan. The redundancy of the primary consonant sounds of the words makes the information conveyed more alluring to the receiver. Alliteration is rare in social promoting slogans, even though it is highly effective if compared, let's say to the fallback rhyme technique.

According to Cuddon (2012), **assonance is the language phenomenon generated by compounding similar-sounding vowels** to receive a certain phonetic effect. This phonetic peculiarity can also be discovered when creating slogans for various advertisements and products. Although this feature is more suitable for poetry and literature, it is rarely applied in advertisements (slogans too). It is a powerful phonetic device, which, when applied in the right sphere, could tremendously affect the user's benefit. It may also be used for a humorous effect.

Scholar Fern (2018) states that the origins of the word **rhythm** go far back to the early days of our civilised world of ancient Greece. The Greek word *rhythmos* (rhythm) could be translated into the ability of people to have their way of repeating the same regular reoccurring motions. This ancient word could be translated into the modern verbal ad era (slogans). Every company that uses the phonetic peculiarity of rhythm has their way of doing it. Furthermore, Kumar (2014) describes the use of rhythm in advertisements as a way to combine sounds to make the pronunciation melodic and elusive for the reader.

Scholar S. Mykytiuk states that onomatopoeia is another peculiarity commonly seen in advertisements. Barbara Lasserre (2018) describes this phonetic peculiarity as a feature that replicates all of the sounds possible for a human ear to capture as the listener perceives them. Furthermore, Barbara Lasserre (2018) defines onomatopoeic words as the ones who do the function of mirroring

sounds. Moreover, this phonetic feature can add more flavour to when it comes to the way of self-expression. “It is a communication tool that is playful, fun, and often seems arbitrary,” says scholar Barbara Lassere (2018). **Rhythm** and **onomatopoeia** are phonetic peculiarities mostly found in poems and literature. They are less popular when creating advertisements. These two later phonetic peculiarities are not used as a singular base foundation for building a slogan, but more likely like an additional feature added towards building a more peculiar and memorable slogan. Phonetic peculiarities of any spoken language of the world truly add more colour to the process of using it. This quality trait of phonetics also applies in the modern age of advertising. When creating slogans, phonetic peculiarities make a perfect ingredient when creating a memorable verbal ad. By applying phonetics to slogans, the chances of memorising it by the reader increase significantly, since these peculiarities make the slogan playful and creative.

2.2.2 The characteristics of slogans

Slogans, as a language phenomenon, could be created in many ways. This form of a verbal ad has many linguistic peculiarities; subsequently, the possibilities are nearly endless when creating slogans. But certain combinations in the market determine whether a slogan will do its marketing job successfully or not. According to the research done by Ding X. (2003), one of the most common characteristic traits noticed when developing successful slogans is the amount of words used in the verbal ad. Three-worded and four-worded slogans are the most popular in the commercials of companies. This is because that is the perfect amount of words to convey a short, catchy, yet powerful message. Usually, this amount of words is found in slogans that rhyme. Two-worded and eight-worded slogans are also quite popular in the field of advertising. Although two-worded ones aren't efficient when connecting with a consumer, they surely can be catchy and memorable and thus have to be planned well for them to work. Eight-worded slogans are perfect for personifications, metaphors and alliteration. Everything else that does not fall into this word number category, according to Ding X. (2003), is too long to be a catchy slogan or convey other linguistic peculiarities.

Scholar Dass M. (2018) states that an important character trait of a slogan is “message clarity”. The main reason slogans were created in the first place is to convey a very clear and focused message to the readers/consumers to help them understand the benefits provided by the brand. Furthermore, Dass M. (2014) explains that if there is no bond between the customer and the slogan, there is a very large chance that your company will be forgotten. According to Kumar P. (2014), creativity is another character trait of a successful slogan. This is crucial if competing in a “big business field”. A creative slogan can make a significant breakthrough in the competitive game since it stands out from the massive market of slogans. The scholar describes “being creative when creating slogans” as having divergence or the extent to which an advertisement is novel or different compared to its counterparts. Slogans with the characteristic trait of creativity tend to generate a positive emotional response from the consumer/reader, which is why this trait is important.

To sum up, it could be said that for slogans to fall under the category of “successful ones”, they need to have these character traits: message clarity, brand and product appropriation, creativity and a certain amount of words (depending on the peculiarity which is chosen for the slogan).

3. RESULTS

According to the theoretical part, the slogans may contain phonetic peculiarities: *alliteration*, *assonance*, *rhyme*, *rhythm* and *onomatopoeia*. These phonetic peculiarities make slogans catchy and playful since the reading properties of these slogans are enhanced, and thus they stick in the consumer's mind. The use of phonetic peculiarities in political slogans can be seen in the examples given below.

Examples	Source
1. <i>"Patriotism-protection-prosperity"</i>	1. The Republican Party and William McKinley slogan
2. <i>"Power to the people"</i>	2. Anti-establishment slogan
3. <i>"War on Women"</i>	3. Political slogan used by the Democratic Party
4. <i>"<u>R</u>um, <u>R</u>omanism and <u>R</u>ebellion"</i>	4. USA Republican slogan
5. <i>"Rejuvenated Republicanism"</i>	5. B.Harrison-campaign slogan
6. <i>"Compassionate Conservatism"</i>	6. George W. Bush's election campaign slogan
7. <i>"Tell the Truth"</i>	7. Cleveland's crisis period slogans
8. <i>"Win with Wilson"</i>	8. Woodrow Wilson Presidential Campaign slogan
9. <i>"Maggie, Maggie, Maggie – Out, Out, Out"</i>	9. Slogan used against Margaret Thatcher
10. <i>"Got Guv?"</i>	10. Jim Oberweis 2006 governor for Illinois slogan

Table 1. Alliteration slogans in political discourse

Table 1 contains slogans that are based on the linguistic peculiarity of **alliteration**. This phonetic peculiarity was quite common out of the 80 examined political slogans. All of the political slogans in this table fall under two to four-worded verbal advertisements. This is a good sign itself. Alliteration grants the slogan the ability of certain sound patterns which impact the reader more. For example, "War on Women" is more compelling to the reader than "Aggression on Women". Alliteration makes the slogan simple and direct yet powerfully striking to the reader's mind. It increases the longevity of the slogan. It can help to make a couple of statements at the same time like in example no.1. Alliteration has a downside which is the limitation that comes with it. Since these slogans are mostly made of no more than four words, it limits the distinctive creativity aspect. An interesting example is no.9, which is a double alliteration slogan since there is a pattern of the repeating letters M and O. Example no.4 has some signs of assonance. The limited amount of words used in this phonetic device of alliteration shows that it is a great tool for achieving political brand appropriation and clarity of the intended message because of the shortness, but it cuts out the creativity aspect.

Example	Source
1. <i>"Be the better bank"</i>	1. Canadian Bank
2. <i>"Fluent in finance"</i>	2. Abilitie Bank
3. <i>"Tomorrow Together"</i>	3. ABCA Bank
4. <i>"Passion to perform"</i>	4. Deustsche Bank
5. <i>"One for One"</i>	5. Toms
6. <i>"Today, tomorrow, together"</i>	6. Absa Bank
7. <i>"Banking on better"</i>	7. American Riviera Bank
8. <i>"Beyond Banking"</i>	8. Anchor Bank
9. <i>"Brilliance In Banking"</i>	9. SMART FCU

Table 2. Alliteration slogans in business discourse

Business slogans listed in *Table 2* fall under the linguistic peculiarity of alliteration. All of the listed slogans use this feature to their benefit. The Canadian Bank, with its four worded slogan (no.1), made a successful breakthrough in its sphere when it came to competing with other banks in their region. Alliteration helps them choose words that have a better sound, and subsequently, a stronger message is delivered. The message clarity is crystal clear, and so is the brand appropriation. The reader understands that the “bank” has good intentions. Another great example in *Table 2* is the *Abilities Bank* slogan: “*Fluent in Finance*”. It is a three worded slogan that even has some expressions of personifications. The verb “Fluent” is the human ability to articulate a language properly. So in a way, it gives the bank human-like qualities. All the listed slogans in *Table 2* have similar linguistic peculiarities that make them effective. By looking at the examples, it can be said that business alliteration slogans have fewer words than their counterparts in politics.

Example	Source
1. “ <u>Drill</u> , Baby, <u>Drill</u> ”	1. U.S Republican party slogan
2. “ <u>Go</u> for <u>Growth</u> ”	2. Pakistan Muslim League political slogan
3. “ <u>Go</u> Imran <u>Go</u> ”	3. Australian Liberal Campaign slogan
4. “ <u>Touch</u> one, <u>touch</u> all”	4. Australian unionist slogan meaning harming one worker
5. “ <u>There</u> are known <u>knowns</u> ”	5. <u>Donald Rumsfeld</u> slogan when addressing war with Iraq.
6. “ <u>Who</u> but <u>Hoover</u> ?”	6. 1928 U.S. presidential campaign slogan of <u>Herbert Hoover</u>
7. “ <u>Nothing</u> About <u>Us</u> Without <u>Us</u> !”	7. <u>U.K slogan used by the people to address democracy</u>
8. “ <u>Stop</u> Boris <u>Stop</u> Brexit”	8. <u>U.K Social democratic and labour party slogan</u>
9. “Keep <u>Cool</u> and Keep <u>Coolidge</u> ”	9. The 1924 presidential campaign slogan of <u>Calvin Coolidge</u>
10. “There is <u>no</u> Stop, Keep <u>Going</u> On!”	10. Slogan of Justice and Development party

Table 3. Assonance slogans in political discourse

Table 3 contains political slogans built using the phonetic peculiarity of **assonance**. This phonetic peculiarity seemed quite popular in politics from the analysed bulk of political slogans. The highlighted parts of every slogan in *Table 3* indicate assonance. This phonetic peculiarity does not contribute to the message's strength, nor does it add specific attributes to the message's character; as seen in *Table 3*, it gives some playful texture to the mix and adds some good rhythm. Every slogan in *Table 3* has a good rhythm and could be used as a chant. Political assonance slogans are made from three to nine words. The message clarity and political brand appropriation character traits of slogans are easily achieved since this peculiarity is not very poetic and helps the message be delivered with many filters as possible.

Example	Source
1. <i>"The thrill of <u>victory</u> and the <u>agony</u> of defeat"</i>	1. ABC's Wide World of Sports
2. <i>"<u>Driven</u> to be <u>the best</u>"</i>	2. Autonation
3. <i>"<u>Sharing</u> Knowledge. <u>Building</u> Trust"</i>	3. Westfield Insurance
4. <i>"<u>Local</u> People. <u>Local</u> Decisions"</i>	4. Community Bank of the South
5. <i>"<u>Bank</u> Smart. <u>Bank</u> Happy."</i>	5. First Market Bank
6. <i>"<u>Get there</u>. <u>Start here</u>."</i>	6. USA Federal Credit Union
7. <i>"<u>Bank Healthier</u>. <u>Live Happier</u>."</i>	7. NVOP Bank
8. <i>"We Help the <u>World Grow</u> the Food It Needs"</i>	8. The Mosaic Company

Table 4. Assonance slogans in business discourse

Assonance slogans were quite common in business compared to the phonetic peculiarity of rhyme. Slogans listed in *Table 4* have the phonetic peculiarity of assonance in them. This grants these business slogans the character trait of being catchy and playful; thus, the first hand the seemingly complicated world of banks and insurance companies is served on an attractive plate with an easily digestible dish. Assonance gives the character trait of good rhythm business slogans, as seen in the examples created for political needs. Thus, it is a perfect recipe for making a strong connection between the reader and the company. Assonance slogans are made out of four to nine words. The message clarity is right there, although some examples showed the missing slogan character trait of brand appropriation.

Example	Source
1. <i>"<u>Equality</u> Not <u>Austerity</u>."</i>	1. Social Democratic and Labour Party.
2. <i>"<u>Prosperity</u> not <u>Austerity</u>."</i>	2. Northern Ireland Democrat party.
3. <i>„Our choice:„ <u>Clevke</u> and <u>Steve</u>."</i>	3. 1892 USA Presidential campaign
4. <i>"<u>Blaine</u>, <u>Blaine</u>, <u>James G. Blaine</u>! The continental liar from the <u>state of Maine</u>."</i>	4. Cleveland attack slogan on G. Blaine's corruption charges.
5. <i>"It's nothing but <u>fair</u> to leave Taft in the <u>Chair</u>."</i>	5. W. Taft presidential campaign.
6. <i>"<u>Liberation</u> before <u>Education</u>"</i>	6. Slogan against segregated Bantu education system
7. <i>"<u>Hey</u>, <u>Hey</u>, <u>LBJ</u>, how <u>many</u> kids <u>will</u> you <u>kill</u> <u>today</u>?"</i>	7. Slogan against Lyndon B. Johnson
8. <i>"Think <u>global</u>, act <u>local</u>"</i>	8. Slogan used in various political spheres
9. <i>"<u>I like IKE</u>"</i>	9. 1952 Dwight D. Eisenhower presidential campaign slogan
10. <i>"<u>I STILL</u> like <u>IKE</u>"</i>	10. 1956 Dwight D. Eisenhower presidential campaign slogan.

Table 5. Rhyme slogans in political discourse

The use of **rhymes** was neither popular nor successful, according to history, when creating political slogans, although this phonetic peculiarity was found quite often. This is because rhymes do not give it the trustworthy ability and make it sound “cheesy”. Slogans shown in *Table 5* fall under the political slogans that use the phonetic peculiarity of **rhymes**. Usually, when it comes to these types of political slogans, they intend to rhyme no more than two words out of the whole verbal advertisement to avoid sounding awkward for the reader. But slogan no.4 from *Table 5* used six rhymes for the record. This is very rare, but the message clarity is easily understood, and so is the person to whom the slogan is targeted, even though it is a thirteen worded verbal ad. So in a way, this slogan is effective.

Another interesting example would be number 5. It is a ten worded slogan, but it only has two rhyming parts. It makes it an interesting combination. The two words that rhyme are pretty different, so if read out loud, they would not rhyme perfectly, unlike example 4. What is meant by the slogan is clear, and so is the brand appropriation, but as we know in history, it failed, probably because of the awkwardly placed rhymes. This slogan sounds “cheesy” because the rhyming part is poorly done. So the rhyme placement needs to be thought out very well. Other examples in *Table 5* are easy to read and effective because their linguistic peculiarities are done right. It could be said that political slogans that use the phonetic peculiarity of rhyme also have a good rhythm. For example, numbers one and two are three worded slogans with two rhymes. Easy to read and has great message clarity. Slogan number 3 uses the fallback rhyme technique. Political slogans that use the phonetic peculiarity of rhyme are made of three to thirteen words; the message is easily understood, and so is the political brand appropriation.

Example	Source
1. “All the News That’s <u>Fit to Print</u> ”	1. The New York Times
2. “On your <u>side</u> , <u>Nationwide</u> ”	2. Nationwide Mutual Insurance Company
3. “To save <u>and invest</u> , talk to <u>Natwest</u> .”	3. Natwest Bank
4. “ <u>You & us</u> . <u>UBS</u> ”	4. UBS

Table 6. Rhyme slogans in business discourse

Compared to the counterparts found in politics and by examining the list of 80 business slogans, a conclusion could be made that the phonetic peculiarity of rhyme is not favourable to copywriters hired for the business field. The tendencies of rhyme found in business slogans are not as peculiar as in politics. All the slogans listed in *Table 6* contain two words, and two occasions of compound rhymes were detected (no.3 and no.4). No indications of a fallback rhyme technique were discovered by examining the list. Business rhyme slogans are made from three to seven words with good message clarity and brand appropriation. The highlighted parts in table *Table 6* indicate the use of rhymes.

4. DISCUSSION

Out of 80 analysed political slogans, 39 contained phonetic peculiarities. These political slogans are mainly created for groundbreaking effects, regardless of the context. Phonetic devices are perfect for direct statements such as insults, ideologies, angry crowd chants, etc. The use of phonetic peculiarities in business slogans was less widespread compared to its counterparts in the world of politics. Phonetic devices in business are primarily used as a tool to state a playful, smart statement about the company rather than a groundbreaking effect. Bank and insurance avoid being seen as serious and cold, so some copywriters tend to use phonetic peculiarities. Out of the 80 examined business slogans, only 25 contained linguistic peculiarities at a phonetic level.

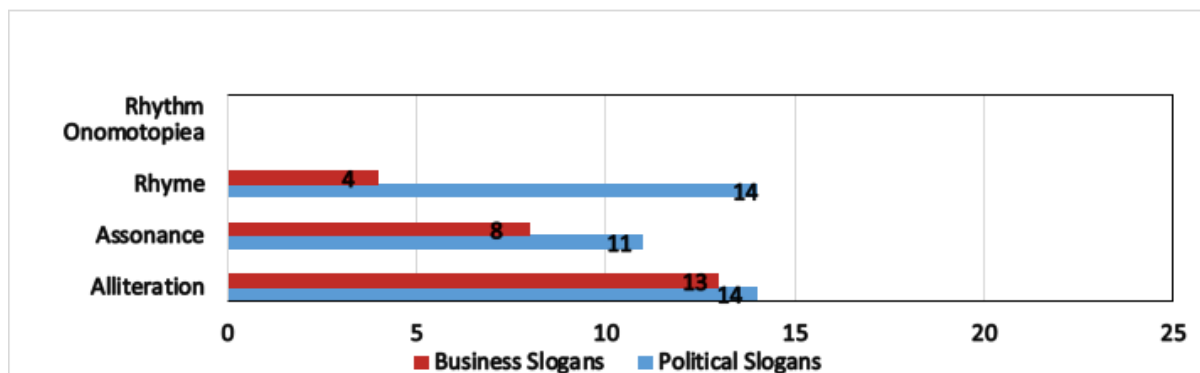


Fig. 1. The use of phonetic devices in business and political slogans

Figure 1 displays the descriptive comparative linguistic business and political slogan analysis at the phonetic level. Out of the 39 examined political slogans, the most popular was alliteration and rhyme. Still, compared to the results found in business slogans (25), the most utilised peculiarity was alliteration. In politics, alliteration grants the slogan's ability to convey information easily about certain ideologies and ideas requiring drastic measures. Alliteration in business slogans is utilised to highlight the better qualities of a company and the ideas themselves. The phonetic peculiarity of rhyme in political slogans is mostly used as a gateway for insults, or for the sole purpose of pointing out certain things wrong in the field. Rhyme was less prevalent in business slogans; this phonetic device is mainly used as a playful eye-catcher than a real message or idea statement vessel. Assonance was the second most popular business slogan, phonetic peculiarity. In this sphere, this linguistic feature adds good rhythm to the slogan, which helps convey certain general statements more attractively; in the world of politics, this phonetic peculiarity is used for the same function (that is why the results are similar). The phonetic peculiarity of onomatopoeia was not detected in the analysed list of slogans. This is probably because the main function of this phonetic device is to replicate certain sounds in the manner of words, which is more suitable for promoting a certain product, not a politician or a serious business.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Slogans are a universal way of portraying a message, ideology, intention, or goal in just a few words. According to the research done in the theoretical sources, slogans could be grouped under these *phonetic peculiarities*: rhyme, alliteration, assonance, rhythm and onomatopoeia. According to the research done in theoretical sources, the following slogan characteristics were extracted: word count, brand appropriation, creativity, and message clarity. The research showed that out of 80 examined business slogans, most peculiarities were present, except *onomatopoeia* and *rhythm*. Business slogans have the characteristic traits of message clarity and brand appropriation. Descriptive comparative analysis revealed that phonetic devices are applied to attract new customers by creating catchy verbal ads, and semantics is used to make the business more accessible. Onomatopoeia was not present in any slogan subgroup, and this is because this feature is created for mimicking sounds, which is not suitable for a business or a political slogan since it would not look mature and acceptable. Both slogan subgroups used the rhythm as an additional device to enhance other present peculiarities. Political slogans had no case of pun usage, whilst business slogans showed different results. This is because wordplay is not suitable for the serious sphere of politics. Hyperbole was also barely present in political slogans, whilst business slogans showed it as the most popular peculiarity. These changes are due to certain tendencies of business and politics.

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