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A note on versions:
The version presented here is a presentation of current research and future research ideas.

For more information, please contact the WRAP Team at: wrap@warwick.ac.uk.
Language Concreteness in Consumer and Brand Communication

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8 June 2018
Agenda

› Selected Studies: Language Concreteness in Consumer and Brand Communication

› Selected Conference Presentations

› Current Projects

› Ideas for the Future
Research Motivation

Brand Language Online

› Holiday dreaming wishing we were at the seaside. What are your holiday essentials? (Estée Lauder)

› Its legs-out season (yay!) fancy showing them off on a fabulous holiday? Share your leg selfie on Instagram with #NIVEALegs for a chance to win a £1000.

→ Is there a systematic difference in brand language and the language consumer use to communicate with brands?
**Language Concreteness**

Measurable outcome of the Construal Level Theory of Psychological Distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010)

**Concrete Language**
- e.g. apple, sleeveless, to comb
- Described object is easy to imagine and **psychologically close** to consumer.
- Used for feasible, accessible, affordable objects

**Abstract Language**
- e.g. spirituality, conceptual, would
- Described object is difficult to imagine and **psychologically distant** to consumer.
- Used for desirable, inaccessible, exclusive objects
Brand Communication Driving Brand Positioning

Luxury brands → Abstract language → Desirable Exclusive Unique

Non-luxury brands → Concrete language

Brysbaert et al. 2014

Affordable Accessible Value for money

Construal Level Theory of Psychological Distance: Trope & Liberman, 2010; Liberman & Trope, 1998
Consumer Brand Associations

Luxury brands → Desirable Exclusive → Construed at high-level → Abstract language

Non-luxury brands → Affordable Accessible (feasible) → Construed at low-level → Concrete language

Liberman & Trope, 1998; Trope & Liberman, 2000; Todorov, et al., 2007

Brysbaert et. al 2014
H1: Consumers have psychologically more distant (close) brand associations with luxury (non-luxury) brands resulting in the use of abstract (concrete) language.

H2: Luxury brands communicate more abstractly than non-luxury brands.

H3: Abstractly (concretely) worded brand communication leads to more favourable evaluations for luxury (non-luxury) brands than concretely (concretely) worded brand communication.
If Moët, the prosecco brand, would use more abstract language it would be perceived more desirable and exclusive.

- Brand managers can use language concreteness to position a brand and improve consumer evaluations.

- No research about psychological distance in brand associations and brand communication.

- Implications of (mis)match between consumer language (cognition) and brand communication in terms of psychological distance.

- Novel methodology leveraging natural data increasing ecological validity and reliability due to ease of reproducibility.

- Construal Level Theory findings are exclusively based on lab experiments with 3 exceptions (i.e. Bhatia & Walasek, 2016, Huang et al. 2016, White et al. 2011)
Overview of Selected Studies

1. Brand Associations → Construal Level → Language Concreteness
2. Match?
3. Consumer Evaluation
4. Brand Type
Overview of Research Methodology of Selected Studies

› Study 1: Language Concreteness in Consumer Tweets to Luxury and Non-Luxury Brands in Consumer Tweets
  – Computational Psycholinguistics

› Study 2: Language Concreteness in Luxury and Non-Luxury Brand Communication on Twitter
  – Computational Psycholinguistics

› Study 3: The Effect of Language Concreteness and Brand Type, Mis(Match) on Consumer Evaluation
  – Mixed Design Experiment
Computational Psycholinguistics

- Psycholinguistic is concerned with language comprehension and the relationship between language and psychological processes (Miller, 1965; Rubenstein & Aborn, 1960)
  - Little attention from disciplines outside of psychology despite the perpetual growth of unstructured text data both in organisations and on social media
  - Little integration with existing theories

- Computational Psycholinguistics: writing a computer script to scrape, clean, and analyse data drawing on published databases
  - Language concreteness norms for 30'000 words. Norms range from 1 (abstract) to 5 (concrete) (Brysbaert et. al 2014)
Computational Psycholinguistics

Data from 15 luxury and 15 non-luxury brands

- Scraped 100 consumer tweets per brand with keyword search, i.e. ‘@EsteeLauder’
  - @ sign before brand name means that tweet is addressed to brand on Twitter
  - Data scraped Feb 17*

- Scraped 100 tweets per Twitter handles of brands**
  - Data scraped Feb 17

*Additional Twitter data set
**Additional Facebook data set
Computational Psycholinguistics: Measuring Language Concreteness

From my fun time in London with photographer @dannymeijaphoto
Skirt & sweater from @hm [https://t.co/KC2FXbsUr9](https://t.co/KC2FXbsUr9)

Step 1
From my fun time in London with photographer dannymeijaphoto
Skirt sweater from hm

Step 2
from my fun time in london with photographer dannymeijaphoto
skirt sweater from hm

Step 3
fun time london photographer dannymeijaphoto skirt sweater hm

Step 4
Language concreteness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fun</th>
<th>time</th>
<th>photographer</th>
<th>skirt</th>
<th>sweater</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>4.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results Study 1 and 2

Study 1: Language Concreteness in Consumer Brand Associations

› Consumers use more abstract words when tweeting luxury brands ($M = 3.232$) than non-luxury brands ($M = 3.292$, $t(2771.9) = 2.679$, $p = .007$)
  - Psychologically closer brand associations with luxury brands than non-luxury brands

Study 2: Language Concreteness in Brand Communication

› Luxury brands use more abstract words when tweeting consumers ($M = 3.212$) than non-luxury brand ($M = 3.024$, $F(1,1) = 8.373$, $p = .007$)
  - Luxury brands position themselves as psychologically more distant, exclusive, unique and desirable than non-luxury brands
Study 3: The Effect of Language Concreteness and Brand Type, Mis(Match) on Consumer Evaluation

› 2x2x2 mixed experiment
  – Within (repeated) factor: concrete vs. abstract language
  – Within (repeated) factor: luxury vs. non-luxury brand
  – Between (independent) factor: high vs. low-level construal

› 109 Undergraduate participants were primed to construe high vs. low-level

› Rated four fictitious brand advertisement for footwear on 7-point scale for liking and purchase intention
Results for Liking

- Abstractly worded advertisement are liked better ($M = 4.108$) than concretely worded advertisement ($M = 3.333$, $F(1, 108) = 53.96$, $p > .001$)

- Participants like luxury brand advertisement less ($M = 3.391$) than a non-luxury brand ($M = 3.681$, $F(1, 108) = 3.859$, $p = .0521$).

- The interaction between language concreteness and brand type is significant ($F(2, 108) = 18.904$, $p > .001$).
Study 3: The Effect of Language Concreteness and Brand Type, Mis(Match) on Consumer Evaluation

Results for Purchase Intentions

- More abstractly worded advertisements lead to higher purchase intentions ($M = 3.323$) than concretely worded ones ($M = 2.627$, $F(1,108) = 10.306$, $p > .001$).
- The main effect for brand type is not significant.
- The interaction between language concreteness and brand type is significant ($F(2,108) = 5.671$, $p = .019$).
Selected Conference Presentations

› **IEEE/ACM International Conference on Advances in Social Networks Analysis and Mining, Barcelona**
  - “Triangulated text analysis of tweets for Social CRM”, under review

› **Association for Consumer Research Conference (ACR), Oct 2017**
  - Communication style mismatch on Twitter and Facebook: how luxury brands fail to communicate their desirability and exclusivity"
  - Co-chair of round table discussion “The luxury brand consumption experience in the digital era” with 6 panellists

› **European Marketing Academy Conference (EMAC), May 2016**
  - “Consumer perception of utilitarian vs. luxury products and services on the basis of psychological distance”

› **Social Cognition Pre-Conference, Society for Personality and Social Psychology Conference, San Diego, Jan 2016**
  - “When to focus on the detail and when on the big picture: psychological distance of utilitarian vs. luxury products and experiences”
Current Projects

› Griesser, S.E. & Barbera, M. “Media outlets as brands: consumer trustworthiness and willingness to share”
  ➔ Psychology & Marketing

› Griesser, S.E., Gupta, N, & Jarvis, S.A. “#Skype Down: Consumer sentiment during service outage”
  ➔ Journal of Service Research

› Nandhakumar, J., Gupta, N. & Griesser, S.E. “The impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on productivity”
  ➔ AI Innovation Network
Future Research Ideas
The Effect of Language Emotion on Use of Pictograms and Ideograms

Inspired by language concreteness research and sentiment research during Skype outage

Language Emotion valence, arousal, & dominance data base (Warriner et. al 2013)
- Based on Osgood, Suci & Tannenbaum’s theory of emotion (1957)
- Language processing procedure as described before can be applied
The Effect of Language Emotion on Use of Pictograms and Ideograms

- Pictograms are symbols representing a concept, object, activity, place or event by illustration

- Ideograms are simplified pictures selected by agreement or custom to become fixed pictorial symbols of an object or concept.
The Effect of Language Emotion on Use of Pictograms and Ideograms

› Utilising existing Facebook data set of 3000 posts
  - Facebook reactions are new and have not yet been studied
  - Impact of language on consumer response

› What is the relationship between language valence, arousal, dominance, ideograms and pictograms?
  - More positive words → 😊
  - More arousing words → 😞
  - Differential role of ❤️ 😊 😌 😢 😞 vs. 😊
  - What is the influence of arousing (dominating) language on organic diffusion of advertisement in network?
  - What is the relationship between arousing (dominating) language and the likelihood to respond to language?
Unorthodox Ways to Leverage Digital Data

› Both human and bot perceptions of bots
  - Perceptions of Alexa, Siri or a simple voice automated system routing calls
  - Employee perceptions of Information Bots

› Language concreteness in product vs service (brand) experiences
  - Experiential distance (Hamilton & Thompson, 2009 JCR)

› The value individuals attribute to different types of personal data and how these perceptions are shaped by different networks.
  - In light of General Data Protection Regulation implemented 25.5.18 and Cambridge Analytical scandal with Facebook data
Thank you!