



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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H Y D E R A B A D

Language and Society

Prof Radhika Mamidi

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Social Hierarchy in Real World Settings

Author

Tanishq Goel

This report supplements the final collective report.

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Language and Society

Introduction

There is no doubt that social hierarchies happen to be an integral part of the society we live in today. They are something that we encounter on a daily basis and which affect our form or way of communication with other members in those hierarchies. At the same time, we need language to recognize such hierarchical models as well. As noted by Heller (2010), language can be viewed not as simply a reflection of social order but as something which helps establish social hierarchies.

Advertising has brought in an advanced change in the manner of building awareness about any product or a service in the society. In the present time, advertising has grown on new heights of creativity and innovation. The types of ads being produced these days have shown great influence on the minds of people. In other words, advertising influences the consumer behavior. In one way or other advertisements have led the society to change its way of living!

We have collected a dozen advertisements that highlight the concept of social hierarchy. We started collecting advertisements so as to help us gain some new insights about how these ads capture Social Hierarchy.

Chapter 1

Analysis

1.1 Dataset

We tried to make our database varied in terms of settings and the relationships captured. Various settings capture offices, neighbors, school, hostel, home, shop etc have been captured. Relationships analyzed include shopkeeper-customer, teacher-student, siblings and many more. We wanted to analyze in general all the advertisements but as we collected data we found that printed ads were not able to capture social hierarchy. So that still remains a further scope of improvement. We considered TV ads as well as radio ads into consideration.

1.2 Criteria

So now let's talk about what are the various criterias for analysing ads for the concept of social hierarchy. The basic factors that we took into consideration are as follows:

1. Language
2. Social Setting
3. Relationship
4. Context and Manner of Interaction

1.3 Observation

1. Language: Majority of advertisements were mainly in Hindi having code-mixing involving English. As our main focus was on Indian Languages we focussed mainly on Hindi ads as Hindi was the only common IL in our team.
2. Social Settings: As mentioned above, social settings were captured from almost every sphere of life ranging from home to office or school etc. And in each settings different types of relationships can be captured for example in school, relationships captured can be student-student or teacher-student etc which makes our database rich in diversity.

3. Relationships: Varied types of relationships were captured as already mentioned before. We took into consideration age gap, gender, social class etc.
4. Context and Manner of Interaction: We analysed ads having different interactions ranging from informal to formal. We found that manner of interaction was affected by many factors like social settings, age gap, relationships, gender etc. For example we saw siblings talking at home interact really differently as compared to when they are at some other place having a formal environment like school, shop etc. We noticed siblings use words like “tu, tum,tujhe, tera etc” in personal settings like home but when the setting becomes formal, words like “aap, aapne etc” are used to address elder sister/brother minding the age gap.

Chapter 2

Conclusion

Many social factors were identified from all the ads like age gap, disrupting social hierarchy, relationship intimacy, respect etc. which are compiled in the final report. The occurrence of these social factors are plotted in a graph as shown below.

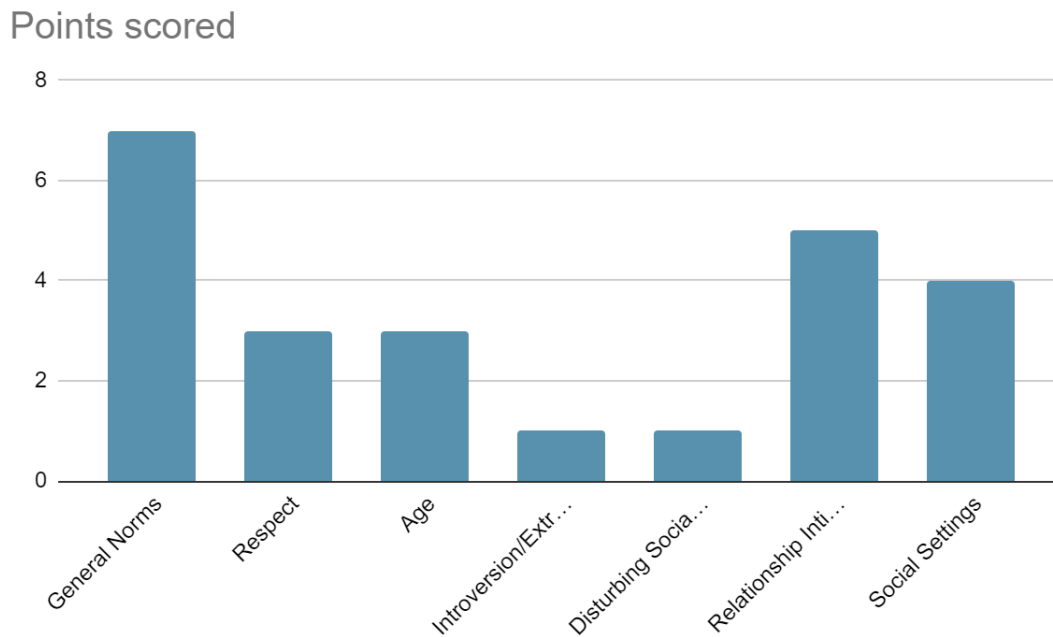


Figure 2.1: Observational Analysis

As we can see most of the advertisements follow general norms of society like showing the elite as superior to the middle class or working class. Few instances of introversion/ extroversion can also be found.

2.1 Future Work

We will also work on including printed ads in our database and obviously increasing the no. of TV ads in our data set will lead to more accurate plotting of the above graph and hence our understanding.