Language And Society

Individual Analysis Report

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Overview:

So as we know, the project is for understanding social stratification through popular audio-visual media including advertisements, TV shows, Movies etc.
We look for certain cues to get to the conclusion what are the linguistics features used by certain part of people, be it based of age/gender/education, etc.

Thus to complete our project, each one of us collected and analyzed data, mostly ads, and some TV shows.
Initially I helped my team in our first survey form, but it did not turn out good, as the questions asked did not yield meaningful data to us, as the respondents might have surely misunderstood the question. Hence I then also helped my team in our 2nd survey form, in which we ourselves put some ad videos and clearly asked the respondents whether the language in those ads are similar to them or not.

Analysis and Observation:

On my part, **I analyzed 8 ads(youtube videos) + some characters of 1 TV show "Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah".**

I observed that many features like the phonetic features, code mixing, setting, clothes play very important role in concluding what section of society is it catering to from these cues.
Like in a short note, I could very clearly observe that phonetic features like /f/ -> /ph/, z -> $d\widehat{ʒ}$/ $d\widehat{z}$, ae -> e, were very common in old people, or who are bit uneducated, or from rural areas. Many other features like rhoticity, conscious evasion of "indian" English, were also observed especially in the case where the characters were upper-class.

For some ads I also observed that even the background song had the cues which could be utilised by us. For example in this Kent ad, Even the song's lyrics "maa tham le meri ungliyan, dikhaun tujhe main duniya"appeal to every relationship between a son and his mother. Here "tujhe" isn't disrespecting; rather, it is decreasing the emotional distance between the son and his mother.

Sample Advertisement Analysis:

Tide: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CX1Zrk7XMHE

- Targeting lower/lower middle class
- The setting is that of the shop of a typical *small halwai* in a town/city.
- The halwai has a particular variety(dialect) of Hindi.
- His accent is also something which is considered rural like he says "chashni" with alveolar fricative instead of the retroflex. "Paisa" -> with stretching the vowel 'i'.
- /ʃ/ -> /s/, /æ/ -> /əi:/, fricative /z/ -> affricate /dz/, /miʈha/ -> /mɪ(ʈh):a
- He starts with "are bhaiya", which is a common addressal term for starting sentences in rural areas.
- Minor code mixing in English. Like "white". "Budget",etc. Mostly it is in Hindi.
- The ad also talks about budget emphasizing to attract more lower middle class/lower class people.

A formal analysis for this Tide ad was also done in reference to the data collected by the forms, including some quantitative analysis about how were the responses for the ad. It was presented during phase 3 and is present in Phase 3 presentation doc.
In the analysis, it did not yield much eager results due to certain challenges as described later.

Similarly all other 7 ads were analyzed, along with the TV Show ("Taarak Mehta Ka Ooltah Chashmah"), all are present in the Data Form(Github) with all the detailed analysis, dimensions and the features.

Challenges Faced:

- Consider the above ad described. Though I am concluding that speaking in such way depicts that it is from rural areas or used by lower class people, it may not necessarily be true. Like such accents is also used by people living in the UP-Bihar region. This just increased the area/possibilities of the hypothesis.
- Reiterating the above point, though I have said that these features means this and so on. It is not that easy. If a feature satisfies the criteria of certain relation, it is not necessary it is thus valid. For example, consider the case of 'Jethalal' in Taarak Mehta show. His example actually exposes this error. So I observed certain phonetic features which he depicts is of lower class people, he is actually very wealthy businessman. Hence I conclude that those features not necessarily depicts lower class. It in general may represent that he is either uneducated(which is true), from rural areas(he spent his childhood in a village), or he is a lower class person(not true in terms of wealth). This sort of helped me to be more vigilant in observing these details.
- Adding to it, like for the Tide ad shown above, the data I collected from the surveys were not that encouraging. That was because the form fillers were mainly from urban background, and thus there were not much presence of responses from rural/uneducated people, making the data not so accurate and correct.