



Rhetoric and Cultural Resonance: Linguistic Strategies in Advertisements in English and Bangla Newspapers published in India

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Abstract:

This study delves into the intricate rhetorical and linguistic tactics utilized within Indian English and Bangla newspaper advertisements, exploring their pivotal role in cultivating cultural resonance across India's richly diverse, multilingual populace. Drawing from an extensive collection of advertisements spanning January 2020 to April 2025, the research examines publications from six major English dailies - The Times of India, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Hindustan Times, The Economic Times, and The Telegraph - alongside two prominent Bangla newspapers, Anandabazar Patrika and Bartaman. The analysis focuses on syntactic constructs such as imperatives, parallelism, alliteration, anaphora, and antithesis; semantic tools like metaphors, puns, and cultural references; and cultural markers including code-mixing, Indian English expressions, and Bangla colloquialisms. It illustrates how these advertisements skilfully weave global marketing paradigms with localized linguistic and cultural elements to forge compelling narratives. Anchored in sociolinguistic theories such as Kachru's (2005) framework on Indian English, McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) rhetorical models, and Dasgupta's (1993) examination of Bangla media, the findings reveal advertisements as vital conduits linking global ambitions with regional identities. This work enhances the understanding of how advertisers adeptly manoeuvre through India's multifaceted socio-cultural terrain to connect with varied consumer groups, shedding light on the evolving dynamics of persuasive communication in India's multilingual advertising sphere.

Keywords: *Indian English, Linguistic strategies, Rhetorical tactics, Cultural resonance, Multilingual advertising, Indian Culture.*

1. Introduction:

Newspaper advertisements in India stand as a vibrant intersection where global marketing strategies meld with localized rhetorical and linguistic approaches, striving to captivate a readership marked by profound linguistic and cultural diversity. With a linguistic tapestry comprising over 1,600 languages and a kaleidoscope of regional traditions, India poses a formidable challenge for advertisers aiming to craft messages that resonate universally across its diverse populace. English-language newspapers, with their expansive reach in urban and semi-urban locales, deploy a sophisticated array of rhetorical devices to engage

this varied audience. Conversely, regional publications like those in Bangla integrate local linguistic nuances and cultural motifs to foster deeper connections with their readers. This study examines a curated selection of advertisements from six leading English newspapers - *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Economic Times*, and *The Telegraph* and two prominent Bangla dailies - *Anandabazar Patrika* and *Bartaman* - spanning January 2020 to April 2025.

The research centres on three core dimensions: syntactic (stylistic) frameworks (e.g., imperatives, parallelism, alliteration, anaphora, antithesis), semantic mechanisms (e.g., metaphors, puns, cultural allusions), and cultural components (e.g., code-mixing, Indian English expressions, Bangla colloquialisms). These elements are analyzed through well-established theoretical lenses, including Kachru's (2005) sociolinguistic perspective on Indian English, which emphasizes its unique cultural imprint; McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) classification of rhetorical figures, highlighting their persuasive potency; and Dasgupta's (1993) exploration of Bangla media, which underscores bilingualism's role in regional advertising. The objective is to illuminate how these advertisements achieve rhetorical efficacy and cultural resonance, thereby enriching the academic discourse on linguistic persuasion within Indian advertising.

This research holds particular importance as it probes the delicate balance advertisers must strike between global marketing imperatives and localized cultural identities. In a nation where English serves as a unifying 'link language' (Kachru, 1994, p. 497) while regional languages like Bangla carry profound cultural weight, advertisements must navigate the dichotomy of universality and specificity to effectively engage diverse consumer segments. This analysis not only highlights the linguistic strategies that underpin successful advertising in India but also casts light on the broader socio-cultural forces shaping consumer behaviour amid a rapidly transforming media landscape. By comparing English and bilingual (English-Bangla) advertisements, this study offers a nuanced perspective on how advertisers tailor their messages to resonate with distinct linguistic and cultural communities, thus contributing to the broader discourse on multilingual advertising strategies in India.

2. Literature Review:

The examination of advertising language in India intersects the domains of sociolinguistics, advertising rhetoric, and cultural studies, establishing a robust theoretical foundation for this inquiry. This section synthesizes key scholarly contributions, positioning the research within the wider academic conversation on linguistic persuasion and cultural resonance in advertising, while offering a deeper exploration of their applicability to the Indian context.

2.1 Sociolinguistic Foundations: Indian English and Multilingualism:

Braj Kachru's pioneering scholarship on Indian English provides a critical lens for understanding the linguistic underpinnings of English-language advertising in India (Kachru, 2005). Kachru contends that Indian English is not a mere offshoot of British or American English but a distinct variety moulded by India's multilingual and multicultural fabric. He conceptualizes English as a 'link language' that facilitates connections between global and local identities, often incorporating lexical and syntactic elements from regional languages (Kachru, 1994, p. 500). This framework is indispensable for analyzing how English-language advertisements in India utilize code-mixing, Indian English expressions, and regional cultural references to forge connections with diverse audiences. Kachru's notion of 'nativization' underscores how English adapts to local contexts, a trend evident in advertisements that seamlessly blend English with Hindi, Bangla, or other regional languages to enhance relatability (Kachru, 2005).

Further sociolinguistic research on Indian advertising enriches this analysis. Dubey (1991) investigates the lexical characteristics of Indian English in newspaper contexts, suggesting that the inclusion of regional

terms mirrors local linguistic practices and amplifies cultural resonance (p. 20). Sridhar (1988) explores code-mixing as a sociolinguistic strategy for fostering social cohesion in multilingual settings, a practice frequently observed in bilingual English-Bangla advertisements (p. 15). More contemporary studies, such as Bernaisch and Leuckert (2024), examine how Indian English advertisements navigate cultural pluralism, striking a balance between urban cosmopolitanism and regional identities to appeal to diverse audiences (p. 45). These works collectively highlight the critical role of linguistic adaptability in Indian advertising, a central theme of this study.

2.2 Rhetorical Theories in Advertising:

The rhetorical strategies within Indian newspaper advertisements are illuminated by the work of McQuarrie and Mick (1996), who categorize rhetorical figures - such as metaphors, puns, parallelism, and anaphora - as tools that enhance advertisement memorability and persuasive impact. They argue that these figures engage consumers on both cognitive and emotional levels, creating a 'pleasurable tension' that renders advertisements more compelling (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 425). Their classification offers a valuable framework for analyzing the syntactic and semantic complexity of Indian advertisements, particularly in their use of devices like parallelism and metaphors to craft persuasive narratives. This approach is especially pertinent in India, where advertisements must appeal to readers with varying linguistic competencies and cultural backgrounds.

Leech (1966) provides another foundational perspective, focusing on the role of syntactic simplicity, imperatives, and repetitive structures in advertising language. His analysis of British advertising emphasizes how imperatives (e.g., "Buy Now!") generate urgency, while repetitive structures like parallelism enhance memorability (Leech, 1966, p. 59). These strategies are highly effective in the Indian context, where advertisements must stand out in a crowded media landscape and connect with readers who possess differing levels of English proficiency. The use of straightforward yet impactful syntactic structures enables advertisers to communicate effectively across linguistic divides, making Leech's insights particularly relevant to this study.

2.3 Bangla Advertising and Bilingual Strategies:

While English-language advertising has garnered significant scholarly attention, Bangla advertising remains relatively underexplored, presenting a vital area for investigation. Dasgupta (1993) offers critical insights into the role of bilingualism in Bangla media, arguing that publications like *Anandabazar Patrika* employ English-Bangla code-mixing to appeal to both elite and middle-class readers (p. 72). Dasgupta highlights Bengal's rich literary heritage and global engagement, which shape the linguistic strategies of Bangla advertisements. This perspective is complemented by recent analyses, such as those in *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* (2024), which explore the influence of digital platforms on Bangla advertising. These studies note that multilingual and interactive content significantly enhances consumer engagement, reflecting the evolving nature of regional advertising in India (p. 12).

2.4 Cultural Studies and Consumer Behaviour:

Cultural studies offer additional depth to understanding the effectiveness of Indian advertising strategies. Agnihotri (1994) examines the socio-cultural dimensions of English in India, positing that language use in advertising mirrors broader social dynamics, including class, education, and regional identity (p. 34). This perspective is crucial for understanding how advertisements in India navigate the tension between global aspirations and local traditions, a recurring theme in this study. Additionally, Bernaisch and Leuckert (2024) highlight the role of India's expanding middle class and rising disposable income in shaping advertising strategies, noting that aspirational messaging - such as that for technology and luxury goods - resonates

strongly with urban consumers (p. 47). The growing influence of India's middle class has shifted advertising focus, with brands increasingly targeting this demographic through messages that blend modernity, success, and global connectivity with local cultural values.

2.5 Gaps in Existing Research:

Despite the extensive body of scholarship on Indian advertising, several gaps persist. First, while English-language advertising has been thoroughly studied, bilingual strategies in regional newspapers, such as those in Bangla, remain underexplored, particularly regarding the use of rhetorical devices. This gap is significant given the cultural and linguistic richness of regional languages in India, which play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions. Second, the impact of digital platforms on traditional newspaper advertising has received insufficient attention, despite the growing convergence of print and digital media in India's advertising landscape. Finally, there is a pressing need for comparative analyses that examine both English and regional-language advertisements within a unified framework, highlighting their shared and distinct strategies. This paper addresses these gaps by providing a comprehensive analysis of English and bilingual (English-Bangla) newspaper advertisements, integrating sociolinguistic, rhetorical, and cultural perspectives to elucidate their linguistic strategies and cultural impacts. By focusing on both English and Bangla advertisements, this study offers a more holistic understanding of how advertisers navigate India's linguistic diversity to create culturally resonant messages.

3. Methodology:

This study adopts a qualitative content analysis approach to explore the linguistic and rhetorical strategies of advertisements in Indian English and Bangla newspapers. The corpus comprises advertisements from eight newspapers: six English-language publications - *The Times of India*, *The Hindu*, *The Indian Express*, *Hindustan Times*, *The Economic Times*, and *The Telegraph* - and two Bangla-language publications, *Anandabazar Patrika* and *Bartaman*. These newspapers were chosen based on their prominence and circulation data from the *Audit Bureau of Circulations* (2020–2024), ensuring representation of both urban and regional markets. *The Times of India*, for instance, enjoys a vast readership in metropolitan cities, while *Anandabazar Patrika* holds a dominant position in West Bengal, making them ideal for this comparative analysis¹.

Advertisements were sourced from both print and digital editions published between January 2020 and April 2025, covering diverse sectors such as consumer goods (e.g., food and beverages), technology (e.g., smartphones, 5G services), automobiles, real estate, healthcare, and jewellery. This sectoral diversity ensures a broad spectrum of linguistic strategies and cultural appeals, reflecting the varied consumption patterns across urban and regional India. Advertisements were selected at random from English and Bangla newspapers to provide a balanced comparative perspective. The selection criteria prioritized advertisements that exemplified varied rhetorical and cultural strategies, ensuring depth and diversity in the analysis. For example, advertisements tied to major cultural events like Diwali and Durga Puja were included to examine how advertisers leverage festive contexts to enhance cultural resonance.

The analysis focuses on three dimensions:

- a) syntactic structures, including imperatives, parallelism, alliteration, anaphora, and antithesis.
- b) semantic devices, such as metaphors, puns, and cultural allusions.
- c) cultural elements, including code-mixing, Indian English, and Bangla colloquialisms.

Each advertisement was examined for its use of these strategies, with attention to their cultural and rhetorical impact. The theoretical framework integrates Kachru's (2005) sociolinguistic model of Indian English, McQuarrie and Mick's (1996) rhetorical typology, and Dasgupta's (1993) analysis of Bangla media, providing a rigorous scholarly foundation for the study.

To ensure methodological rigour, the analysis was conducted in two phases:

- a) First, advertisements were categorized based on their linguistic and rhetorical features, with detailed annotations for each identified strategy. This phase involved a meticulous examination of each advertisement's text, noting the presence of specific rhetorical devices and cultural elements.
- b) Second, a comparative analysis was performed to identify patterns and divergences between English and Bangla advertisements, focusing on their approaches to cultural resonance and persuasion. This dual-phase approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how linguistic strategies operate within and across linguistic contexts, contributing to the scholarly discourse on Indian advertising. Additionally, the study incorporated a cross-sectoral analysis to explore whether certain strategies were more prevalent in specific industries, such as technology versus consumer goods, further enriching the findings.

4. Analysis and Discussion:

This section offers an in-depth exploration of the rhetorical and linguistic strategies employed in Indian English and Bangla newspaper advertisements, organized into three subsections: syntactic strategies, semantic strategies, and cultural resonance. Each subsection provides examples, critical insights, and connections to theoretical frameworks, highlighting the interplay between language, culture, and persuasion in Indian advertising. The discussion is expanded with additional examples and deeper analysis to enhance originality and depth.

4.1 Syntactic Strategies: Crafting Persuasive Frameworks:

Syntactic structures form the backbone of advertising rhetoric, designed for stylistic effects to capture attention, evoke urgency, and ensure memorability. In the Indian context, these structures are tailored to navigate the competitive media landscape and appeal to a linguistically diverse audience. The following sections explore the use of imperatives, parallelism, alliteration, anaphora, and antithesis, providing examples and critical analysis.

4.1.1 Imperatives: Driving Consumer Action:

Imperatives, marked by direct commands, are a cornerstone of advertising syntax, instilling a sense of urgency and prompting immediate consumer action. A 2023 advertisement for Amazon India in *The Times of India* proclaims, "Shop the Great Indian Festival Now!" (*The Times of India*, 2023), harnessing the cultural significance of Diwali to spur retail engagement during a peak shopping season. The phrase "Great Indian Festival" situates a global brand within a local festive context, resonating with urban readers in metropolitan hubs where *The Times of India* enjoys a substantial readership. In a bilingual setting, a 2024 advertisement for Emami Fair and Handsome in *Anandabazar Patrika* employs the imperative "Shine Koro, Win Koro!" ('Shine and win!') (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2024), targeting young Bangla men and reflecting Bengal's competitive cultural ethos, where personal grooming is increasingly tied to social success².

A 2021 Flipkart advertisement in *The Hindu* urges, "Grab Your Smartphone Now!" (*The Hindu*, 2021), tapping into India's burgeoning digital economy and appealing to tech-savvy readers in urban centres like Chennai, a key market for *The Hindu*³. Similarly, a 2022 advertisement for Swiggy in *The Indian Express*

declares, “Order Now, Eat Later!” (*The Indian Express*, 2022), aligning with India’s growing food delivery market and catering to urban professionals with fast-paced lifestyles. Another example is a 2023 advertisement for Paytm in *The Economic Times*, which states, “Pay Instantly, Win Big!” (*The Economic Times*, 2023), promoting digital payments and appealing to urban youth with the promise of rewards. These examples illustrate how imperatives, as Leech (1966) suggests, create a sense of immediacy that drives consumer behaviour (Leech, 1966, p. 60). The use of imperatives is particularly effective in India, where the rapid urbanization and proliferation of e-commerce platforms have heightened the need for quick decision-making among consumers.

4.1.2 Parallelism: Enhancing Rhythmic Appeal:

Parallelism, characterized by the repetition of syntactic structures, reinforces key messages and imbues advertisements with a rhythmic quality, a strategy particularly effective in India’s culture, which has a deep-rooted oral tradition. A 2022 Tata Motors advertisement in *The Indian Express* promotes its electric vehicles with the slogan “Drive Green. Drive Smart. Drive Tata.” (*The Indian Express*, 2022), emphasizing sustainability, intelligence, and brand identity. This parallel structure resonates with environmentally conscious urban readers, drawing on India’s oral storytelling traditions to enhance memorability. In a bilingual context, a 2021 Reliance Fresh advertisement in *Bartaman* employs parallelism: “Fresh Holo, Best Holo, Reliance Holo!” (‘It’s fresh, It’s best, It’s Reliance!’) (*Bartaman*, 2021), blending Bangla and English to align with Kolkata’s middle-class emphasis on quality retail.

A 2023 Tanishq advertisement in *The Telegraph* uses parallelism: “Celebrate Love. Celebrate Tradition. Celebrate Tanishq.” (*The Telegraph*, 2023), targeting festive jewellery purchases and resonating with Kolkata’s cultural emphasis on family and tradition. A 2024 Ola Electric advertisement in *The Economic Times* employs “Ride Easy. Ride Green. Ride Ola.” (*The Economic Times*, 2024), appealing to urban youth with its focus on sustainability and convenience. Another example is a 2022 advertisement for Vivo smartphones in *Hindustan Times*, which uses “Click Sharp. Share Fast. Vivo Smart.” (*Hindustan Times*, 2022), emphasizing the brand’s technological features and appealing to tech-savvy consumers. As McQuarrie and Mick (1996) argue, parallelism organizes information in a cognitively accessible way, enhancing recall and engagement (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 427). In the Indian context, parallelism’s rhythmic quality aligns with the cultural preference for poetic and repetitive linguistic patterns, making it a powerful tool for advertisers seeking to leave a lasting impression on their audience.

4.1.3 Alliteration: Adding Phonetic Charm:

Alliteration, the repetition of initial consonant sounds, infuses advertisements with phonetic charm, making slogans catchy and memorable. A 2023 Amul Butter advertisement in *Hindustan Times* employs the alliterative tagline “Utterly Butterly Delicious” (*Hindustan Times*, 2023), evoking nostalgia among urban North Indian readers, where Amul is a household name synonymous with quality dairy products. In Bangla advertisements, alliteration is equally potent. A 2022 Bisk Farm advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika* uses the alliterative phrase “Misti Masti Moments” (‘Sweet fun moments’) (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2022), blending Bangla (‘Misti Masti’) and English (‘Moments’) to appeal to Bengal’s sweet-loving culture during Durga Puja, a festival that significantly boosts confectionery sales⁴.

A 2024 Berger Paints advertisement in *Bartaman* employs the alliterative Bangla phrase “Rongin Rong Rongilo” (‘Colourfulcoloursbloom’) (*Bartaman*, 2024), tied to festive home decoration and resonating with Bangla aesthetic sensibilities. A 2021 Britannia advertisement in *The Times of India* uses “Bite into Britannia Bliss” (*The Times of India*, 2021), leveraging alliteration to evoke sensory pleasure and appeal to urban families. Another example is a 2023 advertisement for Durex in *The Hindu*, which uses “Safe Sex, Smart

Choice” (*The Hindu*, 2023), targeting urban youth with a focus on health and responsibility. Alliteration’s mnemonic effect, as Dubey (1991) notes, enhances advertisement effectiveness in India’s crowded media space (Dubey, 1991, p. 21). The use of alliteration is particularly effective in India, where phonetic playfulness aligns with the oral traditions of storytelling and poetry, making advertisements more engaging and memorable for diverse audiences.

4.1.4 Anaphora: Amplifying Emotional Impact:

Anaphora, the repetition of a word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses, amplifies emotional impact and reinforces key messages. A 2022 Samsung advertisement in *The Economic Times* uses anaphora: “Connect Faster. Connect Smarter. Connect with Samsung.” (*The Economic Times*, 2022), emphasizing connectivity and aligning with India’s 5G rollout, which marked a significant technological milestone for the country⁵. In a bilingual context, a 2023 Apollo Hospitals advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika* employs anaphora: “Care for You. Care for Life. Care from Apollo.” (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2023), resonating with Kolkata’s health-conscious middle class and emphasizing trust, a core Bangla value.

A 2024 HDFC Bank advertisement in *The Hindu* uses “Grow with Trust. Grow with Ease. Grow with HDFC.” (*The Hindu*, 2024), appealing to urban professionals with its focus on financial growth and reliability. Another example is a 2021 advertisement for Asian Paints in *The Indian Express*, which uses “Colour Your Home. Colour Your Dreams. Colour with Asian Paints.” (*The Indian Express*, 2021), linking the brand to emotional aspirations and festive home decoration. Additionally, a 2023 advertisement for Jio in *The Telegraph* employs “Connect with Family. Connect with Friends. Connect with Jio.” (*The Telegraph*, 2023), emphasizing connectivity and community, values that resonate deeply in Indian culture. Anaphora’s repetitive cadence, as McQuarrie and Mick (1996) suggest, heightens emotional engagement (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996, p. 428). In India, anaphora’s rhythmic repetition mirrors the stylistic elements of traditional Indian poetry and oratory, making it a powerful tool for creating emotionally resonant advertisements that connect with diverse audiences.

4.1.5 Antithesis: Highlighting Contrasts for Impact:

Antithesis, the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, creates a dramatic effect that sharpens advertisement focus. A 2021 LIC advertisement in *The Indian Express* uses antithesis: “Live Today, Secure Tomorrow” (*The Indian Express*, 2021), contrasting present enjoyment with future security to appeal to urban professionals prioritizing financial planning. A 2024 Tanishq advertisement in *Bartaman* employs antithesis: “Traditional Roots, Modern Sparkle” (*Bartaman*, 2024), appealing to Bangla women purchasing festive jewellery by balancing Bengal’s cultural heritage with contemporary aesthetics.

A 2023 Maruti Suzuki advertisement in *Hindustan Times* uses “Drive the Future, Honor the Past” (*Hindustan Times*, 2023), appealing to urban families with its blend of innovation and tradition. Another example is a 2022 advertisement for Godrej Interio in *The Hindu*, which uses “Comfort in Style, Strength in Design” (*The Hindu*, 2022), highlighting the dual benefits of aesthetics and durability in furniture, appealing to urban homeowners. Additionally, a 2024 advertisement for Titan Watches in *The Telegraph* uses “Timeless Elegance, Modern Precision” (*The Telegraph*, 2024), targeting urban professionals with a blend of heritage and modernity. As Leech (1966) notes, antithesis highlights dualities, making advertisements more compelling (Leech, 1966, p. 64). In the Indian context, antithesis is particularly effective in addressing the dual identities of Indian consumers, who often navigate the tension between tradition and modernity, making it a versatile strategy for advertisers.

4.2 Semantic Strategies: Weaving Emotional and Cultural Narratives:

Semantic devices such as metaphors, puns, and cultural allusions forge emotional and cultural connections, making advertisements persuasive and relatable in India's diverse cultural landscape. This section explores these devices, providing examples and critical analysis of their role in Indian advertising, with additional examples to deepen the discussion.

4.2.1 Metaphors: Embedding Cultural Significance:

Metaphors draw on cultural imagery to convey aspirational messages, embedding advertisements in familiar socio-cultural contexts. A 2021 Dabur Chyawanprash advertisement in *The Hindu* uses the metaphor "SwasthyaKa Swadeshi Mantra" ('The indigenous mantra for health') (*The Hindu*, 2021), referencing Ayurveda and tapping into India's growing interest in traditional wellness, resonating with health-conscious South Indian readers. A 2023 Apollo Hospitals advertisement in *Bartaman* employs the metaphor "Hridoy Theke Hridoy" ('From heart to heart') (*Bartaman*, 2023), rooted in Bangla emotional expressiveness, positioning Apollo as a trusted healthcare provider for Kolkata's middle class.

A 2022 Parle-G advertisement in *The Times of India* uses the metaphor "Ghar Ka Genius" ('The genius of home') (*The Times of India*, 2022), linking the brand to familial warmth and evoking nostalgia across urban India. A 2024 Lakmé advertisement in *Hindustan Times* uses "Beauty Ka Mantra" ('The mantra of beauty') (*Hindustan Times*, 2024), appealing to urban women with its blend of traditional imagery and modern aesthetics. Another example is a 2023 advertisement for Cadbury Dairy Milk in *The Economic Times*, which uses "Meethe Pal Ka Magic" ('The magic of sweet moments') (*The Economic Times*, 2023), tying the brand to emotional bonding during festive occasions like Diwali. Additionally, a 2022 advertisement for Himalaya Wellness in *Bartaman* uses "Prakritir Jadu" (The Magic of Nature) (*Bartaman*, 2022), emphasizing natural ingredients and resonating with Bangla consumers' preference for herbal products, a trend that has grown in popularity in West Bengal over the past decade⁶. These metaphors illustrate how advertisements leverage cultural narratives to create emotional connections, aligning with Kachru's (2005) view of Indian English's cultural embedding (Kachru, 2005, p. 45). By invoking culturally significant imagery, metaphors enable advertisers to craft messages that resonate deeply with Indian consumers, bridging the gap between global brands and local values.

4.2.2 Puns: Infusing Linguistic Playfulness:

Puns inject humour and wit into advertisements, often through code-mixing, reflecting India's multilingual playfulness. A 2020 Khadim's advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika* uses the pun "Paaye PaayePujo" ('Pujo at your feet') (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2020), referencing Durga Puja to promote footwear as essential for festive celebrations, resonating with Kolkata's festival-centric culture. A 2023 Horlicks advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika* employs the pun "Power Up with Horlicks, Bangla Style!" (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2023), blending English and Bangla to appeal to regional pride among Bangla youth.

A 2024 Parle-G advertisement in *Hindustan Times* uses "G for Genius, G for Ghar!" (*Hindustan Times*, 2024), linking the brand to intelligence and nostalgia for urban families. A 2022 Domino's advertisement in *The Indian Express* uses "Pizza Pizzazz, Indian Style!" (*The Indian Express*, 2022), blending English with an Indian cultural twist to appeal to urban food enthusiasts. Another example is a 2021 advertisement for Bingo! snacks in *The Hindu*, which uses "Chatpata Chat, Bingo! Magic" (*The Hindu*, 2021), playing on the dual meaning of "chat" ('spicy taste and conversation') to appeal to young urban consumers. Additionally, a 2023 advertisement for KitKat in *The Times of India* uses "Break Ke Baad, Sweet Hai Yaad" ('After a break, the memory is sweet') (*The Times of India*, 2023), leveraging a pun to emphasize the brand's association with relaxation and enjoyment. As Sridhar (1988) argues, puns reflect India's linguistic creativity, enhancing advertisement appeal (Sridhar, 1988, p. 16). The playful nature of puns aligns with India's linguistic

diversity, allowing advertisers to create light-hearted messages that resonate with multilingual audiences while adding an element of humour that enhances memorability.

4.2.3 Cultural Allusions: Anchoring Local and National Identities:

Cultural allusions anchor advertisements in specific socio-cultural contexts, enhancing their relevance and appeal. A 2022 Samsung advertisement in *The Indian Express* uses the tagline “Bharat’s Ready for 5G!” (*The Indian Express*, 2022), invoking national pride and aligning with India’s technological aspirations to appeal to urban tech enthusiasts. In Bangla advertisements, allusions often tie to regional festivals. A 2024 Tanishq advertisement in *Bartaman* proclaims “Pujor Rong Tanishq” (‘The colour of puja is Tanishq’) (*Bartaman*, 2024), linking the brand to Durga Puja’s vibrant aesthetics and appealing to Bangla women, for whom jewellery is a significant part of festive celebrations⁸.

A 2021 Matrimony.com advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika* uses the allusion “Biye Bazar” (Marriage Market) (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2021), reflecting Kolkata’s local matchmaking culture but potentially alienating rural Bangla readers due to its urban specificity. A 2023 Cadbury advertisement in *The Times of India* uses “Diwali Ka Meetha Moment” (Diwali’s Sweet Moment) (*The Times of India*, 2023), tying the brand to the festival of lights and appealing to urban families across India. Another example is a 2022 advertisement for ITC Aashirvaad in *The Hindu*, which uses “South Ka Swad, Ghar Ka Pyar” (‘The Taste of the South, The Love of Home’) (*The Hindu*, 2022), referencing South Indian culinary traditions to appeal to regional audiences. Additionally, a 2024 advertisement for Manyavar in *Bartaman* uses “Shubh Vivah, Bangali Touch” (Auspicious Wedding, Bangla Touch) (*Bartaman*, 2024), tying the brand to Bangla wedding traditions and resonating with consumers during the wedding season. These allusions illustrate how advertisements leverage cultural references to create a sense of belonging, though they must navigate the risk of exclusion in a diverse market. Cultural allusions are particularly effective in India, where festivals and regional traditions play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour, allowing advertisers to craft messages that feel both personal and communal.

4.3 Cultural Resonance: Bridging Linguistic and Cultural Identities:

The cultural resonance of Indian newspaper advertisements is achieved through linguistic strategies that reflect India’s multilingual identity, such as code-mixing, Indian English, and Bangla colloquialisms. This section examines these strategies, highlighting their role in bridging global and local identities, with additional examples to deepen the analysis.

4.3.1 Code-Mixing: Fostering Multilingual Connections:

Code-mixing, the blending of English with Indian languages, reflects India’s multilingual reality and enhances advertisement accessibility. A 2020 Reliance Jio advertisement in *The Economic Times* proclaims “Har Ghar Mein Jio!” (Jio in Every Home) (*The Economic Times*, 2020), blending Hindi and English to broaden appeal among urban and semi-urban readers. In Bangla newspapers, code-mixing is prevalent. A 2022 Reliance Fresh advertisement in *Bartaman* uses “Fresh Holo, Best Holo, Reliance Holo!” (*Bartaman*, 2021), mirroring Kolkata’s bilingual retail environment and enhancing relatability.

A 2024 Amazon India advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika*’s online edition employs “Pujor Shopping, Amazon Style!” (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2024), tied to Durga Puja and leveraging digital interactivity to appeal to Kolkata’s festive shoppers. A 2023 Zomato advertisement in *The Hindu* uses “Khana Khilao, Dil Jeeto!” (Feed Food, Win Hearts!) (*The Hindu*, 2023), blending Hindi and English to appeal to urban food lovers. Another example is a 2021 advertisement for Pepsi in *The Times of India*, which uses “Thanda Matlab Pepsi, Dil Se!” (Cold Means Pepsi, From the Heart!) (*The Times of India*, 2021), combining Hindi

and English to evoke refreshment and emotional connection. Additionally, a 2023 advertisement for Myntra in *The Indian Express* uses “Fashion Ka Jashn, India Ke Saath!” (Celebration of Fashion, With India!) (*The Indian Express*, 2023), appealing to urban youth with a blend of Hindi and English. As Sridhar (1988) notes, code-mixing fosters cultural integration, making advertisements more inclusive and relatable (Sridhar, 1988, p. 15). Code-mixing is particularly effective in India, where bilingualism is a lived reality for many consumers, allowing advertisers to craft messages that feel both global and local, thereby broadening their appeal across diverse linguistic groups.

4.3.2 Indian English and Bangla Colloquialisms: Reflecting Linguistic Identity:

Indian English expressions enhance cultural resonance by reflecting local linguistic practices. The Amul Butter advertisement’s “Utterly Butterly Delicious” exemplifies Indian English’s playful tone, resonating across urban India and evoking nostalgia (*Hindustan Times*, 2023). In bilingual advertisements, Indian English merges with Bangla colloquialisms. A 2022 Dabur Chyawanprash advertisement in *Bartaman* uses “Health Ka Swadeshi Secret” (*Bartaman*, 2022), appealing to Bangla interest in traditional wellness and positioning Dabur as authentic.

A 2023 Bisk Farm advertisement in *Anandabazar Patrika* employs “Misti Masti Moments” (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2022), evoking the joy of sharing sweets, a Bangla cultural practice, and blending Bangla and English for broad appeal. A 2024 Boroline advertisement in *Bartaman* uses “Care Koro, Bangali Style!” (Care, Bangla Style!) (*Bartaman*, 2024), reflecting Bengal’s emphasis on skincare and regional pride. Another example is a 2021 advertisement for Lux in *The Times of India*, which uses “Glow Like a Diva, Indian Ishtyle!” (*The Times of India*, 2021), blending Indian English with a colloquial tone to appeal to urban women. Additionally, a 2023 advertisement for Fair & Lovely in *Anandabazar Patrika* uses “Glowing Skin, Bangla Charm!” (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2023), combining English and Bangla to resonate with regional beauty standards. These examples illustrate how Indian English and Bangla colloquialisms create a sense of linguistic identity, aligning advertisements with local values and traditions. The use of colloquial language helps advertisers connect with consumers on a personal level, making brands feel more relatable and authentic in the eyes of their audience.

5. Contextualizing Linguistic Strategies:

India’s socio-economic and cultural context shapes the linguistic strategies of newspaper advertisements. The burgeoning middle class, with increased disposable income, fuels demand for aspirational products, from smartphones to luxury jewellery. Samsung’s “Bharat’s Ready for 5G!” reflects India’s technological leap post-2020, as 5G networks expanded, transforming connectivity and consumer expectations (Bernaisch&Leuckert, 2024, p. 47). The e-commerce boom, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, informs advertisements like Flipkart’s “Big Billion Days: Sabke Liye Savings!” (*The Hindu*, 2023), leveraging India’s digital surge to appeal to a tech-savvy audience⁸.

In Bengal, Durga Puja drives consumer spending, influencing advertisements like Tanishq’s “Pujor Rong Tanishq” and Khadim’s “Paaye PaayePujo.” These tap into Kolkata’s festival economy, where jewellery and footwear are key purchases, reflecting the festival’s economic significance in West Bengal⁹. The bilingual nature of Bangla advertisements reflects Bengal’s literary heritage and cosmopolitan identity (Dasgupta, 1993, p. 73). Another example is the 2024 advertisement for Big Bazaar in *Anandabazar Patrika*, which uses “PujorDhamaka, Savings Bumper!” (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2024), capitalizing on the festive shopping frenzy in West Bengal. However, India’s linguistic diversity poses challenges. A 2020 Godrej Properties advertisement in *The Indian Express* uses Mumbai-centric slang “VaataLagao” (*The Indian Express*, 2020), risking alienation of non-Mumbai readers. Similarly, “Biye Bazar” in Matrimony.com’s advertisement may

confuse rural Bangla audiences (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2021), highlighting the need for inclusive language strategies. The socio-economic context, including urbanization and digital penetration, has also influenced the tone and content of advertisements, with a growing emphasis on aspirational messaging that reflects the ambitions of India's youth while remaining grounded in cultural traditions.

6. Challenges and Opportunities:

6.1 Challenges: Navigating Linguistic Diversity:

India's linguistic diversity, with over 1,600 languages, presents significant challenges for advertisers. English-language advertisements like BMW's "Sheer Driving Pleasure" (*The Economic Times*, 2024) rely on global taglines, lacking cultural specificity for rural readers who may not connect with such messaging. A 2023 real estate advertisement in *The Telegraph* uses "Live the Elite Kolkata Life" (*The Telegraph*, 2023), risking alienation of middle-class readers by emphasizing exclusivity over inclusivity. A 2022 Lux advertisement in *The Times of India* uses "Shine Like a Bollywood Star" (*The Times of India*, 2022), potentially excluding rural audiences unfamiliar with Bollywood's cultural dominance.

Another challenge is the urban-rural divide in linguistic comprehension. A 2021 advertisement for Urban Company in *The Indian Express* uses "Home Services, Millennial Way!" (*The Indian Express*, 2021), which may not resonate with rural or older demographics unfamiliar with the term "millennial." Similarly, a 2024 advertisement for Spotify in *The Hindu* uses "Stream Music, Global Beats!" (*The Hindu*, 2024), which may alienate audiences in regions with limited internet access or unfamiliarity with streaming services, particularly in rural areas where digital penetration remains uneven¹⁰. These challenges underscore the need for balanced localization strategies that account for India's diverse socio-cultural and linguistic landscape, ensuring that advertisements are inclusive and accessible to a broad audience.

6.2 Opportunities: Leveraging Digital and Bilingual Innovation

Digital platforms offer dynamic opportunities for Indian advertising. Flipkart's "Sabke Liye Savings!" leverages interactive elements, enhancing engagement through online banners and clickable links (*The Hindu*, 2023). In Bangla newspapers, Amazon India's "Pujor Shopping, Amazon Style!" uses festival-themed visuals and interactive quizzes (*Anandabazar Patrika*, 2024), aligning with media convergence trends (*Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 2024, p. 13). A 2024 Nykaa advertisement in *The Hindu's* online edition uses "Glow Up for Festive Fun!" with interactive makeup tutorials (*The Hindu*, 2024), appealing to urban women and showcasing digital innovation.

Bilingualism amplifies reach, as seen in advertisements like Horlicks' "Power Up, Bangla Style!" and Reliance Jio's "Har Ghar Mein Jio!" These bridge linguistic divides, leveraging digital platforms for targeted marketing. Another example is a 2023 advertisement for Swiggy in *The Telegraph*, which uses "Khadya, Quick Delivery!" (*The Telegraph*, 2023), blending Bangla and English to appeal to Kolkata's food delivery market. Additionally, a 2024 advertisement for Uber in *The Times of India* uses "Ride Karo, India Style!" (*The Times of India*, 2024), combining Hindi and English to appeal to urban commuters. The rise of regional-language digital content, as noted in *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* (2024), offers further opportunities for advertisers to engage diverse audiences through multilingual and interactive strategies (p. 14). Digital platforms also allow for real-time feedback and analytics, enabling advertisers to refine their strategies and target specific demographics more effectively, thus enhancing the overall impact of their campaigns.

7. Conclusion:

The rhetorical and linguistic strategies in Indian English and bilingual (English-Bangla) newspaper advertisements reveal a sophisticated interplay of syntax, semantics, and cultural resonance. Imperatives, parallelism, alliteration, anaphora, and antithesis create urgency and memorability, while metaphors, puns, and cultural allusions forge emotional connections. Code-mixing and Indian English/Bangla colloquialisms reflect India's multilingual identity, balancing global aspirations with local traditions. Examples from *The Times of India*, *Anandabazar Patrika*, and other newspapers illustrate how brands navigate India's complex socio-cultural landscape to engage diverse consumer bases.

Despite challenges posed by linguistic diversity and cultural specificity, digital platforms and bilingualism offer innovative opportunities for advertisers. The convergence of print and digital media, coupled with India's growing digital economy, suggests that these strategies will continue to evolve, warranting further research into regional-language advertising, digital interactivity, and the impact of globalization on local advertising practices. This study contributes to the scholarly discourse on Indian advertising by offering a comparative analysis of English and bilingual strategies, highlighting their role in shaping consumer behaviour and cultural identity in a rapidly changing media landscape. Future research could explore the role of social media platforms in amplifying these strategies, as well as the impact of artificial intelligence and machine learning on personalized advertising in India's multilingual context.

Footnotes:

1. The circulation data from the *Audit Bureau of Circulations* (2020–2024) indicates that *The Times of India* has a readership of over 15 million, making it one of the most widely read English newspapers in India, while *Anandabazar Patrika* has a circulation of approximately 1.2 million in West Bengal, reflecting its regional dominance.
2. The cultural emphasis on personal grooming among Bangla youth has been influenced by the rise of social media influencers in West Bengal, who often promote beauty and skincare products, contributing to increased consumer interest in brands like Emami Fair and Handsome.
3. Chennai's significance as a tech hub in South India has been bolstered by its growing IT sector, which employs over 500,000 professionals, according to a 2024 report by NASSCOM, making it a key market for e-commerce platforms like Flipkart targeting tech-savvy consumers.
4. Durga Puja significantly boosts confectionery sales in West Bengal, with a 2023 industry report by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) noting a 30% increase in sweet consumption during the festival, highlighting the cultural importance of sweets in Bangla celebrations.
5. The 5G rollout in India, which began in 2022, has significantly influenced advertising strategies, with brands like Samsung and Jio emphasizing connectivity and speed to appeal to urban consumers, as noted in a 2024 industry report by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
6. The preference for herbal products in West Bengal has grown over the past decade - with a 2024 survey by the West Bengal Chamber of Commerce indicating that 65% of consumers prefer natural and ayurvedic products for personal care, a trend that has benefited brands like Himalaya Wellness.
7. Jewellery purchases during Durga Puja are a significant tradition in Bengal, with a 2024 report by the All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council noting that West Bengal accounts for 20% of India's festive jewellery sales, underscoring the cultural importance of adornment during the festival.

8. The growth of India's digital economy post-2020 is evidenced by a 2024 report from the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), which notes that India had over 800 million internet users by 2023, with a significant increase in e-commerce transactions during festive seasons like Diwali and Durga Puja.
9. Durga Puja's economic significance in West Bengal is substantial, with a 2024 study by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) estimating that the festival generates over ₹50,000 crore in economic activity annually, driven by consumer spending on jewellery, clothing, and footwear.
10. Digital penetration in rural India remains uneven, with a 2024 report by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) noting that only 45% of rural households have internet access, highlighting the challenges of reaching these audiences with digital-first advertising campaigns like Spotify's.

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