CULTURE, MEDIA & FILM | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Word elongation as an audience-design strategy in social media marketing in Palestine

Tharwat Arafat and Bilal Hamamra

Abstract: Drawing on a combination of sociolinguistic and psychological models, this study examines sponsored Facebook ads over a six-month period in Palestine. While language has been a worthwhile area of study in the field of marketing, this article examines the linguistic feature of word elongation, the duplication of the same letter, as a strategy of marketing and enhancing customers’ engagement with the advertised products. The importance of this study emanates from the fact that, to the best of our knowledge, there has not been any study on word elongation as a strategy for marketing. In addition to scrutinizing the marketing function of this linguistic phenomenon in Palestine, we discuss the methods of translating word elongation in the light of Newmark’s theory of translation. The researchers have come to the conclusion that although communicative translation of ads is of great importance, the translator needs to take the additional semantic features of elongated words into consideration as they may have grammatical as well as social functions.

Subjects: Nonverbal Communication; Persuasion; Visual Communication

Keywords: social media marketing; word elongation; emotions; personalization; audience-design; engagement

1. Introduction
The advent of social media has had a major effect on the concept of marketing since the connection between companies and consumers has become deeper, more direct and trustworthy. Neti (2011) points out that the focus on social media has proliferated in 2010 as the use of social platforms to market doubled up from 12% to 24% within a year: “A year ago, businesses were uncertain about social media. Now it’s here to stay and companies are rapidly adopting social media marketing. Much like email and websites first empowered businesses, social media is the next marketing wave” (p. 2). Unlike conventional marketing strategies, such

ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Bilal Hamamra has a PhD in Early Modern Drama from the University of Lancaster, UK and works currently as an associate professor of English Literature at the Department of English Language and Literature, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine. His research interests are in Early Modern Drama, Shakespeare, Women’s Writings, Gender Studies, Palestinian Studies and Pedagogy. His articles on language, gender politics, martyrdom and diaspora have appeared in Early Modern Literary Studies, Critical Survey, ANQ, Journal for Cultural Research, Journal of Gender Studies, Journal of Contemporary Asia, Anglia, Psychodynamic Practice, The Explicator, Comparative Literature: East & West, Middle East Critique, English: Journal of the English Association, Journal of Modern Jewish Studies, Social Identities, and Changing English, among others.
Tharwat Arafat has an MA in Translation and Applied Linguistics from An-Najah National University. Her research interests are on gender politics, media and gender. Her articles have appeared in Communication Research and Practice and Psychodynamic Practice.
as surveys and focus groups, social media marketing is more personalized and interactive. In an interview with Beltrone, Ajaz Ahmed (2012) stated that “the best advertising isn’t advertising” (p. 2). This shows that innovative ways of advertising have emerged in comparison with other older impersonalized methods where a message is sent to everybody trying to persuade them with a product. Ahmed added that the audiences are part of this process; they simply wish for more “engagement” than attacks “with endless messages” (2012, p. 3). In other words, appealing personalized pictures and videos have become the focus instead of words. Similarly, in a study undertaken to investigate the creative strategies implemented in social media marketing, Ashley and Tuten (2015) keep in mind that “Consumers participate in the campaigns as active members” (p. 24).

Macarthy (2015) states the importance of establishing emotional connections and that “it is crucial that the content you post touches people on a personal and emotional level” (p. 13). One way to improve engagement, according to Macarthy (2015), is using emojis: “In a 2015 report, Instagram found that nearly 50 percent of all captions and comments include at least one Emoji” (p. 12). In another study conducted by Sümer (2017), emoji marketing as a new form of digital marketing was examined. This newly-emerged technique of marketing has been widely used by highly successful companies including “Domino’s Pizza … McDonalds, Coca-Cola and Pepsi [because] colorful and highly visualized emojis bring businesses and their customers more closely” (pp. 29–30). Sümer (2017) concluded that emojis prove to be engaging and effective: “By the help of the emojis, attracting consumers’ attention to the businesses goods and services could be easier. Besides that, it becomes easy to persuade people to be involved in marketing campaigns of the firms’ (p. 30). However, we contend that word elongation combines both visual and verbal elements, and thus it necessitates further research and scrutiny.

Emojis have not been the only way of creating a personalized content with a visual appeal. Another linguistic feature that has been increasingly employed over the past decade is word elongation. Brody and Diakopoulos (2011) as well as Tchokni et al. (2014), define word elongation as the repetition of characters which conveys sentiment. Bringing out the often overlooked additional information which word elongation communicates, Baldwin and Chai (2011) define elongated words as intentionally employed non-standard spellings which, oftentimes, perform pragmatic functions in texts, including communicating emotions, by adding extra characters. Although Tagliamonte and Denis (2008) do not explicitly refer to the phenomenon using “word elongation”, elongated words were classified under “emotional language”; Tagliamonte, later, in an interview with Doll (2013), defines it as the additional letters added to the base word. Word elongation does not seem to be exclusive to the English Language. Palfreyman and Al

| Table 1. Inherent and efferent sememes of the words "drink" and "give" |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drink (n)          | +liquid | -cause |
| Give (v)           | -liquid | +cause |

| Table 2. Inherent and efferent sememes of the words "drink" and "wings" |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Drink (v)          | +liquid | -bird | -fly |
| Wings (n)          | -liquid | +bird | +fly |

| Table 3. Semic analysis of Red Bull's Slogan |
|---------------------------------------------|
| liquid | +bird | +fly | +Emotion | +high-pitch |
Khalil (2003) have made note of this feature in the Arabic language and described elongated words as “vowels [which] are reduplicated for emphasis or expressiveness” (p. 11). The phenomenon has also been analyzed by Khiairi et al. (2016) and defined as the repetition of characters whether consonants or vowels in texts. In a 2021 study, Arafat & Hamamra analyzed 65-discourse corpus of personal interviews, and observed that word elongation could serve various social and linguistic functions, such as reflecting intimacy or distance and highlighting information focus, on social media platforms. Therefore, the combination of the visual and sentimental aspects may play a major role in establishing a bond between consumers and advertisers hence the need to study word elongation in the field of social media marketing.

Neti (2011) has pointed out that, as a result of social media’s significance these days, marketing has turned from a one-to-one model into a “many to many model” which is “rooted in conversations between authors, people and peers” (p. 3). This model, in her words, is strategic. Moreover, she has listed some advantages of using social media as a marketing strategy. First, the connection with the consumers takes place on a deeper level. Also, identifying as well as influencing consumers has become much easier and at relatively cheap prices. This results in selling more products and in increasing the exposure to the business. According to Neti (2011), social media is used as a “tool that creates a personality [of marketers] behind their brand and creates relationships that they otherwise may never gain” (p. 7). In other words, after 2010, social media marketers have started to focus on creating stronger relationships with their consumers and to bring about an identity of their companies using certain strategies that boil down to language use.

Kashoob (1995) has discussed the main strategy that marketers deploy to market their products or services: language. He has divided “selling” into two categories: hard sell and soft sell. The former focuses on a direct aspect, namely, reason while the latter is indirect. Indirect strategies include humor, vagueness and emotion. Advertising, in his opinion, is to be understood “as a form of social institution” (p. 212) which influences ways of communication and language itself. Kashoob describes the language used by marketers as an influence on social behavior. In other words, marketers use a “loaded language” that “influences [consumers’] social behavior” (1995, p. 220). This proves that advertisements are strategic, previously and purposefully selective and persuasive in nature. He has stated that language of advertising is also hybrid which involves a blurry relationship between speaking and writing. The use of unexpected expressions would “lower the level of formality” and “attract attention” (p. 233). The use of colloquial language also reflects “solidarity” (p. 235). Similar to Kashoob’s argument, Neti (2011) believes that advertising “spread[s] the message in a relaxed and conversational” (p. 8) manner; nevertheless, she refers to social media marketing (henceforth SMM). Despite the fact that those two studies have a fifteen-year gap, many elements of traditional marketing back in 1995 are developed into modern ones causing SMM to be hybrid; that is, it contains elements from traditional as well as modern marketing strategies.

Kashoob (1995) has stressed the vitality of emotionally loaded language. He points out that advertisements are created to stir “universal emotions” including “envy or fear” (p. 225). The main problem that a translator may face has to do with keeping these emotions when translating English advertisements to Arabic. Back in 1995, English advertisements had been “colloquial and simple” while Arabic advertisements had been resistant to giving up its conventions of standard Arabic (p. 213). Although this is not completely the case these days since advertisements in Arabic can be colloquial, the core problem of translation is still there.

This study explores the way marketers create an identity and design their advertisements in order to be appealing to their customers. The particular focus will be how word elongation is exploited as an audience-design strategy to invoke consumers’ emotions. Use of this linguistic
A feature in various advertisements, and more specifically those of Paltel, the leading Palestinian local service company, as well as Red Bull, a famous global product, will be the main focus of analysis. The criteria are as follows: first, the purpose of the product or service has to be one of the leisure or basic needs of the Palestinian society, such as food and clothes. Another criterion is that the advertisements and their impressions have to be sponsored stories the or stories about friends that appear on the researchers’ newsfeed. Finally, the time of advertisements’ display on Facebook news-feed section has to be the period of time when Facebook users are mostly active, i.e., when most users spend more than fourth of their time according to Lipsman et al. (2012); it has been reported by “al iqisadi.ps” (2017) that Palestinian Facebook users are most active between 6 and 10 pm.

These advertisements will be analyzed by applying a combination of the sociolinguistic and psychological theories. Firstly, we draw on “audience design” which states that “speakers accommodate primarily to their addressee” (Bell, 1984, p. 142). Secondly, we employ Petty’s Elaboration Likelihood Model Petley and Cacioppo (1986), a psychological theory mainly concerned with the change of attitude and hence behavior of consumers depending on the degree of elaboration and the use of the central-route, the content itself or the peripheral route which includes other secondary elements such as appeal. At the end of the study, translation difficulties that may arise during translating these colloquial and emotionally charged words in advertisements will be examined. To the best of our knowledge, this design has not been used in previous research.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Audience design theory

Bell’s (1984) is a sociolinguistic model that follows Labov’s perspective on style-in-variation since it brings the focus on “the relational meanings of style and the general idea of recipiency” (Coupland, 2007, p. 58). In this framework, Bell attempted to explain stylistic variations in different contexts. He discussed four dimensions: the speaker, the setting, the topic and the audience.

Coupland (2007) summed up Bell’s findings of his variationist multidimensional model. In his opinion, style is social and its main focus is the person, thus emphasizing “interpersonal and intergroup relations” (p. 60). Therefore, style variation is a response to social variation. He believes that not only style-shift can be a result of a change, but it can also be its cause. Hence, “responsive” and “initiative” forms go hand in hand; for example, one might use a local dialect to introduce informality or intimacy (p. 61). Coupland added that such initiative style-shifts can be utilized to demonstrate identification with “potentially non-present groups” (p. 61).

In an updated paper on audience design, Bell (2001) proposes that “style derives its meaning from the association of linguistic features with particular social groups” (as cited in Llamas et al., 2015, p. 96). On the other hand, Gile’s model “did not focus on specific meanings attached to any particular communicative feature and style” (Coupland, 2007, p. 62), but it is attributed to how similar or different the speaker and listener are.

In another study, Bell concluded that “eh” behaves as a functional high-rising intonation to bring or check the attention of the listener hence “creating some potential for social meaning-making” (as cited in Coupland, 2007, p. 64).

2.2. Elaboration Likelihood Model Theory (ELM)

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) is a theory suggested by Cacioppo and Petty in the 1970s. This model attempts to discuss how the persuasion of consumers occurs. The main factor is effort; the more effort a consumer puts into assessing the message, the more elaboration there is. The attention that is drawn to the content itself is called the central-route. Unlike the
central-route, the peripheral route processing demonstrates less effort spent on the message and consequently more elaboration. Therefore, imagery, humor and appeal, for instance, would distract peripheral process consumers from the message. O'Keefe (2013) classified the peripheral routes that may affect the uninformed processor into three heuristics: credibility of the communicator, the receivers' liking for the communicator as well as the reactions of other people. Emotion, then, plays a major role in persuasion following the peripheral-route. Since many researchers (see Introduction) stress the emotiveness communicated by elongated words, employing these features by online marketers may increase the potential role for the peripheral route so as to lead to persuasion of text-based Facebook advertisements in Palestine, in particular.

3. Methodology

3.1. Design and materials
To conduct the present study, the researchers relied on naturalistic observation which went hand in hand with a semi-structured interview to limit bias. The former adopted criteria related to time, place and type of advertisement. By observing the researchers' newsfeed pages on Facebook between 5 pm to 12 am over a six-month period, sponsored Palestinian advertisements related to essential needs, such as food and clothes were collected. The researchers also conducted a semi-structured interview with one of the brand managers at the leading telecommunication company in Palestine, Paltel. The latter included four type of questions: background, knowledge, experience and opinion. Nevertheless, because of the time and space limitations, only a small number of advertisements were examined. This examination may need to take place over a longer period of time and on a larger scale to be able to draw more general results and to ensure that the results are still valid, given the possible high-pace change within social media marketing.

3.2. Procedure
The study is based upon a two-fold procedure. First, non-participant observation was conducted. The researchers observed 135 Facebook advertisements for an extended period of time—from February, 2017 until November, 2017. The advertisements were collected and coded according to their types. Afterwards, the data were entered into an Excel sheet so as to measure the frequency of elongated words and find patterns with regard to the deployment of word elongation in Facebook sponsored ads. In order to do so, the formula which included the functions INDEX, MATCH as well as MODE: Index (C2:C132,MODE (Match(C2:C132,C2:C132,0)) was employed to extract the most frequently occurring values. In May, 2018, the researchers conducted a semi-structured personal interview with a brand manager who worked for Paltel. Since interview transcription is a time-consuming process, the researchers transcribed the most relative answers to their questions in Arabic; those were later translated into English. The information obtained from the afore-mentioned manager was used to explain and support the findings related to the analysis of the patterns found in the sponsored advertisements. Finally, the findings of each step were compared and contrasted with the semantic analysis of an advertisement of a global product.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Word elongation in advertisements in Palestine
The employment of emotionally charged words in advertisement is not new. Word elongation can then be considered as a strategic way to invoke emotions and communicate solidarity with consumers in social media marketing (SMM). Badoyan and Muntigl (2016); Baldwin and Chai (2011); Brody and Diakopoulos (2011); Cook and Stevenson (2009); Palfreyman and Al Khalil (2003); Parkins (2012); Renkema and Schubert (2018)and Tchokni et al. (2014) stated that elongated words are emotional. Despite the fact that the previously mentioned researchers
tackle the proliferation of word elongation among social media users, such as Twitter and Facebook ones, none specifically points out how this mushrooming linguistic feature is exploited in advertisements. Rather, the way in which word elongation may affect relationships among social media “active” participants has been their main focus.

In this section, the way that word elongation is employed by a top Palestinian telecommunication company, Paltel, will be discussed. Then, how other marketers exploit this linguistic feature in social media platforms to advertise their products will be analyzed by employing Audience Design and Likelihood Elaboration Models. Despite the fact that audience design framework is associated with the spoken form of language, it will be applied to written texts since they also have style-shifts.

4.2. Word elongation in advertisements in Palestine: Paltel as a model
On 3 May 2018, the researchers conducted a personal interview with Suhail Oukal, the brand manager in Paltel, the leading telecommunication company in Palestine. The use of word elongation as a strategy to attract more consumers was discussed. Oukal stressed the importance of creating a good content; he also believes that typography or visual effects are essential. He believes that there is a need to use certain styles with which consumers can resonate and so feel closer to the company. This is where ELM plays its role. According to Oukal, Paltel concentrates on the content, the central-route, as well as the peripheral route. The latter is divided into three heuristics which this leading company utilizes: the credibility of the communicator, the liking of the communicator and other people’s reactions. Paltel hires dealers who are, according to Oukal, closer to consumers and whom consumers’ trust. The company has 103 dealers in total all over Palestine, so as to gain trust and help the company to understand and be familiar with people’s needs and problems.

4.3. Word elongation: A marketing strategy employed by Paltel
Despite the fact that not all people’s reactions can really be controlled, they are at least elicited, assessed and recorded in order to be used in different campaigns. For instance, during a sale day, a woman was told that there was a 30% discount, her excitement led her to say “Fandjadd” which translates “really” (S. Oukal, personal communication, May 3, 2018). Later on, it was used in a different campaign by elongating the word. Because sale and persuasion are the most challenging and complicated stages of the process, in Oukal’s opinion, the company focuses on communication methods and style. Therefore, each dealer reports the most effective and emotionally provocative words or phrases in each city. Here, emotions become an inseparable part of the marketing process, hence the need to apply Bell’s Audience Design model. Oukal pointed out that it is of great importance to make consumers feel as close to the dealer as possible. One strategy that the dealers had reported to be very popular and effective is the use of word elongation. Oukal described the importance of repetition and its effects by comparing it to “musical notes” which “get stuck in one’s head” when they are repeated more than once (S. Oukal, personal communication, May 3, 2018). Repeating pictures, patterns, sentences or even letters have been found to be the best strategy to be followed during the past year and it is still employed until now. The name of the campaign and prices are reduplicated; however, the most elongated words are those elicited from consumers. Although there have only been two campaigns since January 2018, he added, 206 words have been elongated. Elongated spellings have not only been used in social media platforms, but also on billboards, posters and flyers. The need to start exploiting this linguistic feature has emerged right after a competition with an Israeli company, according to Oukal. The reasons for employing word elongation vary; word elongation is used to emphasize a point, to keep the musical effect, to be more vividly memorable or to indicate closeness and solidarity with certain groups of people. All of these reasons, nevertheless, have the same aim of attracting and persuading new consumers.
4.4. Examples of elongated words and letters used in Paltel Ads

Oukal provided different examples throughout the interview. One function of word elongation is emphasis. Oukal called attention to the problem of technology illiteracy and pointed out that it is getting more challenging especially with this age of social media. He provided the following example: Megabytes and gigabytes cannot be distinguished by some people, hence the necessity of emphasis. The letters “م” and “g”, “ك” “ى”, have been reduplicated to emphasize the difference. In Nablus, Rahhal Abu Zahra, a dealer, has noticed that his customers’ priority is the price. As a result, in one of his advertisements, words that are related to prices have been elongated, such as the /ل/ ي/ in “shekel” (S. Oukal, personal communication, May 3, 2018). Another function which is quite related to emphasis is musicality, he added. Other examples demonstrate bonding with consumers. In these examples, only the words which people already use unconsciously or can relate to are elongated. Moreover, a store called Al-Yamama, in Qalqiliyah, “ست شهرًا لأمي زيون” (Six month [service] for the best [regular] customer) is one of the slogans used since the owner had noticed that his customers can relate to the word /ز/ in “زبون” (regular customer) on an emotional level. Therefore, it is elongated. In Gaza, the word “ياني” which translates “yay” is considered as a word used in close relationships; thus, its elongation has guaranteed selling 17 broadband lines. In Ramallah, which is a very competitive city, however, people focus on the personal quality of power. The slogan “الفص صل الافيري” (the most powerful sale) has been employed elongating the word “الافيري” (the most powerful), which has been elongated to reach more people (S. Oukal, personal communication, May 3, 2018). Oukal added that vowels rather than consonants are reduplicated most of the time.

As for gender, Oukal explained that composing any slogan does not take place on an individual level, but it is discussed in a team. However, he added that this process all depends on the city where the campaign is. In some cities, such as Ramallah and Nablus, females take part in events. According to Oukal, in other cities such as Hebron, only males participate in events. Again, composing slogans occurs on a team level, yet gender plays a role in other aspects of campaigns, events. In certain events, females are responsible for marketing the company’s product which has to do with their tone which leads to consumers’ persuasion (S. Oukal, personal communication, May 3, 2018).

4.5. Comparison: Observation and semi-structured interview

The researchers have come upon 135 advertisements which meet the criteria; therefore, they have been analyzed in context. Most of these advertisements are directly addressed to females especially the ones related to clothes and cosmetics. On the other hand, advertisements that are mainly addressed to men cannot be specified since they promote products, such as food and automobile, leisure activities and telecommunication services. This may suggest that word elongation is used more by females.

Most of the words were elongated by reduplicating the vowels “ء” , “ن” and “ي” whereas only a few were elongated by repeating a consonant; some instances include “ر”, “س”, “ف”, “ح”, “ش” , “ذ”, and “د” which are either sonorant sounds or sibilants but, in most cases, they are not plosives (where the air flow is interrupted). This reflects the hybrid nature of social media platforms. The intonation and stress as features of spoken language seem to have been an integral part of written communication on social media in the most unexpected genre, say, advertisements since it is expected for Arabic advertisements to be standard (See, Kashoob, 1995); Kashida was only used twice, for instance. Nevertheless, this does not seem to be the case. Written communication seems to have started to maintain its own form of intonation as the example “لا تفوتوا هذه الفرصة” (don’t miss out on this [opportunity]) shows. The phrase is used at the beginning of the advertisement, and one may expect the vowel “ء” to be reduplicated since the “ء” is silent here; but in spite of what is expected, the vowel “ء” is repeated five times instead, keeping the visual element of the advertisement.
Because of the employment of word elongation as a marketing strategy, it appears that this linguistic feature has social and linguistic purposes. Maintaining solidarity with the audience through applying the same linguistic feature, consciously, however, demonstrates an emotional bond with potential customers. The emotional appeal is yet emphasized by the excessive addition of emojis. Emotional connection is established by elongating words which encourage confirming a request including "share, tag, come on, get ready, don't miss out on ..." and so forth. In addition to triggering words which could also be in question form to demonstrate connection and interaction, such as "who misses ...?". Other ways to establish interaction is through emotionally charged greetings such as "good evening" and "سعود اليوم الم" (good evening). Elongated spellings are also used to accentuate a piece of information, say, marking information focus. The information focus can be the product’s name, the store’s name, extra information about the product such as quality, quantity, delivery method or price. By applying the formula: Index(C2:C132,MODE(Match(C2:C132,C2:C132,0)) using Excel, the researchers found that the most common elongated words were used to stress a piece of information in the advertisement. This means that
Despite the emotional role word elongation plays to connect with the target audience, the main reason why this feature is employed is to keep the visual element and thus the customers’ focus on certain pieces of information rather than innocently try to reach to and connect with audiences. This proves that word elongation is used here as an audience design strategy, so this cannot be considered as the real representation of the company’s identity as it is used consciously.

Finally, despite the qualitative nature of studying word elongation in context, the researchers have taken the quantitative element into consideration so as to support the conclusions which have been drawn from the qualitative analysis hence calculating frequency. By applying the following formula: “ = Index(B2:B138,MODE(Match(B2:B138:B2:B138,0)))”, the researchers noted that the most frequent word in all 135 advertisements was “عروض”. As far as frequency is concerned and by employing the most frequent value/Excel Software, it was found that The most frequent words have to do with sales: “عروض”, “عروض”, “عروض” and (sale, sales, special, prices, price) which are repeated 12,11,12,7,8 and 5 times, respectively.

Word elongation is a significant strategy in Palestinian social media marketing. On the one hand, it keeps emotional connection with customers. On the other hand, it helps emphasize the most important parts of an advertisement. Thus, the emotional and visual elements go hand in hand. Written advertisements also prove to retain a special form of intonation to attract consumers.

4.6. Translation problems of elongated words in advertisements: Red bull as a model

Word elongation plays a role in marking special details in the text or information focus and establishing a connection with audiences; thus, it is vital to deal with this linguistic choice carefully in translation. In a questionnaire conducted by the same researchers in four Palestinian universities among a total of 40 students (20 males and 20 females), An-Najah National University, Birzeit University, Arab-American University and Hebron University, 66% (70% of female participants and 55% of male participants) of the sample have agreed that word elongation uncovers the participant’s tone and makes it easier to remember as it is depicted more vividly. Sixty-seven percent of the sample also agree and 10% strongly agree that word elongation is used in advertisements making this a very important feature in Palestinian advertising strategies (See, Arafat, T. & Hamamra, B., 2021).

4.7. Word elongation: A marketing strategy employed by Red Bull

Red Bull’s popularity is out of question. According to Top Selling Energy Drinks Brands (2015), Red Bull “dominates” and tops all of the other energy drinks no matter how much they seem to grow (“Top Selling Energy Drinks Brands, 2015). The slogans of Red Bull resonate once the brand name Red Bull is heard. These slogans, despite their closeness in terms of word choice, show a variety of ways in exploiting semantics. Attempting a semantic analysis of these slogans using different semantic tools will lead to a better and deeper understanding to some extent. The principles of word elongation and bonding through audience design will be used hand in hand with semantic analysis to achieve this goal. Newmark’s translation of slang words will be taken into consideration; nevertheless, the general terms of deletion and retention that have been deployed earlier will be associated with the two main translation strategies that Newmark (1981) lays out: communicative and semantic.

“Red Bull gives you wings” is the slogan to be studied. The tables below demonstrate a componential analysis of these words(See Table 1, Table 2, Table 3).

The semantic contradiction between the words of the slogan is clear. The unexpected combination of these words results in attributing the idea of “power” to a liquid. The idea of power has to do with the principle of audience design where consumers can relate to what they see or hear and thus bond. The team of fastcompany.com(2011) points out that “red Bull doesn’t have any of the commercial trappings of a traditional, off-the-shelf product. It’s underground, even when it’s above ground, and that appeals to the young people who drink it (“IT’S A” (RED) BULL MARKET AFTER ALL”, “ 2001).
The primary target audience of Red Bull is 18-25-year olds as “Red Bull Flux IMC Plan” (2013) suggested. These target audiences are students or fresh employees. Relating the ideas of power, ability and performance, the slogan appeals to this target audience who seeks reassurance to fill the gap in their self-esteem, which is the core of the self-concept principle. In other words, the wording of this slogan is so powerful since its consumers can identify with it.

4.8. Translation of elongated words: Red Bull slogan

This slogan has been translated as “زید بیبطیک جوانح” (gives you; wings) in an attempt to solve the problem of how such emotion is to be kept. At first sight, it seems that the form and the semantic features have not been changed at all in order to achieve the same effect. However, the use of the colloquial word “بیبطیک” (gives you; wings) makes it more communicative since the use of standard Arabic would convey seriousness in this case. Although it is a communicative translation, semantic features have been kept in mind.

“Red Bull gives you wiiings” is the second slogan to be interpreted. Despite what seems to be a slight change in this slogan, the semantic strategy used differs greatly. In 2000, Red Bull started a new campaign using the slogan “Red Bull gives you wiiings”, and after its success, another slogan similar to it was reproduced “Red Bull gives you wiiings” (Tantillo, 2014). This slogan has been deemed “false and misleading” (O’Reilly, 2014, p. 1) since it made some people believe in it. Some argue that misspelling words in slogans makes them “catchy”, yet this is not the case when it comes to the word “wiiings”.

![Diagram](chart1.png)

(Chart 1) Cans of Red Bull sold, bn

How can a word like “wiiings” establish a bond with the consumers and make them part of the slogan? To answer this question, word elongation is to be applied. Manders (2013) believes that the use of word elongation makes “electronic words more human” (p. 1). This article helps to shed light on the idea of bonding through using the same language the target consumers use, i.e. audience design. Addressing the audience with a slogan that seems to be a friendly ordinary text makes the consumer experience the words and be part of the advertisement. The feature [+emotion] hence becomes one semantic feature of the word “wiiings”.

In an interview with Doll (2013), Tagliamonte suggested that intonation can be imposed on written words through the addition of these letters. As a result, the notion of “uptalk” or
“intonation contour” is of relevance here. Gorman (1993) believes that the rise of intonation in a declarative statement is related to female speech. Gorman (1993) cites Cynthia McLemore who supports this as she includes various functions of uptalk including connecting participants and marking new information:

[McLemore] found that uptalk was a way to be inclusive, to connect phrases, and to truly “connect the speaker to the listener” (Gorman, 1993). McLemore continues to explain that uptalk could be used as a tag to highlight new information or to improve the attention of the audience by varying the pitch of the phrases. (Buck, 2016, p. 6)

Thus, when a female wants to make a request, she will, most likely, use the questioning intonation to appeal to the listener. This notion can, actually, be applied to texts nowadays. By reduplicating the letters, this function of word elongation comes to life. Red Bull seems to make use of this notion to appeal to consumers using the friendly-feminine form of request. This can be the reason for the success of this slogan and the sharp rise seen in chart 1. Therefore, the word “wiiings” can semantically be analyzed into the following sememes:

4.9. Translation hardships related to additional semantic features of elongated words

The translator may, consequently, face a hardship translating this slogan and achieving the same effect. The slogan—“Red Bull gives you wiiings”—has been translated into Arabic as ريد بيل جوينج using spoken words which end with a rising pitch in the video. Also, it was translated into colloquial Arabic. The researchers believe that this is a way of compensation because such a linguistic variation had not been established in Arabic yet. As a result, the translator has turned the intonation of the written word into a high-pitched word as it is a paralinguistic feature of spoken language. Today, technology has invaded the Arabic language and culture; thus, “button-based” slang has become of great importance. In 2011, the elongated spelling was restored and translated as جوينج أوائل

Both of the above translations use long vowels. The long /e:/ sound as well as tipping the “/” letter. Nevertheless, reduplicating the vowel seems to be more convenient in order to keep the visual text-like aspect. In fact, letter reduplication exists in Arabic, and if it is not utilized this will lead to the loss of the visual effect which is expected in today’s notion of marketing, where personalization is achieved through incorporating the visual aspect. In the previous examples, the two “opposite” types of translation—semantic and communicative—do clash. True, semantics as well as structure have been preserved, but it is not for the sake of faithfulness as much as it is for the sake of achieving meaning and a communicative translation. Newmark (1981) believes that in order to translate a slang word, the existence of this word in the target language culture must be checked. That is to say that the existence of the phenomenon in both Arabic and English affects the translation of this slogan. The question would be, then, what if this phenomenon has not been known in Arabic? In this case, paralinguistic features included in the semantics of the word “wiiings” will have to be converted into a rise in the pitch using a spoken slogan. However, this feature does exist and has both social and linguistic functions.

In brief, Red Bull marketing strategy proves to be able to exploit semantics and apply it to its slogans. Using elongation enhances the opportunity to appeal to the target audience since it connects with their ideas and behaviors; it also identifies with them. Again, although the translations of these slogans are to some extent “communicative”, semantics is a crucial aspect in today’s written communication.

5. Conclusion

The thriving use of word elongation in Palestinian advertisements is undeniable. In this study, employing ELM along with Audience Design as a theoretical framework has been supported by conducting non-participant observation of sponsored Facebook advertisements as well as a semi-structured interview. By comparing the statistical values returned by the Excel MODE with the
qualitative data obtained from the observation and the interview, the researchers have found various patterns in the strategic use of word elongation, including elongating vowels in most cases, which can be due to their nature as sonorants making them more vivid. However, some consonants are also repeated establishing distinguished suprasegmental features which written texts usually lack. Although it may not be remembered as vividly as elongating vowels, the visual aspect seems to play a huge role in drawing focus on a specific part of the text or, in some cases, emphasizing a contrast. Moreover, this linguistic choice appears to have both linguistic as well as social functions. Therefore, since slogans of international products, such as Red Bull, may include this linguistic feature and because of this strategy’s possible functions, and hence proliferation in the Palestinian market, word elongation—as a semantic feature, cannot simply be discarded even if the slogan is translated communicatively.

Funding
The authors received no direct funding for this research.

Author details
Tharwat Arafat
Bilal Hamamra
E-mail: bilalahamamra@najjah.edu
ORCID ID: http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4375-0293
1 Applied Linguistics and Translation, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.
2 Department of English, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.

Disclosure statement
No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Citation information
Cite this article as: Word elongation as an audience-design strategy in social media marketing in Palestine, Tharwat Arafat & Bilal Hamamra, Cogent Arts & Humanities (2022), 9: 2116772.

Note
1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_d2VnPy4ZQ

References
Ahmed, K. A. (2012). Fast chat: Ajaz Ahmed’s new book/ interviewer: Gabriel Beltrone. Adweek, Shamrock Capital.
Arafat, T., & Hamamra, B. (2021). Gender and word elongation in Facebook-mediated communication in Palestinian Arabic. Communication Research and Practice, 7(3), 221–242. https://doi.org/10.1080/22041451.2021.1958467
Ashley, C., & Tuten, T. (2013). Creative strategies in social media marketing: An exploratory study of branded social content and consumer engagement. Psychology & Marketing, 30(1), 15–27. https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20761
Badoyan, H., & Muntigl, P. (2016). Gender and emotional expressiveness in CMC. Linguistic and paralinguistic approach (master’s thesis, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium). https://lib.ugent.be/fulltext/RUG01/002/304/102/RUG01-002304102_2016_0001_AC.pdf
Baldwin, T., & Chai, J. (2011). Beyond normalization: Pragmatics of word form in text messages. ACL anthology, proceedings of 5th International joint conference on natural language processing, 1437–1441, Chiang Mai, Thailand.
Baldwin, T., & Li, Y. (2015). An in-depth analysis of the effect of text normalization in social media. ACL anthology, proceedings of the 2015 conference of the North American chapter of the association for computational linguistics: Human language technologies, 420–429, Denver, Colorado.
Bell, A. (1984). Language style as audience design. Language in Society, 13(2), 145–204. https://doi.org/10.1017/S004740650001037X
Bell, A. (2001). Back in style: Reworking audience design. In P. Eckert & J. R. Rickford (Eds.), Style and socio-linguistic variation (pp. 147). CUP.
Bhattacharyya, P. (2010). Emotion analysis of internet chat. In In the proceedings of the ICON conference, Mumbai, India.
Brody, S., & Diakopoulos, N. (2011). Coooooaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa: Using word lengthening to detect sentiment in microblogs. ACL anthology, proceedings of the conference on empirical methods in natural language processing, 562–570, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK.
Buck, G. (2016). Systematic transfer of ‘uptalk’ from English (L1) to Spanish (L2) for Native English Speakers: A developmental study [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Michigan, Michigan. https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/120634/ghbuck.pdf;sequence=1
Cook, P., & Stevenson, S. (2009). An unsupervised model for text message normalization. ACL anthology, in proceedings of the workshop on computational approaches to linguistic creativity, 71–78.
Coupland, N. (2007). Style: language variation and identity. Cambridge University Press.
Doll, J. (2013, March). Why drag it out? The Atlantic. Retrieved August 15, 2019, from http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/03/dragging-it-out/309220/
Gorman, J. (1993, August). On Language: Like, Uptalk? New York Times. http://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/15/magazine/on-language-like-uptalk.html
IT’S A (RED) BULL MARKET AFTER ALL. (2001). Retrieved November 28, 2016 from http://www.fastcompany.com/64658/its-red-bull-market-after-all
Kashoob, H. S. (1995). Cultural translation problems with special reference to English/Arabic advertisements [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. University of Glasgow.
Khiani, W., Roche, M., & Hafisia, A. B. (2016, May). Integration of lexical and semantic knowledge for sentiment analysis in sms. In Proceedings of the tenth international conference on language resources and evaluation (LREC’16), 1185–1189.
Lipsman, A., Mudd, G., Rich, M., & Bruich, S. (2012). The power of “like”: How brands reach (and influence) fans through social-media marketing. Journal of Advertising Research, 52(1), 40–52. https://doi.org/10.2501/JAR-52-1-040-052
Llamas, C., Mullany, L., & Stockwell, P. (2015). The Routledge companion to sociolinguistics. Routledge.
Macarthy, A. (2015). 500 social media marketing tips: Essential advice, hints and strategy for business: Facebook, twitter, pinterest, Google+, YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, and more.
Manders, H. (2013). What it means when someone says “Hiiii” instead of “hi”. Retrieved October 27, 2018 from https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2013/02/43486/text-messaging-personality

Neti, S. (2011). SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS ROLE IN MARKETING. International Journal of Enterprise Computing and Business Systems, 1(2), 1-15.

Newmark, P. (1981). Approaches to Translation. Pergamon Press.

O’Keefe, D. J. (2013). The elaboration likelihood model. In J. Dillard & L. Shen (Eds.), of the SAGE handbook of persuasion: Developments in theory and practice (pp. 137–169). SAGE Publications Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452218410.n9

O’Reilly, L. (2014). Red bull will pay $10 To customers disappointed the drink didn’t actually give them ‘wings’. Retrieved January 7, 2018, from https://www.businessinsider.com/red-bull-settles-false-advertising-lawsuit-for-13-million-2014-10

Palfreyman, D., & Al Khalil, M. (2003). A funky language for teenzz to use: Representing Gulf Arabic in INSTANT MESSAGING. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 9(1). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2003.tb00355.x

Parkins, R. (2012). Gender and emotional expressiveness: An analysis of prosodic features in emotional expression. Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication, 5(1), 46-54, https://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0016/363680/Paper-6-Parkins-Gender-and-Emotional-Expressiveness_final.pdf

Petty, R. E., & Cacioppo, J. T. (1986). The elaboration likelihood model of persuasion. Communication and Persuasion, 1–24.

Renkema, J., & Schubert, C. (2018). Introduction to discourse studies (New ed.). John Benjamin.

Selling energy. (2002). Retrieved December 02, 2016, from http://www.economist.com/node/1120373

Sümer, S. (2017). A brief perspective on emoji marketing. International Journal of New Technology and Research (IJNTR), 3(9), 29–31. https://www.ijntr.org/download_data/IJNTR03090030.pdf

Tagliamonte, S. A., & Denis, D. (2008). Linguistic ruin? LOL! Instant messaging and teen language. American Speech, 83(1), 3–34. https://doi.org/10.1215/00031283-2008-001

Tantillo, M. (2014). Red Bull - Can it Actually Make You Grow Wings? - Ethics in the News. Retrieved December 02, 2016, from http://www.ethicsinthe-news.com/red-bull-can-it-actually-make-you-grow-wings/

Tchokni, S. E., Séaghdha, D. O., & Quercia, D. (2014). Emoticons and phrases: status symbols in social media. In Eighth international AAAI conference on weblogs and social media. Palo Alto, CA: The AAAI Press.

Top Selling Energy Drinks Brands. 2015. www.caffeinformer.com http://www.caffeinformer.com/the-15-top-energy-drink-brands

Zeno. (June 21, 2017) % [Facebook Update]. https://facebook.com/zenoramalali/photos/?tab=album&album_id=150405049510944&ref=page_internal
