Linguistic Characteristics of Domestic Men's Formal Wear Brand Names

Kwon Haesook
Professor, Sangmyung University, College of Design, Fashion Design Major

Abstract

The main purpose of this research was to examine the linguistic characteristics of domestic men's formal wear brand name. Four linguistic characteristics of language type, combined structure type of language, word class, length of brand name were investigated in this research and also examined the difference between brand type.

For sample selection, the 209 men's fashion brands were selected from '2009 Korea Fashion Yearbook' and then, 25 brands which could not collect proper informations about the brand name or naming were excluded. Among total 184 men's brand names, 66 men's formal wear brands were selected and studied. For data analysis, quantitative evaluation of the frequency and qualitative evaluation have been used.

The result as follows:.

1. Seven language types were found in domestic men's formal wear brand names. English has been used the most, then followed by Italian and French.
2. For combined structure type of brand name language, the single word used the most, followed by separately combined word type, artificially combined word, and unified word type.
3. The most frequently used the type of word class was noun, and followed by phrase, adjective, and verb. In the noun type, 6 different types which expressed a person, concrete & abstract entity, place, acronym, and neologic were found. For phrase, only noun type was appeared, however, 6 out of 20 phrases were abbreviated type. All eight adjective brand names implied an attributive character of the brand such as 'Dainty' or 'Solus(Solo)'.
4. The long name used most and then followed by normal and short length of brand name. Looking by the number of syllable, 4 syllables appeared the most and then followed by 3, 5, 6, 2 & 7 showed the same rate, and 8 syllables.
5. The result which compared the difference according to each brand type showed a difference in its language type, language combined style, word class, but length of brand name.

Key Words: men's formal wear, linguistic characteristics, brand name, brand type
I. Introduction

In consumer behavior the rational and emotional perspectives are two models that explain how consumers make purchase decisions. Successful branding, therefore, depends on combining the rational and emotional components of a brand in a manner that it becomes consistent with the consumer’s frame of mind. A brand is the identity of a specific product, service, or business and it can take many forms, including a name, sign, symbol, color combination or slogan. A brand name defines as a part of the brand which express by words. In other words, it is the representation of trademark which generally expresses by a vocabulary, a letter, or a numeral letter. As the core elements of brand awareness, brand image formation and brand association, a brand name plays an important means of communication with consumers. It also performs differentiation with other brands, warranty, asset accumulation, legal protection.

A brand name, at once the story about what makes one different from other competitors and the emotional tug that connects companies with their audience—all in one or a few words. It is an intangible emotional components of a brand which is perceived through the various sensory organizations and expressed by a specific language. The major elements which consist of characteristics of brand name are the types of language, the visual and auditory sense, and the meaning of language. Among them, the genuine linguistic factors of brand name as intangible elements seem to be the type of language and the meaning of language.

A great brand name is one of the most powerful forces in branding, marketing and advertising. As Miguel de Cervante said, a good name is better than riches. But to get a good name takes a careful balancing act between art and science. Selecting a good name on a global scale adds the need for legal and linguistic competencies as well.

Recently, the scale of domestic fashion market has been reached over 23 trillions won on the basis of 08/09 F/W. Looking at specific types of clothing, menswear market amounted to about 8 trillion won and then followed by women’s wear market of 7,500 billion won, sports & outdoor wear of 4,200 billion won, and unisex wear of 3,800 billion won. Looking at types of clothing item, the men’s suit was the largest market of 21,00 billion won.

In clothing, a suit is a set of garments made from the same cloth, consisting of at least a jacket and trousers. It is a traditional form of men’s formal clothes in the Western world. The current styles were of the lounge suit, often called a business suit founded in the revolution during the early 17th century.

As mentioned above, recently men’s suits market in the domestic fashion market has occupied an important position, therefore, the men’s suits brand names would play a significant role in branding, marketing and advertising. Therefore, the main purpose of this research is to examine the linguistic characteristics of domestic men’s formal wear brand name. Four linguistic characteristics of language type, combined structure type of language, word class, length of brand name will be investigated and also examined if there is some difference between brand type.

II. Theoretical Background

1. Brand name and linguistics

Brand naming consists of three components:
the market component, the legal component and the linguistic component. Each component makes its own specific requirements in creating a new brand. The market component requires a brand to be suggestive of productive benefits. The legal component demands the legal availability and the uniqueness of the brand. The linguistic component includes three parts: phonetically, a brand should be easy to pronounce and pleasant to be heard and read; morphologically, it should be short and simple; and semantically a brand should present a positive not offensive, obscene; modern or contemporary, always timely; understandable and memorable.

The theoretical basis of brand name considerably based on linguistics. Linguistics is the scientific study of natural language. It concerns itself with describing and explaining the nature of human language. Linguistics encompasses a number of sub-fields. An important topical division is between the study of language structure (grammar) and the study of meaning (semantics and pragmatics). Grammar encompasses morphology, syntax (the rules that determine how words combine into phrases and sentences) and phonology. Linguists distinguish between four components that are thought to typify all languages: phonology, orthography, morphology, and semantics. Phonology is the study of sound systems and abstract sound units. Phonetic devices pertain to vocal sounds and the letters that represent sounds in a given language. An example of a phonetic device is alliteration, as in the brand name Coca-Cola. Orthography is concerned with the spelling of words. Orthographic devices include unusual or incorrect spellings, such as Kool-Aid. Morphology is the formation and composition of words. It deals with word formation through the combination of prefixes, roots, and suffixes. For example, affixation involves the addition of letters or groups of letters (morphemes) to words, as in 'Jell-O'. Finally, semantics is the study of meaning. It typically focuses on the relation between signifier, such as words, phrases, signs and symbols, and what they stand for. One semantic device is metaphor, which occurs when a word pertaining to one kind of idea is used in place of another to suggest likeness between them, as in the use of the brand name 'Arrid' to imply dryness. As the above examples of brand names suggest, when constructing brand names, these four classes of linguistic devices are commonly used, either alone or in conjunction with one another. This strategy involves creating names that have certain linguistic qualities that differentiate them from others in a cluttered media environment.

2. The linguistic characteristics of brand name

Based on linguistics and previous study, the linguistic characteristics of brand name has been categorized as follows.

1) Type of language

Every nation has its own language. It reflects each nation’s peculiar emotion and demonstrates a common cultural characteristics. For example, French gives an impression of soft and sophisticated, and Korean presents intimate, easy and comfortable feeling. Like this, different characteristics will be expressed and also different influence will be given on brand image according to the type of language.

2) Language combined style of brand name
A word is the smallest free form in a language, in contrast to a morpheme, which is the smallest unit of meaning. A word may consist of only one morpheme (e.g. wolf), however, a single morpheme may not be able to exist as a free form (e.g. the English plural morpheme -s). Typically, a word will consist of a root or stem, and zero or more affixes. Words can be combined to create other units of language, such as phrases, clauses, and/or sentences. A word consisting of two or more stems joined together form a compound.

The types of language combined structure in brand naming are widely classified into two types of the single word and the combination word. Then, the combination word type could subdivide into three categories of unified word, separately combined word, and artificially combined word. According to the language combined structure type of brand name, the brand nuance could be greatly changed.

1. Single word: Names which consists of one word.
2. Unified word: Names which are not originally one word, however, have been recognized and used as if one word.
3. Artificially combined word: The brand names, nongoistical names which completely made-up words, and the acronymic name which made of initials will belong to this category.
4. Separately combined words: Combination of two or more than two words.

3) Word Class of Brand Name

Grammar classifies a language’s lexicon into several groups of words. The basic bipartite division possible for virtually every natural language is that of nouns vs. verbs. The classification into such classes is in the tradition of Dionysius Thrax, who distinguished eight categories: noun, verb, adjective, pronoun, preposition, adverb, conjunction and interjection.

A language can have a certain form of word class. As a brand name has been developed with a specific language and letters, it is frequently against the rules of grammar system. For brand name, word classes in grammar can be classified into four categories of noun, verb, adjective, and phrase.

1) Verb : In syntax, a verb is a word (part of speech) that conveys action (bring, read, walk, run, learn), or a state of being (exist, stand). In most languages, verbs are inflected (modified in form) to encode tense, aspect, mood and voice. A verb may also agree with the person, gender, and/or number of some of its arguments, such as its subject, or object.

2) Noun : A word which is used to denote a person like pianist or woman, a concrete or abstract entity like fork or truth, a place like office or garden which are all common nouns. The proper nouns which are the names of a specific person, place, event etc., usually starting with a capital letter, for example, York, John, Christmas, Saturday.

3) Adjective : It is a word whose main syntactic role is to modify a noun or pronoun, giving more information about the noun or pronoun’s referent. Collectively, adjectives form one of the traditional English eight parts of speech, though linguists today distinguish adjectives from words such as determiners that also used to be considered adjectives.

4) Phrase : It is a group of words functioning as a single unit in the syntax of a sentence. For example, ‘the store at the end of the street’ is a phrase and acts like a noun. It can further be broken down into two shorter phrases functioning as adjectives: ‘at the end’ and ‘of the street’, a shorter prepositional phrase within the longer
prepositional phrase. 'At the end of the street' could be replaced by an adjective such as nearby. 'The end of the street' could also be replaced by another noun, such as the crossroads to produce the house at the crossroads.30)

4) Length of Brand Name

Every language has a length of long or short. The brand name can be differentiated depending on the length of the language. The length of brand name language has classified into very long, long, average, and short one. generally, two or three syllables have been used for brand name, however, longer syllables of brand name has been appearing to emphasize the distinct differentiation and the representation of brand properties. Like thus, the length of words in brand name closely related with the differentiation between other brands and the representation of its product properties.31)

Depending on the length of syllables when a brand name is pronouncing, it has been divided into 3 categories of short, normal, and long length.

① Short length: The length of brand names are consisted of 1 ~ 2 syllables.
② Normal length: The length of brand names are consisted of 3 syllables.
③ Long length: The length of brand names are consisted of more than 4 syllables.

III. Methods

1. Term Definition : Based on the review of literatures and preliminary examination, terms have been selected and defined as follows:

1) Type of language

In this research, it is not based on the type of spelling but the meaning of brand name.

2) Language combined style of brand name

It will be classified into following 4 categories which is based on brand name’s spelling.

(1) Single word: Names which is consist of one word such as GALAXY, BASSO, or designer’s name such as MICHELANGELO and LANCETTI will be included.

(2) Unified words: Names such as MENSTAR or LIFE APPAREL which are not originally one word, however, have been recognized and used as if one word.

(3) Artificially combined word: Brand names such as 'MO BETTER' which combined with 'more + better + chic', and 'Towngent' which means 'town + gentleman' or 'VALUZI' of Italian brand name, which is a combination of 'valore(value) + creazione(creation) means that this brand creates a novel fashion through the elevation of wearer's value. Like these brand names, neologistical names which completely made-up words, and the acronymic name which made of initials will belong to this category.

(4) Separately combined words: Combination of two or more than two words like 'tradclub' or 'icinoo homme'.

3) Word Class and phrase of Brand Name

Based on brand name’s spelling, it has been categorized verb, noun, adjective, and phrase.

1) Verb : A word that conveys action, or a state of being.

2) Noun: Common nouns and proper nouns. Acronymic brand name which is a name made of initials such as tngt(town gentleman), neologistical name is completely made-up words like ggio2 are also included.
3) Adjective: A word which gives the reader or speaker extra information about a noun or delimits it in some way.

4) phrase: Here, it is a group of words functioning as a single unit in the syntax of a sentence.

4) Length of Brand Name

Depending on the length of syllables when a brand name is pronouncing, it has been divided into 3 categories of short, normal, and long length.

① Short length: The length of brand names are consisted of 1 ~ 2 syllables like 'Good Luck'.

② Normal length: The length of brand names are consisted of 3 syllables such as 'Genzia' or 'Galuxy'.

③ Long length: The length of brand names are consisted of more than 4 syllables such as 'Nut Club' or 'Nina Ricci'.

5) Brand Type of Men’s Wear

Based on comprehensive analysis of the men’s wear brand types indicated by the '2009 Korea Fashion Yearbook', they were classified into four types such as national, designer, licensed and imported.

2. Sample selection

First, the 209 men’s fashion brands were selected from '2009 Korea Fashion Yearbook'. Then, 25 brands which could not collect proper informations about the brand name or naming were excluded. Lastly, among total 184 brand names, 66 men’s formal wear brands were selected and studied.

3. Data analysis

For data analysis, quantitative evaluation of the frequency and qualitative evaluation were used.

IV. Results and Discussion

1) The Types of Language

The language types of Korean men’s formal wear brand names have been identified as 7 categories and the order of their incidence is as follows : English(51.5%), in which type of compound
word and abbreviated word of English are included, Italian(24.2%), French (12.1%), mixture of foreign language(4.5%), the type of Korean + foreign language and other type of foreign language (3.0% for each), and Korean(1.5%).<Table 1>

Comparing the difference between brand type, English has been used the most for all brands except Designer brand.<Table 2> For National brand, all kinds of language but the type of Korean+ Foreign Language have been appeared. For Designer brand, the type of Korean+ foreign language and Italian have been used the most in same frequency and 5 types of English, Italia, French, Mixture of Foreign Languages, Korean+

For Foreign Language have been shown. In Licensed brand, only 3 types of English, Italian, and French have been appeared. This result would imply that the language types of Korean men’s formal wear brand name has been used somewhat differently according to its brand type.

2) Combined structure type of Language

For combined language structure in men’s fashion brand names, the single word type has been used the most(59.1%), and followed by the type of separately combined word(16.7%), artificially combined word(13.6%), and unified word(10.6%).<Table 3>
As single word brand names would be easier to make and remember than the other type of brand names, it used the most for men's formal wear brands.

The result which examined the combined structure type of language by brand type has shown in Table 4.

Combined structure type of language have been shown differently by brand type. Looking in detail, the single word type has shown most frequently except Designer brand. In National brand, the type of single(59.6%) appears the most and followed by artificially combined (14.9%), and unified and separately combined (12.8%) in the same. For Licensed, the type of single(72.7%) uses most frequently and followed by artificially combined(18.2%), separately combined (9.1%) and no unified one. The separately combined word type has appeared the most (57.1%) and followed by single(28.6%), unified (14.3%) and no artificially combined in Designer brand.

3) Word class

The most frequently used the type of word class is noun(56.0%), and followed by phrase (30.3%), adjective(12.1%), and verb(1.5%).

Various types of noun that denote a person, concrete or abstract entity, place have been found including acronym and neology. In phrase, all of noun phrase type has shown, however, 6(30.0%) of them have include the abbreviated type of word. These results agree with a preceding research result\(^{32}\) that a brand name was frequently against the rules of grammar system. All adjective brand name has implied an attributive character such as 'Dainty or Solus (Solo).

Examining the result of word class type according to brand types demonstrated in Table 6.

For National and Licensed brand, noun type has been used the most. Otherwise, phrase type and noun type used about the same rate in Designer brand and adjective used for Imported brand. Therefore, it seems that the type of word class has been used differently according to brand type.

4) Length of Brand Name

For domestic men's formal wear brand name, the long name has been used most(69.7%) and then followed by medium(25.8%) and short(4.5%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand type</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Unified</th>
<th>Separately combined</th>
<th>Artificially combined</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>28(59.6%)</td>
<td>6(12.8%)</td>
<td>6(12.8%)</td>
<td>7(14.9%)</td>
<td>47(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>2(28.6%)</td>
<td>1(14.3%)</td>
<td>4(57.1%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>7(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed</td>
<td>8(72.7%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(9.1%)</td>
<td>2(18.2%)</td>
<td>11(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imported</td>
<td>1(100.0%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(100.0%)</td>
<td>1(1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39(59.1%)</td>
<td>7(10.6%)</td>
<td>11(18.7%)</td>
<td>9(13.6%)</td>
<td>66(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Type of word Class and its frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word class</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Ratio</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
<th>Ratio (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun</td>
<td>Designer’s name</td>
<td>10(27.0%)</td>
<td>6(16.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Celebrity’s name</td>
<td>6(16.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Common name</td>
<td>2(5.4%)</td>
<td>1(2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete entity</td>
<td>2(5.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abstract entity</td>
<td>4(10.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>4(10.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>1(2.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neology</td>
<td>8(21.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective</td>
<td></td>
<td>8(100.0%)</td>
<td>1(12.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrase</td>
<td></td>
<td>20(100.0%)</td>
<td>3(8.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb</td>
<td></td>
<td>1(100.0%)</td>
<td>1(1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>66(100.0%)</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6: Type of Word Class and its frequency according to the brand type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Word type</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>National</td>
<td>26(55.3%)</td>
<td>8(17.0%)</td>
<td>12(25.3%)</td>
<td>1(2.1%)</td>
<td>47(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Designer</td>
<td>3(42.9%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>4(57.1%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>7(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Licensed</td>
<td>8(21.8%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>3(27.3%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>11(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Imported</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(100.0%)</td>
<td>0(0.0%)</td>
<td>1(100.0%)</td>
<td>2(1.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37(56.1%)</td>
<td>9(13.8%)</td>
<td>19(28.8%)</td>
<td>1(2.1%)</td>
<td>66(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7: Length of Brand Name and its frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of name</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Ratio</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3(4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17(25.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24(36.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13(19.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4(6.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3(4.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2(3.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>66(100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking by the number of syllable, brand name with 4 syllables appeared the most and then followed by 3, 5, 6, 3 and 7 showed the same rate, and 8 syllables.

This result is supported the result of previous research\(^{33}\) that brand names with 2 or 3 syllables used the most in general, however, longer brand name had been appeared to emphasize the brand attribute and the unique effect of differentiation.

The result which examined the length of brand name according to the brand type presented in <table 8>.

There has been no big difference between brand type.

### IV. Conclusion

This study has been done to identify the four linguistic characteristics of language type, combined structure type of language, word class, length of brand name of domestic men's formal wear brand and then if there are some differences by brand type. The result as follows:

1. Seven language types have been found in domestic men's formal wear brand names. English has been used the most, then followed by Italian and French. This result could suggest following reasons: English is the common language which used worldwide, therefore, it may be easy to deliver the meaning and image of the brand. Italian and French can communicate the fashionable sensitivity to the consumer because two countries are perceived as fashion powerhouses. Although English & Italian have occupied 50% of the total, comparatively various types of language may have used for domestic men's formal wear brands.

2. For combined structure type of brand name language, the single word used the most (59.1%), and then followed by separately combined word type, artificially combined word, and unified word type. The reason why single word used the most in men's formal wear brands may be that it would be easier to name and remember than the other types. Other three types, however, have been appeared at a relatively similar rate of 7%, 9% and 11%. 
Therefore, it could be concluded that various type of combined structure have been used for domestic men's formal wear brand names.

(3) The most frequently used the type of word class is noun(37.0%), and followed by phrase(20.0%), adjective(12.1%) and verb(1.5%). In the noun type, 6 different types which express a person, concrete & abstract entity, place, acronym, and neology have been found. Otherwise, less various types, have been found in phrase and adjective. For In phrase, only noun type has appeared, however, 6(30.0%) out of 20 phrases were abbreviated type. Like this, the brand names which were against the rules of grammar system were often found in domestic men's formal wear brands. All eight adjective brand names have implied an attributive character of the brand such as 'Dainty' or 'Solus(Solo)'. This result could imply that the domestic men's formal wear brands have tried to diversify each brand name using various types of word class and also sub-categories of each word class type.

(4) The long name has been used most and then followed by normal and short length of brand name. Looking by the number of syllable, 4 syllables appeared the most and then followed by 3 syllables, 5 syllables, 6 syllables, 2 and 7 syllables showed the same rate, and 8 syllables. The longer the brand name is, the better the characteristics of products can be explained. Therefore, marketers may deliver their intend easily through the longer brand names. The result of using longer length of brand name seems to closely relate with the means of discriminating from other brands and expressing the attributes of own brand in domestic men's wear brand.

(5) The results that compared the difference according to each brand type showed a difference in its language type, language combined style, word class but length of brand name. The result would suggest that domestic men's formal wear brands have tried to differentiate and diversify each brand according to their target market and goal through the use of brand name.

As mentioned before, the brand name is one of the most powerful sources of identity. The results revealed that Korean men's formal wear brands have tried to touch the hearts of target market and the right appeal for customers through the diverse names. More unique and various type of brand name, however, need to be developed. To communicate with consumer more effectively, individuality in brand names will become more important factor in the near future.

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