Expresso Expressions: Use of Language in Branding Local Coffee Shops

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Abstract— This study explored the linguistic and cultural significance of coffee shop names in Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo, through Dell Hymes' SPEAKING model. Barotac Nuevo, a municipality rich in heritage, provides a unique sociolinguistic landscape where language, culture, and commerce intersect. Coffee shop names serve as more than mere branding; they reflect local identity, community values, and evolving communication trends. A qualitative ethnographic approach was employed, incorporating direct observations and informal interviews with coffee shop owners and patrons. Data were analyzed using the SPEAKING framework, focusing on the setting, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, and genre of communication. Findings indicate that coffee shop names in Barotac Nuevo often integrate Hiligaynon, Kiniray-a, and Filipino, reinforcing local pride while appealing to diverse audiences. Names frequently feature wordplay, cultural references, and hybrid linguistic elements, fostering an inviting and relatable atmosphere. Additionally, the study highlights the role of informal, playful, and nostalgic naming conventions in enhancing consumer engagement and community interaction. This research features the importance of language as a cultural and social marker in commercial spaces. By strategically employing localized and creative naming practices, coffee shop owners contribute to cultural preservation while adapting to modern business trends. The findings offer insights into the broader implications of language in branding and identity construction within small communities, emphasizing the role of linguistic creativity in shaping social and economic interactions.

Keywords— Expressions, Language, Coffee Shops, Branding, Local Business.

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of language in the naming of coffee shops in Barotac Nuevo is deeply intertwined with the community's cultural and historical context. With a rich history filled with stories of bravery, perseverance, and the unwavering determination of its inhabitants, the town of Barotac Nuevo, shines as an example of development and success in Iloilo and beyond. Described by the Iloilo Provincial Government, the municipality, located approximately 30 kilometers from Iloilo City, has a rich cultural heritage that shapes local identity and communication styles. The Barotac Nuevo Plaza Field, a central hub for local gatherings and cultural festivities, serves as a reflection of this identity, emphasizing unity and tradition within the community (Klug, 2023). In communication analysis, the setting refers to the physical environment where interactions occur, while the scene represents the abstract psychological backdrop that influences those interactions (Perales, 2024). He said Barotac Nuevo, the local coffee shops often embody this duality by not only serving as a venue for social interaction but also as spaces that reflect the community's values and history. Their roles, relationships, and interactions significantly affect the choice of names, which often carry local significance or cultural references that resonate with the community. Coffee shops have evolved into vibrant social spaces where people gather, connect, and build communities, thereby fostering a sense of belonging and pride among patrons (Dogelio, 2023). The design and ambiance of coffee shops contribute to customer satisfaction and loyalty, emphasizing the importance of creating spaces that resonate with the community's spirit (Vanharanta, 2015). While specific studies on the naming conventions of coffee shops in Barotac Nuevo are limited, the broader practice of selecting names that incorporate local dialects, cultural references, or foreign influences is a recognized strategy in the coffee shop industry (Dzierlatka, 2023). Different linguistic strategies including politeness strategy, personification, and metaphor were found in the signs to attract customers. The study would contribute to a better understanding of the use of English in lingua franca contexts in Coffee Shops in Barotac Nuevo, and utilizing these commercial signs as a realistic source of learning linguistic strategies and pragmatics (Alkhaldi et al., 2023). Online, as offline, purchase decisions are based on expectations about flavor and taste, offering an opportunity to make healthy and sustainable options desirable by using the right descriptions (Klein Hazebroek & Croijmans, 2023). Hazebroek and Croijmans investigate the effect of different types of

coffee flavor descriptions on consumers, showing language can influence consumer purchase behavior.

II. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative methodology employed in this study utilizes Dell Hymes' SPEAKING framework to conduct an ethnographic communication analysis of coffee shop names in Barotac Nuevo. This approach is designed to systematically explore how language is used within specific cultural contexts, emphasizing the social meanings and functions that influence communication. The careful selection of names that incorporate local languages, cultural references, or even foreign influences highlights the rich tapestry of identities within Barotac Nuevo, illustrating the intricate relationship between language, culture, and community engagement in the realm of coffee shop culture.

Data Collection

To gather relevant data, a qualitative descriptive method was employed. The study involved observing various coffee shops in Barotac Nuevo and documenting their names, alongside contextual factors such as their location, clientele, and ambiance. Additionally, informal interviews with owners were conducted to gain insights into the rationale behind the chosen names and their perceived significance in the local culture.

Data Analysis

The analysis follows the components outlined in Hymes' SPEAKING model (2013). The setting refers to the physical locations of the coffee shops, while the scene encompasses the psychological context of the customers' experiences. Understanding these elements helps to frame how names contribute to the atmosphere of each establishment and influence customer perceptions. Moreover, participants in this analysis include coffee shop owners. Their interactions and relationships with the patrons play a crucial role in understanding how the names function within the social dynamics of the coffee shop environment. The ends of communication in this context refer to the purposes behind the naming choices, such as attracting customers, conveying a theme, or reflecting local culture. This component helps to identify the goals of the coffee shop owners in their branding strategies. The act sequence involves the order of events that occur within the coffee shops, including how names are introduced, used in marketing, and responded to by customers. This analysis focuses on the interaction patterns that arise from the names chosen for the establishments. The key denotes the tone or manner of communication associated with the coffee shop names. This includes whether the names evoke a sense of familiarity, sophistication, or playfulness, influencing customer expectations and experiences. Instrumentalities refer to the forms and channels of communication, such as the visual presentation of names on signage and menus, as well as how these names are verbally communicated by staff and patrons. This element examines the impact of presentation on customer engagement. The norms encompass the social rules and expectations surrounding communication within the coffee shop setting. This includes the accepted practices related to naming, branding, and customer interaction, which can vary based on local cultural context. Lastly, the genre refers to the type of communicative event represented by each coffee shop name. This may include categories such as casual, thematic, or traditional, providing insight into how the names fit within broader cultural narratives.

Data collected through observations and interviews will be analyzed qualitatively, focusing on how each component of the SPEAKING model interrelates to provide a holistic understanding of the communicative significance of coffee shop names in Barotac Nuevo. By employing Hymes' framework, this study aims to highlight the complex interplay between language, culture, and social dynamics in this specific context (Katsara, 2023).

III. RESULTS

Applying Hymes' SPEAKING model to coffee shop branding in Barotac Nuevo, Iloilo, it is observed how local culture, language, and consumer behavior influence communication patterns. The town, known for its strong football culture and deep-rooted Ilonggo and Kiniray-a influences, offers a unique sociolinguistic environment where coffee shop branding reflects a mix of local identity, modern consumer trends, and digital marketing strategies.

Setting. Barotac Nuevo's coffee shops are often small, community-focused establishments, reflecting the town's rural and close-knit ambiance. These settings are not just places for drinking coffee but also hubs for social interaction, where friends and families gather to converse and relax.

> *G Café in Barotac Nuevo uses the slang "G" (short for "Game" or "Go"), reflecting the town's dynamic and youthful spirit,*

particularly among football players and students. This creates an inclusive and action-driven atmosphere, appealing to young consumers looking for a place to study, socialize, or relax.

The ambiance often influences customer engagement, with modern coffee shops adopting cozy, aesthetic designs to attract millennials and Gen Z consumers (Flores, 2024).

Participants. A mix of the speech community is fluent in local languages like Kiniray-a and Hiligaynon, as well as individuals proficient in Filipino and English. This multilingualism influences how coffee shop names and advertisements are crafted to resonate with diverse audiences. Accordingly, local business owners, baristas, and marketers use creative language to appeal to their community (Chakraborty, 2023).

> *Shops like Diyaho Coffee Shop use the sound-like Kiniray-a word "Diyaho" (meaning "here"), reinforcing a strong local identity that resonates with native speakers and highlights Barotac Nuevo's local pride.*

The study observed that coffee shop names serve as a reflection of both the physical and social settings in which they operate (Grinshpun, 2021). Many establishments prominently feature names that evoke local culture and community values, creating a connection with patrons in Barotac Nuevo.

Ends. Communication serves both functional and social purposes (Hymes, 1972). The following are the specific observations in this study:

> ***Functional Purpose.*** *Coffee shop names function as branding tools that attract customers and create a unique identity. Names like TEArrific Snack House use wordplay (terrific + tea) to emphasize their specialty in tea-based drinks.*

> ***Social Purpose.*** *Coffee shop language fosters community engagement and cultural expression. For example, G Café integrates Filipino slang ("G" meaning "Go") to establish a laid-back and youth-friendly brand identity.*

Meanwhile, the use of homophones, compounding, and slang in coffee shop names enhances memorability. For instance, Kofeletta (Italian-inspired) suggests a café atmosphere associated with reading and relaxation, reinforcing the brand's thematic experience. Coffee shops in Barotac Nuevo use creative and locally relevant branding to attract customers (Wijngaarden et al., 2019). Using Kiniray-a, Hiligaynon, Filipino, and even loanwords in branding fosters cultural appreciation and reflects local traditions. Coffee shops act as community spaces where people from different backgrounds interact, strengthening social bonds.

Act Sequence. Many coffee shop names in Barotac Nuevo are inspired by local language, wordplay, and familiar expressions. The creative language in coffee shop branding includes metaphors, cultural references, and homophones that resonate with local values (Liao & Chan, 2024).

> *Maleia Café evokes the idea of freedom (Malaya in Filipino), aligning with a sense of relaxation and leisure associated with coffee consumption. Moreover, the phrase "TEArawi! Arat Na!" is an exclamatory call to action, incorporating Filipino, Kiniray-a, and English playfully and engagingly.*

For the end and act sequence, the objectives behind choosing specific names were found to be diverse, ranging from attracting customers through humor and cultural references to establishing a brand identity that resonates with the local populace (Thompson et al., 2006). Owners often initiated discussions about their name choices in a manner reminiscent of storytelling, detailing the inspirations behind their selections, which can lead to deeper customer engagement and loyalty. This aligns with Hymes' concept of "Ends," as the names often encapsulate the goals of building community and fostering a welcoming atmosphere.

Key. The key to communication in coffee shop names is often light-hearted and inviting, aiming to create a friendly atmosphere for patrons. The tone adopted in naming—whether it is whimsical, traditional, or modern—can significantly influence customer perceptions and the emotional response elicited upon entering the shop.

> ***Welcoming and Friendly.*** *Coffee shop branding in Barotac Nuevo reflects a warm*

and inviting tone to encourage customer engagement.

Youthful and Trendy. The use of slang and compounding words (e.g., "Coffeeholics") targets younger audiences, particularly students.

Names like Hautea Café reflect creativity while tying back to the local lifestyle and identity. The tone is casual yet culturally significant, emphasizing both the tradition and modernity of family-owned coffee shops in Barotac Nuevo.

Instrumentalities. Coffee shop branding blends English (for broad appeal), Filipino (for national identity), and Kiniray-a (for local relevance).

Based on the analysis, Hautea Café combines family name and "Tea," signifying premium tea products, while maintaining a sophisticated yet relatable brand identity among local families of business owners.

Informal styles dominate, particularly in social media posts and spoken communication (Larina, 2015).). For instance, TEArawi! Arat Na! uses a mix of Filipino and Kiniray-a to create a vibrant, youthful vibe.

Norms. Kiniray-a, Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English are widely used. Kiniray-a adds an intimate, localized touch, while English appeals to tourists and younger audiences. Wordplay, homophones, and compounding make branding more engaging (Danilović & Josijević, 2019). Wordplay and homophones (e.g., Maleia Café) create multi-layered meanings, allowing customers to form their interpretations. 14th Beanery Coffee Shop adopts a "beanery" term to sound affordable and accessible.

In Barotac Nuevo, the incorporation of local languages, English, or even playful misspellings or even slang showcases the linguistic diversity of the community.

Norms. Norms govern how names are perceived and accepted within the community (Nderitu, 2016; Grewal et al.,1998). There exists an understanding of appropriateness that influences how shop owners select names, ensuring they align with cultural values and local traditions.

As part of the findings, coffee shop names are expected to be creative and engaging. Slang and wordplay, such as Kofeletta (a mix of "coffee" and "letter"), appeal to a sense of fun and relaxation.

The blending of English and local languages mirrors everyday speech patterns, creating a natural and accessible communication style.

Genre. Genre refers to the category of communication.

Branding & Advertising. Coffee shop names and promotional materials combine linguistic creativity with cultural relevance to stand out in a competitive market.

Social Interaction. Beyond branding, these spaces facilitate social connections, where conversations often mix regional languages (Hiligaynon and Kiniray-a) with Filipino and English.

IV. CONCLUSION

By analyzing coffee shop branding in Barotac Nuevo through Hymes' SPEAKING model, we see how language, culture, and business strategies intersect to shape communication. The integration of local languages, informal speech, and creative naming conventions strengthens community identity while enhancing consumer engagement and market appeal. Barotac Nuevo's linguistic and cultural richness makes it an ideal setting for the application of Hymes' SPEAKING model. The interplay of English, Filipino, and local languages like Kiniray-a creates a dynamic linguistic landscape. Coffee shop names and communication practices in this context not only serve commercial purposes but also reinforce local identity and foster social connections, making them deeply rooted in the community's cultural fabric.

To enhance coffee shop communication in Barotac Nuevo using Hymes' SPEAKING model, businesses should incorporate local languages (Kiniray-a, Hiligaynon) in branding to strengthen cultural identity while maintaining accessibility through Filipino and English. Engaging social media strategies, such as interactive posts and multilingual hashtags, can boost customer engagement. Thematic branding with locally inspired names and storytelling enhances brand uniqueness while training baristas in multilingual greetings fosters a welcoming environment. Hosting community events, collaborating with local artists, and supporting local farmers can further promote cultural

heritage. By integrating these strategies, coffee shops can serve as both social hubs and cultural ambassadors, enriching customer experience and local pride.

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