

A STUDY OF SELECT ENGLISH COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS OF PEDAGOGIC VALUE

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Abstract

Presently the Commercial Organizations and Business Houses vie with one another in creating and retaining their market. The advertisers employ all sorts of creative, attractive, novel and innovative methods for gaining momentum for their products among the consumers. In line with this, in order to turn the attention of the customers they concentrate much on naming the products and designing the wrappers and covers. According to the prerequisite of the changing trends of the society they introduce catchy, short and sweet product names, taglines and slogans. There is a vast difference between the names of the present commercial products and the past ones. More or less it is due to the highly-educated, well-informed and knowledgeable members of the society. Currently due to the advent of ICT the entire environment is educative and enlightening. Thus people learn things everywhere and at every time. The Information and Communication Technology and the English Language contribute a lot for this. The English advertisements of commercial products that we see around have the potentials for English Language Learning and Teaching. The researcher of this Paper has taken a sample of English commercials that have some pedagogic value for the study. The attempt is a new one. The study examines the linguistic elements of English commercials and how they can be made use of in the day to day affairs of conversational and vocabulary building processes. As everything is subject to change, the process of English Language Teaching could also be put into the changing process. The teaching - learning process can be an effective and an entertaining one, only when the new, novel or innovative methods are introduced in ELT. The study examines the main possible aspects of using the names of commercial advertisements in ELT and suggests how language teachers could exploit them in the formal and informal way.

Keywords: *advertisements, innovative methods, commercial products, product names, conversational and vocabulary building process, taglines and slogans.*

Introduction

The practice of publishing advertisements in the media was legally approved in the year 1949. It recognized advertisements as a legitimate subsidiary source of income to offset the heavy production cost and the need to take the Print and Visual Media to the stake holders at a lower price.

Today we live in a world of advertisements. Anything and everything is advertised. Advertising is done through the mass media - the press, the radio, the television and the internet etc. Newspapers and periodicals are undoubtedly the cheapest and largest carriers of advertisements. It is a fact that more than half of the space in newspapers and periodicals is occupied by advertisements of all sorts. Advertising is a form of business communication for marketing. It encourages or persuades the target audience, viewers, or listeners, sometimes a specific group to make it continue with or to take some new action.

In Latin, the word 'ad vertere' means 'to turn the mind toward'. Recently Political or Ideological advertising is quite common everywhere. Mostly advertising is closely associated with Journalism. The researcher of this paper here has related it with English Language Teaching.

Generally whatever people see around, listen to and talk about scarcely disappear from their mind. Accordingly the English Brand Names and Titles of Commercial products that the consumers buy and make use of indirectly create them a platform for learning and recapitulating certain things that they have already learnt academically and formally. The reasons are the modern advertisements' linguistic elements, the implicitly marked terms denoting recent and contemporary concepts, the concept of coining new terms in line with the formal and Standard English terminology. Thus the present paper probes deep into the pedagogic value of the English Brand Names and Titles of Commercial products. A set of potential advertisements have been selected and commented upon for this purpose. The selection is fairly representative of some of the Commercials of the Food Products currently available in the market.

Word Power Made Easy

Language is not possible without words. Words are like bricks that are used to build a small house or a big building. Words are the building blocks of a language. Knowledge of more words gives more clarity in writing. A right word at the right place makes the language precise and correct and helps in correct expression of the thought intended to be expressed. And for correct expression of thoughts, words have to be joined with one another to make complete sentences. Vocabulary learning is the focal point for communication. Students who are not able to construct complete grammatical sentences can still get their message across if they know some key, high-frequency and familiar vocabulary.

Words and Advertisements

The Print media and Electronic media often carry advertisements that explore the meanings of words and phrases. They present a unique opportunity for building vocabulary. Expanding new vocabulary is essential for effective communication. Correspondingly the advertisements often emphasize peculiar words that will not find themselves into anyone's working vocabulary, but they can still make learning a fun. The little constellations of meaning keep the brain cells active and hungry for more. Learning one new word leads to other new words. Students generally do not retain words after one listening and need multiple exposures and experiences with new vocabulary. In this context, Collins Block, a literacy expert of International Reading Association, views that 'a learner needs repeated exposure to a new word to truly learn its meaning, (2006). Accordingly the linguistic and

phonetic elements of such words could be further explained and highlighted in a language learning environment. Thus the students can be left to use the semantically significant words and phrases in an appropriate context of their own.

Food Products

Food Products are part and partial of everybody's life. Though quality is the hall - mark of a product its nomenclature, colourful design, slogans and its pictorial aspects indirectly move consumers to some extent, because they strongly and emotionally react to them. The researcher here views it linguistically. A sample of certain English commercial advertisements of Food products has been taken for analysis. These commercials have certain potentials for learning.

Good Day

Good Day is a famous product of biscuits from Britannia. Mostly children, adults and also elderly people are fond of consuming it, for its crispiness and taste. Sometimes it is a smile that makes it a Good Day. The smaller joys that can brighten up one's life everyday often get ignored, in the pursuit of larger joys. With its tagline of "With every cookie there are many smiles", Good Day acts as an enabler in enjoying all those small moments in everyday life. In its brand new tastier avatar, 'Britannia-Good Day' brings alive its philosophy of *Smiles* through its new Logo, packaging and cookie. The new Good Day-cookie comes with a smiley design. Cookie means a small flat, baked cake which is either crisp or soft. Sometimes a bun or biscuit cooked in the same way can be called a cookie. Traditionally everybody uses to wish others with the phrase 'Good Morning', when a person is seen for the first time in the morning. It has been the standard expression for greeting. In this context 'Good Day' can be used as an expression of wish for a change. If we use 'Good Day' as a greeting it would be attractive. We can make people feel the difference. If anybody asks us why we say 'Good Day' instead of good morning we can very well say "we don't want to be narrow minded by restricting the goodness to the morning alone. Hence we wish a Good Day. Such an idea can be derived from the advertisement Britannia "Good Day". Thus it helps us to avoid the monotony. Novelty in the expression of wish could very well turn the attention of the hearers and thereby it could get wide currency among the speakers of English.



Crafted With Love

The phrase 'Crafted with love' is the tagline of the aforementioned product. 'Tag' means stringing words or ideas together to go behind as a follower along with the main word or words of a consumer product. The phrase employed in the commercial is quite interesting. The word 'Craft' is a noun. It is also the verbal form. As a verb it means 'making something with careful skill'. We often make use of the word craft in conversation and writing. Some of the usages are: 'craftsman-an artisan', 'craftsmanship-the work of a craftsman', 'handicraft-a trade requiring skill of hand or manual occupation', 'craftwork-a work done by hand'. Its adjectival form is 'crafty'. It can be used as a noun as 'crafty men'. It means 'wily men' or 'men who are cunning'. But here in this advertisement the lexical item 'craft' has been used as a **participial adjective**. Accordingly the tagline of the commercial suggests that the edible item has been prepared with great care and concern. The implied meaning of the phrase is quite creative and attractive. If the same phrase is included in the day to day conversation as one's own, it would turn the attention of the hearers. The expression could gain popularity; if it is exchanged contextually between husbands and wives, newly-married couples and the to-be-married ones. A phrase like this can definitely attract youngsters.

Choco

The novel lexical item 'Choco' is a frequently-used jargon of the commercial advertisement agencies. It has been derived from the English edible item 'Chocolate'. Chocolate is a paste made of the ground seeds of *Theobroma cacao* -cocoa, with sugar and flour or similar material. All sorts of sweetmeats made of, or covered with the paste, the beverages made by dissolving the paste or a powder prepared from it, are given the attributive term, 'Choco'. Though it is not a Standard English adjectival word, it has been freely used by the advertisers. As a result of this, it has become a popular term especially among small children. Mostly it is used as an adjective. It is used to refer to the chocolate flavour used in the products. Some of the adjectival phrases and usages of the term are: Choco-Bar, Choco-Pie, Chocoes, Choco Chip, My Choco, and Choco Baby'. Thus many use it as a formal term for referring to Chocolate taste, Choco flavour and so on, as the usage of

the term does not deviate much it can be entertained in the day to day conversations contextually.

Chunkies

Good Day '**Chunkies**', as the name suggests is a 'Chunky cookie'. Though 'Chunk' is an English word, 'Chunkies' is a created term like Choco. In English 'Chunk' means a small cut piece of food item. With regard to the above-mentioned product, its picture contributes for explaining the meaning of the term chunk, as the uneven surface of the biscuit looks like 'Chunkies put together'. Though there is no such word originally derived in English, the advertisers have the habit of making or coining new nouns by adding 'ies' at the end of the nouns ending in 'y', following the regular English rules of plural formation. The commercially introduced such words are: **Munchies**- the eatables that can be chewed, **Cookies**-the cake, bun or biscuits that are baked' and **Huggies**. Huggies means things that can be hugged. It is named after a sanitary napkin used by infants and babies. The implication with regard to the product-name, Huggies is that the infants wearing the sanitary napkin, commercially named, Huggies can be hugged and kept fondly without hesitation and uneasiness. Since the words employed here are dynamic in nature, they can be very well used in other similar contexts.

Hide & Seek

Hide and Seek is the brand name of biscuits manufactured by Parle. The grouping or juxtaposition of things, especially words or sounds, also a sequence of words or terms that co-occur more often, in line with the regular English syntactic structure, in advertisement is interesting, entertaining and quite enlightening. 'Hide and Seek' is actually a game which is quite popular among the school going students and small children playing in the village. In the game, the eyes of an individual are kept closed by fastening them with some soft, cotton cloth. He finds out the hide-outs of the others, involved in the game by his sensory power and sometimes with mere guess. In a learning environment if the meaning of the double word is informed and explained to the budding, young minds, in case they happen to be unaware of the meaning, they would be so happy to know the meaning of the word 'Hide and Seek'. They would never forget this collocational item when it is properly explained.



Because small children are fond of playing and are curious to know the English meanings of the things that are around them. If they are informed of the meaning of this play term, they would be happy to use this among their peers and playmates. Then there would be a clear spread of this linguistic item amidst many and all would never forget it. Apart from this, the Brand-name is known for its pictorialism. Pictorialism is a school of artistic photographs. It flourished in the late 19th and early 20th centuries which emphasised using photographs or graphical designs to mimic certain styles of contemporary things. Accordingly the word 'Hide' is hid and the term 'Seek' is highly visible in the wrapper. The dimness and brightness between the double word that make the term distinguishable, greatly contribute for grasping the meaning of the term.

Sunrise

'Sunrise' is a coffee powder manufactured by Nestle India Limited, New Delhi. It is implicitly referred to be the starter of a healthy morning. To have a cup of coffee with biscuits before breakfast is what is customarily seen in India. Sunrise is a better alternative to have something healthy to start the day with. There is no better way than a rising sun to symbolically represent not only the beginning of a beautiful day but also the beginning of a moment. Thus the concept explains the reason behind the brand name. The words like **sunrise**-the time of a day when the sun appears above the eastern horizon and **sunset**-the time of a day when the sun disappears below the western horizon can be associated with the above-mentioned product-name. In addition the portmanteau word, **Nescafe** is a compound term that has two words in it namely 'nest' and 'cafe'. Here nest has a specified meaning that means home or family. And café means a small restaurant where drinks and snacks are sold.



So the amalgamated word implies the meaning that the residents don't need to go to a 'cafe' to drink a tasty coffee instead the café itself can come to their home in the form of Nescafe. Thus a new term has been coined by the advertisement agency and that

too teaches the consumers or the members of the family the integrity prevailing or to be maintained in a home. The concept is implied by the long horizontal line covering and uniting the alphabets of the term Nescafe.

Gems

A **gem** is a piece of mineral crystal, which, in cut and polished form, is used to make jewellery or other adornments. However, certain rocks such as *lapis lazuli* or organic materials are not minerals and are not used for jewellery. The GEMS referred to in the advertisement that are 'colourful' and 'button-shaped' are chocolates manufactured by Cadbury. They look like actual gem stones filled with chocolate inside so that it would attract people of all age group



Children are fond of attractive colours. The 'gems' come in attractive colours that resembles the colours of the gemstones. Thus the meaning implied by the product is very explicit. The children can learn what the commercial product means by 'gems'. In turn as they grow up they would be able to use the word 'Gems' contextually at a later stage. Teachers and Elders can enlighten the wards for effectively using the term 'gems' in sentences of their own.

Digestive



A **digestive biscuit**, sometimes described as a **sweet-meal biscuit**, is a semi-sweet biscuit usually known in American English as a 'cookie'. It originated in the United Kingdom and is popular worldwide. The digestive was first developed in 1839

by two Scottish doctors to aid digestion. The term 'digestive' is derived from the belief that the products have ante-acid properties. The lexical item 'Digestive' is in adjectival form. It implies that the biscuits, if eaten can be easily digested. Learners can contextually use the word in other similar situations meaningfully. It can be used with people having indigestion for referring to have digestive edibles.

Conclusion

Many teachers in India face the challenges of teaching English because the students' native language is not English. It is the need of the hour that teachers should certainly know more about effective strategies for teaching English. Everyone from beginners in English to veterans in journalism - knows the frustration of not having the appropriate word immediately. Sometimes it's a matter of not being able to recall the right word; sometimes we never know it. It is also frustrating to read a newspaper or homework assignment and run across words, the meanings of which elude us. To consider English as a subject makes it very boring to learn. Students start taking it as a burden that leads to boredom and consequently the greatest hurdle in effective learning. It does not prompt the learners to grasp and use; things in their daily life. Monotony can only be ended through creative ideas and it can be more creative, if English commercial advertisements are used to teach English Language.

As the developed world moves from the industrial age to the information age, economic activity and growth is based on interpretation of information and the development of knowledge. In such a society, it is safe to assume that, the English language is essential for success in almost every sphere of life.

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