

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES - BASIC TERMINOLOGY IN ADVERTISING

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Abstract:

This paper provides a short list of some of the most common words and phrases in advertising, the key language in the field, along with their meanings and a summarized explanation. In some of the cases, they come with their abbreviations, their Romanian translation and, of course, some practical examples for the students.

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When generally considered to convey a message about a product, advertising can be traced back to the appearance of a market economy, namely to the early start of bartering, not to specify selling and buying. For example, the marks utilized for recognizing shops, can be regarded as initial manifestations of advertising, as can family names make reference to a certain trade or craft.

In terms of a more appropriate and contemporary definition of advertising, we can exemplify the following: *any paid form of non-personal communication through the mass media about a product by an identified sponsor.* (M. Marcheteau, M. Savio – *Engleza pentru economie - Business & Economics*, pg. 216)

As we all know it, language is a very powerful tool and has a substantial impact over people and their actions. This is above all true in the fields of advertising and marketing. The terminology used to transmit certain messages, with the clear purpose to influence people, is essential.

Although design and visual elements in advertising have a very big influence on the consumer, the language is the one that aids people to notice a specific product and recognize it.

The English language has a particularly broad vocabulary. Where many other tongues have only one or two words, which have a particular meaning, English may have many more.

With respect to teaching English for Specific Purposes, in this case advertising, teachers are often not equipped with the exact English terminology. For this reason, core vocabulary sheets go a long way in helping teachers provide adequate materials for students with English for Special Purposes needs.

In taking this lexical approach to achieving key vocabulary in advertising, students should be encouraged to translate the specific words and phrases into their native language, as each phrase has a very specific translation in each tongue.

Therefore, it is very important for teachers to be aware of the fact that it is not enough to give a list of terms, and then expect students to use them appropriately, especially when it comes to students learning English as their second language.

One of the best ways to approach this is to take it step by step. The first thing that needs to be done, during the English class, is to see whether the students are familiar with any of the words that are going to be introduced. Then, the terms should be written on the blackboard or, a list with those expressions, should be given to the

students. It is always a good idea to ask the students to try explaining these in their own words and, possibly, give a translation.

The next stage should consist in the actual part of the teaching process: the teacher will read aloud, clarify, translate every term, word and expression on that sheet, and then the teacher will give one or two examples for each one of these. Furthermore, it is advisable to quiz them at the end of the class or at the beginning of the next class, in order to know if they fully understood what they have been taught. Of course, a short homework might be assigned, too.

The list below includes some of the most frequently used terms in advertising; this is more of a brief description, rather than a full, detailed one. The following words are used in practical sentences that are easy to understand, and they provide a clear picture of the meanings of these words and their use in a specific context.

- *ADVERTISEMENT* (abbr. ad, advert) – item of publicity for a service or product, on TV, in newspapers, magazines, etc.

Examples:

The point of an **ad** is to create an image that the audience will not easily forget.

She may well appear on a television **advertisement** or program, or even in movies.

- *ADVERTISER* - an individual or company that pays for a service or product to be publicized; it can also refer to an individual or company whose clear task is to create advertisements.

Examples:

This is the best **advertiser** I've seen in many years.

Which are the main **advertisers** in this country?

- *ADVERTISING* – the entire business of communicating a message about a service or product with the purpose of selling it.

Examples:

We should come up with a sassy slogan for this **advertising** campaign.

I would certainly like to have a career in **advertising**.

- *ADVERTISING AGENCY* – a company, which is specialising in placing and producing advertisements for customers.

Examples:

John doesn't want to work with the people in this **advertising agency**.

He thinks they are not to be trusted.

Someday, I would like to have my own **advertising agency**.

- *BENEFIT* - advantage of a service or product, commonly gained from its characteristics.

Examples:

As you can see, this product has many **benefits**. I truly think you should buy it.

The main **benefit** of this service is that it offers a significant discount.

- **BILLBOARD (US)** - signboard, generally outdoors, utilized for advertising posters.

Examples:

There are hundreds of **billboards** throughout the city. We can see them everywhere.

This huge **billboard** has to be placed somewhere else.

- **COMMERCIAL** – a paid advertisement on the radio or on TV.

Examples:

I don't think I've seen this **commercial** before, but I certainly like it.

TV **commercials** are supposed to be informative, short and pleasant to watch.

- **COPYWRITER** – the individual whose assignment is to work on the language of advertisements. She or he generally turns to puns in order to clasp the reader's attention. When she or he is successful, consumers mainly find it almost impossible not to know the slogan linked with a specific brand or product.

Examples:

I have recently begun my career in an advertising agency, and I want to become a successful **copywriter**.

Copywriters enter the customer's subconscious with a pun, which is easy to remember.

- **DIRECT MAIL** – an advertising procedure consisting in delivering publicity material (handbills, catalogs leaflets) to potential customers by post.

Examples:

Direct mail has been a means of promotion for "Tibiscus" University this year.

Each of you has been the target of **direct mail** when you found an advertising folder in the mailbox, from some company.

- **JINGLE** - a short verse or tune primarily used to advertise something.

Example:

The jingle is a song, with a nice melody, which is easily settled into the memory of the listeners.

- **POSTER** - an extensive sheet of paper, frequently illustrated, used as an advertisement.

Examples:

Posters are used very often, because they have a high visual impact, and they are relatively cheap.

Posters are used to inform a large number of potential clients, for example, during election campaigns.

- **PRIME TIME** - hours on TV and on the radio with the biggest audience, especially during the evening hours (generally from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.).

Example:

The broadcasting of the spot, during **prime time**, is a costly thing, but with maximum impact, due to large audiences, who come into contact with the spot.

- **RATING** – an estimation of the number of viewers watching a TV program, at an exact time. The higher the audience rating, the more costly the advertising space is anticipated to be.

Example:

The rating represents the measuring unit of the media, which is used to determine, for instance, which TV program is the most watched by the viewers, in which time slot, etc.

- **PROMOTE** - to (attempt to) increase sales of a product by advertising and publicizing it.

Example:

Nowadays, it is getting more and more expensive to advertise a product or a service, especially on television.

- **SLOGAN** - a quickly remembered and commonly repeated phrase, which is used in advertising, etc.

Examples:

The **slogan** is a word or a group of words, which completes a brand's name.

The **slogan** may be replaced, when the old one is no longer attractive, or a better one is found.

- **TARGET AUDIENCE** – a designated demographic group or audience, for which an advertising message is created.

Example:

The **target audience** consists of both current and potential consumers.

Despite the fact that advertising differs from country to country, in terms of culture, tradition, ways of thinking, tastes, and the last, but not the least, the products and services advertised, there are some aspects that stay the same, namely the language of advertising, in general, the English terminology used in this field, in particular.

The language that is utilized in advertising is intentional in its effort to generate a positive effect of the service or product.

Of course, there are so many other words, terms and expressions that could have been easily included in this list, but the focus has been put on the basic vocabulary or, better said, the core language of advertising.

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