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## **Enhancing General ELT by Applying ESP - the Language of Marketing**

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the possibilities of applying ESP in general English Language Teaching. The authors of this paper are proposing the language of marketing and advertising in English as a methodological tool for enhancing ELT. Although the language of advertising and marketing belongs to the ESP category, its specific features of this ESP make it compatible with almost any General English teaching endeavour. This paper focuses on slogans, since they are very suitable for practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, and even some grammar structures.

**Key words:** slogans, marketing, advertising, ESP

**Apstrakt:** Ovaj rad se bavi mogućnostima primene EPS nastavi opšteg engleskog jezika. Autori ovog rada predlažu jezik marketinga i oglašavanja za poboljšanje nastave engleskog jezika. Iako jezik oglašavanja i marketinga pripadaju ESP kategoriji, njegove specifične karakteristike čine ga kompatibilnim sa skoro svakim zadatkom u nastavi engleskog jezika. Ovaj rad se fokusira na slogane, budući da su vrlo pogodni za uvežbavanje izgovora, vokabulara i nekih gramatičkih struktura.

**Ključne reči:** slogani, marketing, reklamiranje, ESP

The purpose of this paper is to show the possibilities of applying ESP in general English Language Teaching – ELT for general purposes in order to achieve greater effectiveness of English language acquisition.

The majority of language and applied linguistics specialists and writers have been dealing with the issues pertaining only to ESP courses. The relationship between General English and ESP, the ratio of GE and ESP in both materials and syllabus designing has been the main concerns of these authors and practitioners. However, very few of these linguists have investigated the possibilities of applying ESP into ELT for general purposes. The authors of this paper are proposing the language of marketing and advertising in English as a methodological tool for enhancing ELT. This language is simple, striking, memorable, effective, amusing and, as such, suitable to serve this purpose.

The global language of advertising and marketing is the English language. Needless to say, advertisers throughout the world use English words, sentences and even entire texts as an efficient strategy to sell their brands and products to consumers. English serves as a "lingua franca" that is understood by people in different countries. Why has English become the chosen language of advertising and marketing? English is associated with today's dominant cultural values of western civilization and prosperity; and they in essence reflect Anglo-American models of internationalism, modernity, prestige, youth, globalisation, cosmopolitanism and other positive stereotypes. Since English has become the international or global language it has turned into a "neutral" and "transparent" language, tied to no particular social, political, economic or religious system, belonging to everyone or to no one. (Kelly-Holmes, 2005)

It is necessary to emphasize that the English language is used not only for advertising and marketing of American and British brands but also for promoting all other famous French, German, Scandinavian, Japanese and other brands. It is almost impossible to imagine a famous brand coming from any country that is not advertised in English. Such developments have made English the language of mass consumer culture and as such suitable for advertising and marketing.

Advertising and marketing experts are devoting their greatest attention to the use of language because they are very much aware of the power of effective messages, slogans, taglines and other language structures. They employ expert teams made up of linguists and psychologists to study and analyse language expressions before launching them. The language of advertising has to be striking and memorable, universally and globally acceptable in order to reach the target audience. Leo Burnett, one of the most famous advertising experts and slogan producers, gives guidelines for the language of advertising: " Make it simple. Make it memorable. Make it inviting to look at. Make it fun to read."

In order to serve this purpose the language of advertising uses plain, clear, concise language elements, simple and catchy vocabulary, short and effective language structures for unique selling propositions, advertising slogans and the like. The field of advertising and marketing recognized the need for the use of "plain English" long ago. Nowadays the Plain English movements of Britain and the USA are advocating the use of uncomplicated clear and simple English in all spheres of life: business, civil service activities and other linguistic contacts with the general public. "Plain English campaigns" continue to grow and they are the outcome of the requirements of modern times. (Crystal, 2010)

Although the language of advertising and marketing belongs to the ESP category, the above-mentioned specific features of this ESP make it compatible with almost any General English teaching endeavour. It can greatly contribute to achieving more effective linguistic as well as communicative competences. Its quality to enhance motivation in language acquisition is of special importance. The above-mentioned features of the language of advertising provide greater motivation than many other motivating factors. The use of advertising slogans can be very effective in ELT. Their use of "plain English" makes them more widely applicable for learners at different levels of competence and at different ages than many other types of materials.

The authenticity of course materials used (advertising slogans) is an important prerequisite in applying this ESP segment. This is easily accomplished due to great accessibility of such materials via all modern media. The selection of materials (advertising slogans) requires a special attention taking into consideration the following criteria:

- the level of the English language course, the age and cultural background of students and their professional interests, target language skills and needs.

Slogans can be classified in various ways. In order to be effective, striking, amusing and memorable some of them use rhyme as a style. Good examples are the following:

**Eye it-try it-buy it!** (Chevrolet Cars)

**Buy it. Sell it. Love it.** (e-Bay)

**Grace...space...pace.** (Jaguar)

**Get busy with the fizzy.** (Soda stream)

These slogans are very suitable for practicing pronunciation, vocabulary, even simple grammar structures. Therefore they are suitable for upper elementary and intermediate level students, but other students also enjoy them.

Besides rhyme similar effects can be achieved with slogans consisting of plain single words chosen to be fun to read, pronounce or listen to. There are slogans which use alliteration, such as:

**Today, tomorrow, Toyota** (Toyota)

**Sense and Simplicity** (Philips)

Sometimes they use simple grammar categories for these single words, for instance:

**Good, better, Paulaner.** (Paulaner, German brand beer)

which uses comparison of adjectives as the base. Another example applies single imperative forms, such as:

**Subaru. Think. Feel. Drive.** (Subaru Cars)

Word play is inevitably one of the most frequently-used features when creating advertising slogans. These expressions are amusing and interesting to learners

of English and at the same time quite instructional for an easy acquisition of various more or less complicated lexical and grammar forms. For instance:

**Time to Re-Tire.** (Fisk tires)

**BEer YOURSELF** (Tuborg)

**Don't just book it, Thomas Cook it.** (Thomas Cook, Travel)

Some of these slogans are especially funny. The best example of it is Volkswagen's slogan **Relieves gas pains.**

Some slogans play with words to build new lexemes out of brand names. Good examples of these are:

**You know when you've been Tango'd.** (Tango soft drinks) or

**Inspire me. Surprise me. AMD me.** (AMD - Advanced Micro Devices)

The brand Tango is used as a past participle, whereas the brand abbreviation AMD is applied as an imperative form.

Idiomatic expressions could be learned from slogans such as:

**A whole lot can happen, Out of the Blue.** (Labatt Blue, the best-selling Canadian beer brand), or

**Love it for life** (Dannon Yogurt)

**Think outside the Box** (Apple Computers).

The possibility of playing with words could go beyond expectations. A good example of it is the slogan for SEGA Saturn Console:

**It takes AGES to be as good as SEGA.**

Apple Computers launched a very interesting word play slogan combining the use of rhyme and word play:

**Once you go Mac. You'll never go back.**

There are numerous possibilities for enhancing the acquisition of grammar structures through slogans ranging from simple imperative forms to more

complex grammar forms like if- clauses, passives and causatives. The imperative is probably the most frequently used form in advertising slogans. We have chosen some of the most interesting imperatives:

**Unleash a Jaguar. Or Don't dream it. Drive it!** (Jaguar cars)

**Drive Your Dreams. Let's Go Places.** (Toyota)

**Saab. Move your mind. Or Find your own road.** SAAB.

**Create a storm.** (Monsoon)

**Think outside the bun.** (Taco Bell)

**Just imagine what Citroen can do for you.** (Citroen)

**Fly the friendly skies.** (United Airlines)

Superlative forms are also often found in slogans such as:

**The Best Built Cars in the World** (Toyota)

**The Happiest Place on Earth** (Disneyland)

**The most natural thing in the world.** (Guinness)

Interrogative forms could be effectively illustrated and practiced through slogans such as:

**Have you driven a Ford lately?** (Ford Vehicles)

**Who could ask for anything more?** (Toyota)

**What's the worst that can happen?** (Dr Pepper)

These examples are appropriate for pre-intermediate and intermediate levels.

There are quite a few slogans which provide possibilities for the effective contrasting of gerund vs. infinitive forms.

**Going beyond expectations.** (Malaysia Airlines)

**Designed for living. Engineered to last.** (Ford)

**Moving Forward.** (Toyota)

**Engineered to move the human spirit.** (Mercedes-Benz car brand)

**It takes a licking and keeps on ticking.** (Timex Corporation)

**Leave the driving to us.** (Greyhound Lines)

**Keep walking.** (Johnie Walker)

Syntactic structures such as *if* clauses could be easily memorized by learning slogans such as:

**If you've got the time, we've got the beer.** (Miller Beer)

**If you dream it, you can do it.** (Disneyland)

Passive forms have always presented a challenge for both English language teachers and learners. However slogans are **born to perform** for you. (like a Jaguar)

At least these slogans, luckily, can make such complex grammar notions more digestible.

**You and I were meant to fly.** (Air Canada)

**Because you were born to fly.** (TAM Brazilian Airlines)

**Everything we do is driven by you.** (FORD)

**Once driven, forever smitten.** (Vauxhall Motors)

**Make yourself heard.** (Ericsson)

**Driven by Passion.** (Fiat Cars)

**Born to perform.** (Jaguar)

The language of advertising can also provide various opportunities to applying task-based approaches. The teacher can assign small research projects for students to perform which they will enjoy doing. For instance, students could be asked to find the ten shortest, funniest, most enigmatic, silliest, most bizarre, most attractive, most annoying, and most famous slogans. They could be asked to offer the best possible translation or interpretation of slogans. A great challenge for the most creative ones could be to try to make their own advertising slogans for brands they choose. This is a particularly motivating and inspiring task. Students love it. Great fun can be had by organising a competition in the best performance in terms of pronunciation, translation, etc. A more demanding assignment could be to ask them to "translate", find the equivalent or English version for some of the best known Serbian advertising slogans such as "Svetsko a naše" (MB pivo). "Ili ieseli ili nisi" (Lav). "Muškarci znaiu zašto" (Jelen).

”Izgleda šašavo ali mene leđa više ne bole” (Kosmodisk), ”Savršeno lako, savršeno slatko“ (Poslastina Bambi čokolada), ”Dobar osećaj koji se vidi” (Wellness keks Bambi), ”Prepusti se inspiraciji” (Yo D’ORO Bambi napolitanke).

Obviously the language of advertising offers a great variety of possible applications in general ELT. Its role is to enhance motivation as one of the most crucial factors of foreign language acquisition. Besides, the great accessibility of advertising materials makes it convenient and easy to use for both the teacher and the learner. It does not take any special effort to carry out these tasks. The exercises exemplified are usable with a wide range of students with regard to the level of ELT course.

This paper focuses on just one segment of the language of advertising - advertising slogans - as a source of teaching materials. It would be beneficial to explore other segments of the language of marketing and advertising suitable for implementation in ELT. The language of marketing and advertising is just one type of ESP. There are many other types and subtypes of ESP. It would be worthwhile exploring other suitable ESP categories for applications in general ELT. Of course some of the disciplines would be more appropriate, such as English for Tourism, Catering, Air Travel, certain segments of Business English, English for Art, Media and quite a few other disciplines in the field of humanities and social studies. ESP for more technical and scientific disciplines is probably less applicable and attractive for general ELT courses.

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