

# The Role and Nature of English Usage in Bangladeshi Advertisements: Trends and Linguistic Traits

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## ABSTRACT

This article probes into the use of English language in advertisements in Bangladeshi media. The use of English language in advertisement is one of the most popular strategies around the world. This may be related to a large marketing strategy as English is considered as a global language. This study investigates both print advertisement and electronic advertisement. This paper also explores how the use of English in advertisement helps to attract international business. It has been observed that the use of English words in advertisement may change the overall effectiveness. The impact of using English is much more effective in a non-English advertisement and it draws the attention to the non-English speaking people. Furthermore, when English is used in the advertisement especially in the non-English speaking country like Bangladesh, its brand value increases a lot and the perception of people towards the product changes immensely. Consequently, people get fascinated by the product and try to buy it.

Banner or print advertisements use English slogans in their posters so that they attract the people. Using English in the advertisement has an important role. Print advertisements try to use eye-catching pictures with English slogans which attract people from all walks of life. However, nowadays, Bangladesh is selling their products internationally. It becomes possible because they are now using English language in their advertisements. Moreover, the advertisement companies consider these results when they use English in non-English advertising to standardize their products in international marketing strategies.

**Key words:** English Usage, Bangladeshi Advertisements, Linguistic Traits, Code-mixing and Code-switching

## INTRODUCTION

To attain a global language status, a language must be adopted by other countries of the world where it is not spoken as a local language. It can be achieved by two main ways. The first way is to consider the language as the official language of the country, to serve as a "second language" and the mother tongue gets the status of "first language" and the second way is that the language gets the status of a foreign language in education in the country (Cristal, 1997). In Bangladesh, English is used as a foreign language and it has not yet been given the status of a second language. Speakers who are proficient in English with higher education may not feel any language barrier in their daily life, but people with relatively less English proficiency also experience this increase in the use of English words in social and educational settings and might face difficulty in understanding.

The media plays an important role in the globalization of English (Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1997; Hjarvard 2004). A notable exception is the study of English in advertising, which has seen an interesting expansion of research in the last decade after the publication of some preliminary research (Haarmann 1984, 1989; Masavisut et al. 1986; Bhatia 1987, Griffin 1997, 2001; Martin 1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2007). Advertisers may choose standardization because they want to save money and build their project into a global image of the brand, service or product (Gerritsen et al., 2010; Hornikx, van Meurs, & de Boer, 2010). There are so many

advertisements company who are trying to introduce their product globally. That is why they are trying to advertise their product in international standards. As English is used as a lingua franca, the advertisement company are now making advertisement in English. They are using English language in their advertisement. English is one of the greatest global market leaders and advertisers believe that most people understand English because it is a global language (Gerritsen, Korzilius, van Meurs, and Gijbers, 2000; Kuppens, 2009). However, it is important to convey message to the international customer or the target audience and that is one of the big reasons why advertisement companies are using English language. It is seen that Bangladeshi advertisement company are now making their content by using English language and they are trying to build their product to international standard.

### **Significance of the Study**

Now a days, Bangladeshi advertisement are using English language when they advertise their product. Sometimes, we have seen in the road or in billboard that they are advertising their product using English language. It is very important. Furthermore, this study could provide the basis for future research into the stylistic nature of advertising in English.

### **Objective of the Research**

The objective of this research is to find out the impact of English usage in Bangladeshi advertisements. In this modern world, almost all the companies are advertising their product through different strategies. They are using foreign language to advertise their products so that they can attract their customers. In Bangladeshi advertisements, English language has been used frequently. Both print media and electronic media both are using different strategies to attract their customer. The advertisement companies are now using English language to sell their product internationally. For this reason, they are using English language. The objective of this research is to explore the multifarious use of English language in advertisements.

### **Research Questions**

1. How does the use of English language in advertising attract more attention than the local language?
2. What linguistic techniques do Bangladeshi advertisers use to make their content interesting by using English words?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

The primary focus of this study is to find out the use of English in Bangladeshi advertisement. This chapter will briefly discuss the scholarly works which are related to English language in Bangladeshi advertisement. The aim of this chapter is to find out a gap in the literature on the use of English language in Bangladeshi advertisement. Firstly, I will talk about the attitude towards English language in Bangladesh. Then, I will discuss the status of English in Bangladesh and English language proficiency in Bangladesh. After that, I will present language in advertisements and English language use in advertisement. Finally, principal of advertisement, target audience of a particular advertisement will be presented.

### **Definition of Advertisement**

The concept of advertising is based on the argument that consumers are motivated to verify advertising claims (Muda & Cris, 2012). He also mentioned that advertisement is defined as "the amount of perceived claims in consumer advertising to be true and credible". Normally, advertisement company focuses on consumers and evaluates the authenticity and credibility of the advertising content. According to Simpson (2010), actually, advertisement is targeted at a specific group of people and they advertise a product based on a specific people.

Lima (2014) said that a marketing vehicle mainly designed for the people, where sales promotions are considered complementary to its other components and they try to promote their product to the customers. People often need a lot of products, and they sometimes look for good products and advertising helps them to get these. According to Cook (2001), advertising is the promotion of products and services which they do it through various media.

### **Language in Advertisement**

According to Radlinska (2010) there are some reasons for using English in advertisements, it seems from the idea that the message of English advertisement gives a positive impression about English to some target audience. He added that there are more than one language used in advertisement and it depends on what is being addressed in the advertisement. In the advertisement, there are many various dialect and language which is being used in various advertisement and sometimes it sounds beautiful and there is no reason to worry whether the advertisement is using formal language or informal language. Their main concern is to attract people. Gee (2010) added that the language of the advertisement must be highly engaging or attractive in order to complete the purpose of the ad and to attract potential customers so that they can sell their product well. It is very unique to make advertisement using different languages or in different dialect because it charms the customers most of the time and allures them to buy the products. Moreover, Ferdous et al. (2023) revealed that the students feel comfortable and confident to communicate conveniently through code-switching since they are accustomed to a multilingual environment.

### **Alliteration**

Alliteration is a phonological device. Basically, it is the repetition of the same words and sounds. Nowadays, a lot of products names are alliterative (Gee, 2010). For example: Coca-Cola, Dunkin' Donuts, Kit-Kat, Black Berry. Shariq (2020) explain alliteration and said that the sound of the initial consonant is repeated in different words. The company of the products frequently used this device in the advertisements. It is seen in the advertisement. Backiavathy (2016) mentioned that alliteration makes the reading more interesting and when alliteration used in the advertisements, it makes the products more eye catching and appealing to the customers. It is a marketing system of policy to attract the customers. According to Salomo (2015) it is quick to read and display a positive role to the readers or customers.

### **Onomatopoeia**

According to Gee (2010), onomatopoeia is a figure of speech where a word echoes what has been described. Salomo (2015) mentioned that onomatopoeia is used in advertising for emphasis or stylistic effect. According to Leech (1969) advertisers use onomatopoeia in its language to create advertisements which makes the advertisements more unique and it becomes more expressive and engaging that affects the viewer and their feelings. For example: Bang! Zip! Advertisements company use Onomatopoeia because it is eye catching and memorable.

### **Metaphor**

Metaphor is a figure of speech and it refers one thing but refers another thing. Advertisement companies frequently use metaphors in their advertisements. Black (1979) mentioned that metaphors often do not express the similarities of a pre-existence but rather create similarities that are perceived to be highly accurate. However, to create a poetic effect in the advertisements, sometimes, advertisers use metaphor and it attracts the people. for example: Mentors use a slogan like "Turn on the lights of brain".

### **Literary Devices in Advertisements**

Literary devices are used in the poems, novels, songs, texts to make the writings different from the ordinary texts. However, in advertisements, especially in the English advertisements, advertisers use some literary

devices in their advertisements (Fabb, 2009). Sometimes, they intentionally do it in the advertisements to make the products tag line or slogan more appalling to the customers or the people but sometimes they unintentionally do it in their advertisements. Literary devices are common in poems, novels, but it is not uncommon in the advertisements (Fabb, 2009). Personification is one of the common literary devices which is used in the advertisements and it makes the advertisements more interesting to the people.

On the other hand, advertisers use slogan in their advertisements. It is easy to attract the customers or the people to buy their products. According to Otaala (2004), advertisers first use slogans to attract customers and to identify product or service, then remember that a certain product exists, and finally let people know that the particular product is worth buying. He added that slogans are meant to attract attention and advertisers may deviate from standard English to make the slogan memorable. Slogans usually consist of a few words or sentences. The advertisements company or the advertiser uses very short form of English language or sentences to make slogan.

### **The Use of English Language in Advertisement**

There have been many advertisements in different countries where the use of foreign languages has been noticed in different types of advertisements (Gerritsen et al., 2007; Griffin, 1997; Hilgendorf, 1996; Pétery, 2011; Piller, 2001; Taavitsainen & Pahta, 2003; 2001; Ustinova, 2006). English has been used as a foreign language in advertisement and it is the most common language in advertisement (Pillar, 2003). It is used frequently even in non-English speaking country. Pillar (2001) added that the values associated with English are globalization, modernity and progress. According to Hornikx and Starren (2006), the use of English in advertising gives a company or brand an international status and paves the way for a company to thrive higher and achieve success.

De Raaij (1997) states that using English in advertisement makes the product more interesting and attractive to the customer. Customers can be easily attracted by using English because advertising in English gives the product modernity (Hornikx et al, 2010). According to Svartvik & Leech (2016) in 21<sup>st</sup> century, using English in advertisement consider as cool by the young generation. Wardhaugh (2010) mentioned that from the sociolinguistics elements, code-switching is one of the elements which is frequently used in TV advertisement. The advertisement company use English to identify their products which makes it an international standard because it carries the status of an international language.

However, in Bangladeshi advertisement, English language is utilised frequently because it makes the advertisement more attractive to the audience. There are lots of Bangladeshi advertisements where English language has been used because they want to attract the international customers. For example: RFL and Pran, they are now making advertisement by using English language because they want their products to sell to the international customers. Though it costs a lot of money but they are trying to attract the international audience.

### **Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Bangladeshi Advertisement**

The purpose of language in any advertisement is to create an impression in the minds of consumers about the image of any product so that the language used is attractive and highly persuasive (Simpson, 2010). In Bangladeshi advertisement, there are so many advertisements where they switch their code and mix code in between the sentences. It is very common in Bangladesh. Sometimes, they also change their dialect when they are in conversation. Rahman and Hossain (2012) mentioned that though it is a informal way in conversation, it is legitimate in television advertisement. Leech (1966) said that Advertising vocabulary as concrete and understandable, especially in communities where multiple codes exist. Code-switching is very helpful in the communication and through code switching, it is easy to convey messages to others. According to Myers-Scotton (1993) code-switching can be a tool to overcome difficulties when someone has difficulty communicating in a language. Code switching does not affect in any language as (Cook, 1991) said that in code switching “the switch can come at a point in the sentence where it does not violate the grammar of either language” (p. 65). Wardhaugh (2006) said that Code switching occurs whenever people like to talk, they have to

choose a certain code and they can make a decision Switching code from one code to another or sometimes mixing code with very short pronunciation and create a new code with it.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

This chapter started with the objective of the study then gradually discussed the research design, data collection procedure, data analysis.

### **Research Design**

The research has been designed through the qualitative method based on the English language which is used in Bangladeshi Advertisement. In-depth analysis of the data has been done to conduct the research. According to Grix (2004), qualitative research method is needed for a meaningful understanding of the problems being investigated. Qualitative research is a form of constructive research to get in-depth feedback on what people think and feel (Dongre, Deshmukh, Kalaiselvan, & Upadhyaya, 2010). According to Gilgun (1992), qualitative data is presented as text and figures but not as numbers.

### **Instruments**

Pictures of Bangladeshi advertisement have been collected from the street of Dhaka city where English has been used along with Bangla words. The researchers collected data of English usage in advertisements from YouTube videos. Some Bangladeshi printed advertisements were also gathered from the newspaper as well.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

Since this study adopted qualitative research method, the researchers had to be very careful while collecting the data. During the investigation period, the researchers collected around 50 television commercials and several printed advertisements were also collected from newspaper. Furthermore, many pictures of signboards or billboards were accumulated from the streets of Dhaka city. Those are also collected for the research project.

The physical format of each advertisement, including visuals like images, logos, white space and font size, was verified to show how the various commercials or advertisements support the English language that is used in selected ads to impress the target audience.

### **Data Analysis**

According to Van Dijk (2000), speech analysis deals with the study and analysis of written text and spoken words in relation to the underlying meaning, power, dominance, inequality and bias and how these ideas are initiated, reproduced and transformed into specific social, economic and political.

However, the collected print advertisements and electronic advertisements were grouped and organized the data accordingly. Then all the collected data were divided into categories and summarized and then presented in the form of discussion.

## **Data presentation, and Discussion of the Results**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of English language in Bangladeshi print media and electronic media commercials. This chapter focuses on the collected data and the results of the analyzed survey according

to the research questions of this study and also presents the types of language that are used in the Bangladeshi advertisements, and finally highlights the code-switching or code-mixing in the Bangladeshi commercials.

### **Language Elements in Bangladeshi Commercials**

In Bangladeshi advertisements, sometimes, the advertisement companies or the advertisers intentionally or unintentionally use some language elements to attract the customers.

According to Radlinska (2010), there are some reasons behind using the linguistic elements in the Bangladeshi television commercials or in the print advertisements, it gives the positive impression towards the target audience or the customers. Furthermore, in Bangladesh, using English in the commercials gives a positive impact towards the people. Radlinska (2010) claims the idea that the language the advertisers use for advertising is very diverse and different and it depends on what is being addressed in the advertisement and what are the ideas that advertisements company gives to the customers and it does not matter whether it is formal or informal. It is important that the language of the commercials is very impressive to the consumers and it is easy to attract the customers.

In the Horlicks advertisement, the language they have used is highly impressive and easily it can attract the customers. The slogan of the advertisement is “get taller, stronger and sharper”. It is saying that if a child drinks a glass of Horlicks in a day, then he or she will get taller stronger and sharper. It is not necessary to judge what language they have used in the figure or it is formal or informal. The important thing is that the language they have used for the commercials is impressive towards the customers or not and whether it eye catching or not. it can easily attract the customer.

### **Alliteration in Advertisements**

It is a literary device which is being used in the advertisements. It makes the advertisements more attractive to the customers. Using alliteration in the advertisements displays a positive effect to the readers and it is easy and fun to read and it easily attract the target customers.

In the advertisement of coca cola and Kit Kat, it clearly shows the use of Alliteration in the commercials. Kit Kat, Coca Cola all are the example of Alliteration. It is nice to read and easily it can attract the customers.

### **Onomatopoeia in Advertisements**

It is also a figure of speech and it is being used to emphasizes something in the sentences. It is used in the advertising for stylistic effect.

Advertisers use onomatopoeia in their language to create commercials that have a unique effect that makes them more expressive and appealing to viewers and influences their perceptions. However, there are some more examples of Onomatopoeia which are ‘La La! boom! snap! Bam! Dhishum! Twing!’ La La is a sound of happiness which are used in the Television commercials. It is very common in the television commercials. Dhishum is a sound of fighting which is used in the television commercials as well. Moreover, Twing actually is a sound. Here, it is a food product.

### **Metaphor in Commercials**

According to Gee (2010) the metaphor allows viewers to see things in a new format or light. It is very common in the advertisements. There are many advertisements company or advertisers who use metaphor in the commercials. It sounds interesting to the audience and attract the audience.

Table 1. Metaphor

	vertisements (Metaphor)	any
	n on the light of Brain ainer Alon Jaliea Din)	ntors
	এক্সাম রেডি (Get Exam Ready)	clicks
	brain is a tough nut to crack it for us	spital
	চকলেট এই আডম থাডক (I am in all Chocolates)	ocolate.

All the examples show the metaphorical use of language. The advertisement companies use metaphor in their commercials to make the slogan interesting and eye catching to the customers. The first example which is “Turn on the light of brain”. Here, Light indicates the creative ideas or exclusive ideas. After that, “সব চকলেট এই আডম থাডক” (I am in all Chocolates). Here, no one can be in chocolate. It is actually not possible for a person to be a chocolate. Here, “ami” indicate something else, it does not indicate a person here.

### Literary Devices in Commercials

In advertisements, advertisers intentionally or unintentionally use many literary devices which makes the advertisements more fun to other people. Literary devices like Simile, Metaphor, Personification, Hyperbole, Alliteration, Assonance are used in the advertisements. Those literary devices play a vital role in the advertisement’s slogan. Using literary devices in the slogan makes the commercial more presentable and interesting to the customers. “Fine Fragrance” is the example of alliteration which is used in perfume commercials named Wild Stone perfume. Then, “We save your home from the God’s anger” is the example of Hyperbole. It is used in a commercial named “Asian Paints”. After that, the example of personification is “Gatorade always wins”. It is a beverage and food product.

### Code-switching and Code-mixing

There are some reasons why the advertisement companies or the advertisers use code switching or code mixing in their advertisements. Advertisers use code switching for successful and easy communication with the customers, creating a memory effect, internationalizing the product, enhancing brand image, attracting target audience, delivering the message quickly, attracting customers attention etc. In Bangladeshi commercials, it is very common that people are switching code and mixing code in between the sentences. To have a better communication, people switch the code or mix the code. It is easy and quick to deliver the message to the target customer. However, code switching or mixing is divided into 4 parts: Intra-word sentential, Inter sentential, Intra sentential and Tag switching. All of them are used in Bangladeshi print commercials and electronic commercials. For example:

1. Grameenphon এ service এখন symphony Store এ সম্ভব,
2. Number এক রেলখ চলে আসুন
3. Number 1 network—এ,
4. ডব্বলসো alrounder

5. রেশলশো Network,
6. কালে থাকুন- Grameenphone,
7. ঘলে বলসই home delivery,
8. ঘলে বলস মুছেলেই Internet Balance,

All the examples are from Intra sentential code switching. Intra sentential code switching happens in between the sentences. According to Hidalgo (1988) mentioned that the use of code switching is most negatively considered by people who are monolingual speakers and the majority cultural groups who face problem in terms of understanding, attractiveness, and honesty. As Bangladesh is a bilingual country, code switching occurs frequently. Here, the first example is like “Grameenphone er service ekhon Symphony store ei sombhob”. So, the switching happens in between the sentences. Furthermore, “Ghore bose muhurtei Internet Balance”. This sentence is also the example of intra sentential code switching. People use code switching to make communication easier. When people switch the code with others in conversation, it makes people comfortable. In Bangladeshi advertisements, the advertisers switch code and mix code all the time in order to make the message easy to understand and thus the companies can touch the emotion of the common people more effectively.

## CONCLUSION

Advertisement companies are now using English language in their commercials. In fact, it is a very powerful means to fascinate people by using English language. Sometimes, it seems very eye-catching and attractive to the people if English is used in the advertisements. There are lots of literary devices that are used in the advertisements. It is not important that the advertisement companies are mixing the codes intentionally or unintentionally. But it is important that they are using it properly and competently and it makes the audience infatuated towards the product. However, use of code-switching and code-mixing makes the commercials interesting and captivating as well.

In conclusion, this study highlights an intricate relationship between the diverse use of English words and the communication convenience in Bangladeshi commercials. The researchers have brought to light that the advertisement companies or the advertisers are trying to enamour the target audience or the customers. In this era of globalization, English words are used willingly and efficiently in the Bangladeshi advertisements and TV commercials as well.

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