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## THE CONSUMER ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LANGUAGE OF ADVERTISEMENTS IN INDONESIA

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the consumers' attitude towards the use of English in advertisement and compare with those that use Indonesian. English in advertising has an impact to influence consumer's intention to purchase the advertised product. The use of English in advertising with bilingual slogans has been recognized to attract the consumers' attention than comparable ads with a single language (Haarman, 1986). This has been observed to occur in many countries around the world ( see, for example, Kasanga, 2010; Amiri & Fowler, 2012; El-Dali, 2012; Bala, 2014; among others).

The data were collected by in-depth interviews with 30 middle-class professionals as participants. The analysis of advertising materials and interview data was coded to identify the meaning and associate participants' interpretation of the slogans. The results found that English successfully influenced participants' attitudes about the prestige and image of an advertised product. The conclusion that copywriters, having knowledge about the consequence of using English language to advertise product in Indonesia, is that for the middle-class, the image has more considerable influence for consumers than comprehension of the advertising slogans. Indonesia consumers have a specific and favorable impression of the English language a symbol of prestige and high-quality product.

**Keywords:** Consumer Attitude, Qualitative Analysis, Advertising Slogans.

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### 1. Introduction

Mobile communication and internet bearing cell phone have effects on economies to all ends of the world ( O'Leary & O'Leary, 2005). The advance of technology has been principally changed because of the supremacy internet can be used in many devices through social media instead of a desktop. Like other countries, most Indonesians access the internet on a smartphone or tablets for social interaction, thus making Indonesia currently the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest smartphone market in the Asia Pacific and the number of smartphone users in Indonesia is expected to grow further from 55 million in 2015 to 92 million in 2019 ( Indonesia Investment, 2016).

Indonesia currently leads Asia in spending on advertising, with an annual growth rate of 15% which is expected to continue. Most Indonesians (78%) report that television is the most relevant form of advertising with 48% citing social media in this role (Nurhayati, 2014). While television has been a dominant form of media in Indonesia for several decades, on the other hand social media and internet use in general has increased rapidly in recent years.

Indonesia is growing larger to become a fascinating market for mobile devices, especially smartphones that use to access the internet. Advertising for this kind of product is exhibiting a high degree of some quality that potential to relating fashionable society of Indonesians with approach of cultural and language contents in the advertising.

## Research Problem

In particular, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1) How do slogans on advertising impress Indonesian consumers for advertised smartphone?
- 2) How does English text on smartphone advertising influence purchase decision?

## 2. Literature Review

As a promotion, the use of non personal messages to promote products and utilizes the media, advertising need to involve marketing communication strategy to develop effective promotion to persuade consumers in all over that world. In this, however, cultural differences could be something that constrains to requires attention for consumers in global marketing. Design global advertising is not easy, the improper use of words in a local language may convert the brand image and impact to market share of the brand. Unsuitable or inappropriate global advertising media may impact on marketing communication as a whole and can significantly affect a company's image and consumer response (Jain & Roy, 2012). Cultural differences, including language can have a significant impact in advertising in different markets (Doole & Lowe, 2008). Hassan and Katsanis (1991) note this as considerable challenge for consumer marketing in global markets that involves dealing with segmented market across cultures.

De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) show a model that can be implied for effective advertising intended to clarify the cultural differences that consolidated an understanding of the cultural values of consumers. The model builds on self-determining the attributes, qualities and process that will appear to behavior as well as a personality factors being exist from differences in traits, abilities, motives and values. De Mooij (2005) explained that social process includes motivation, needs, emotions and group process are relate to consumer behavior in purchasing products. In addition, internal factors such as emotional development and socialization may also affect behavior, purchasing decision can also be influenced by group association where informal communication, especially the views of a group leader, may provide anything of accurate information. Cultural differences can obtain the information for example people in collectivist culture may attain more information from social networking while those in individualistic cultures may rely on the mass media. De Mooij and Hofstede (2010) discuss how the mental process that relates to how people see, think, use language, and learn and communicate are part of an internal psychological system that develops through socialization in a given environment and exemplifies the cultural dimension of consumer decision making and behavior. Cultural differences in social reasoning suggest that the culture may appear as anastonished factor that may impact consumer behavior (Norenzayan, Choi and Nisbett, 2002).

The use of English in advertising becomes more common in a countries where English is not language for communication. The purpose of the use of English in advertising in non-English speaking target market is to influence consumers perceptions about the product being advertised thus impact to purchase decision. The use of English has been shown capable to enhanced consumer's perceptions about the use of English in advertising tend to suggest the advertised product is modern and part of the globalized environment and also create a high self-reference effect (Micu & Coulter, 2010). Vettorel (2013) explain that English associate with a sophisticated image and universal values. It is this symbolic value of English that is easily understood in non- English speaking target markets. In many parts of the world, English is used in advertising for symbolic value, not as a language of communication. The consumer is not expected to understand the meaning of English words and phrases in ads, but to respond to their presence as symbols (Haarmann, 1986). It is this symbolic value that advertisers rely on to draw consumer's attention to their product and influence their decision to purchase.

The use of semiotics are often used in marketing to stimulate consumer recalled of brand identity such as brand names, logos and advertising slogans that are all persuasive signs that used to attract consumer attention and inspired them to relating with nature and use of products and services (Beasley & Danesi,2002). Semiotics interpretation have been found in the communication process that bring impact for consumer purchase decision of advertised product or service ( Bianchi, 2011). Furthermore, Epure et al, 2014 explain that advertising can be used by companies in marketing communication to spread information about the value of products by semiotics meaning.

English as an international language has multiple functions as a cultural symbol; countries that use other language often use English symbolically, not to communicate linguistically. This represents a meaningful connection with people who speak English and the associated culture (Eastman & Stein, 1993). For this reason, English words and phrases or even whole sections of text serve as an important semiotics resource in advertising with many potential symbolic uses that vary by country or region of use (Cheshire & Moser, 1994).

English words symbolize a great part of non-linguistic meaning that communicate message to consumers that encouragement to their purchasing behavior (Epure et al,2014).

In summary, the literature review explains that consumer attitudes, perceptions and beliefs are convincing in their decisions to purchase. These perspective and awareness are influenced by their knowledge that have been process through the language and image of advertising. Furthermore , the possible way to change consumers perceptions through advertising is using language that will be fitting with the cultural in different language for foreign market. The symbolic value of English is easily understood in non-English speaking target markets. The consumer did expected to understand the meaning of English words and phrases that used in advertising but to respond to their presence as symbols. It is considerable to draw consumers' attention to the product and influence decision to purchase it.

### **3. Methods**

The study with qualitative method was used to represent consumers' attitude towards English language slogan in smartphone advertising in Indonesia. This study was accomplished in Jakarta, with in depth interview with 30 participants, who were middle class Indonesian professionals .The participants were then asked to explain their view of each slogan and to describe their reaction to it as well as to the product. They only showed slogans without visual or complete advertisement of the samples.

#### **3.1. Data Analysis**

The analysis consisted of coding and developing themes, organizing the themes and deducing and commenting on the findings. The interview data was coded and analyzed using the approach outlined by Danesi and Perron (1999) and Besley and Danesi (2002).The coding outcome of the study rely on semiotics analysis was used throughout the data analysis based on consumer perception of certain English language used in the context of smartphone advertising and the meaning of these words to them.

#### **3.2. Findings**

##### ***Consumers' impression about advertised smartphone***

The participants were asked to give comments to the slogan among two samples they recognized as smartphone slogans.

The slogan “The sign of design with you in mind” is established slogans used in smartphone ads in Indonesia. The participants were asked to give reasons and comments to English words used in the smartphone advertised and their impression about the smartphone.

Participants give comments about types of smartphone that they described based on slogan that use for the advertising.

The following two quotes about the impression of smartphone:

It's as if the slogan shows something attractive about the design. The design must be exclusive, maybe like an iPhone. An exclusive design where everything complements everything else. The size, colors, shape and form.

(Participant 21, male, age 26)

It's like for the Apple brand; they have an iPhone design. Just by seeing the shape of the smartphone, you can guess it's an iPhone. Like the newest one, it has all the features in a thin phone with 5- inch screen which is easy for user to use. You can tell from the shape of the phone itself. So if you see it, you can guess that it's an iPhone.

(Participant 22, male, age 21)

The slogan "The smart than you can trust" is created slogans that used for this study. There are comments of few of participants about the advertised smartphone.

An easy phone you can rely on, in terms of both quality and performance.

(Participant 17, male, age 36)

This smartphone would put a priority on security for the user and would not be easy to hack into...

(Participant 14, female, age 22)

To cause to be accepted or recognized slogan 'Sign of design with you in mind' did not considerably to stand purchase intention because a number of participants thought the slogan did not interest them and would not impress the mind to have purchase for advertised smartphone. However, more participants showed the act of impressing of a smartphone based on slogan with an exclusive, classy and stylish smartphone. Participants had the impression the slogan referred to an expensive smartphone like iPhone.

Furthermore, slogan that was created by researcher 'Smart that you can trust' made the participant feel that the smartphone is trustworthy with good quality smartphone. The term 'trust' in the slogan acted as a symbol to represent consistent support and high quality software. Meanwhile participants response to established slogan 'Sign of the design with you in mind' indicated less interest to provoke them to have purchase decision for advertised smartphone. The word 'design' in this slogan was ambiguous for participants because they perceived the words not relevant to a smartphone.

### ***Consumers' purchase decision about advertised smartphone***

In addition to participants who were interested in purchasing the smartphone expressed their views as follows:

Yes, I am interested because I picture a smartphone with the qualities we discussed before, one that is like other things on the market, elegant and such as expensive.

(Participant 11, female, age 39)

I'd be interested because here they don't say...you know; they just say that this is here for you. What you want, what you think, it's here. This means they are saying the application of technology is above average. Because with this technology, it represents a million people who bought it, it represents what the consumer want.

(Participant 27, male, age 44)

The comments of participants who were interested in the slogan included:

I am interested in this slogan and want to learn more about the product in more detail to see if it is what I imagine and then I would decide if I wanted to buy it.

(Participant 1, male, age 39)

I am interested in this slogan because it encourages consumers to find out about the advantages of this smartphone and if it was right, I would just decide to buy it...

(Participant 29, male, age 26).

The capability of the use of English in advertising to attract attention, thus makes the participants excited about the advertised smartphone. According to Khrisna and Ahluwalia (2008), English in advertising has been used to give consumers a certain impression about products and services. It has also been shown to attract to the products being advertised (Garcia-Yeste, 2013). This is certainly the case in this study where the appeal of the slogans was not related to an actual understanding of the words but instead represented a reaction to the symbolic value of English words. Advertising language sometimes uses words that are imaginative, breaks grammatical rules or generally used incorrectly, with the intention of attracting the attention of consumers. The findings of this study show that English slogans were seen to represent expensive smartphones of good quality.

The consumers who took part in this study have a tendency to favorably respond to the use of English, but their understanding of accurate words and slogans may be different from the ways of native speakers. In this study, participants had effort to understand the intent of words used that was not the way of English as used in Indonesia, even though none of the slogans tested contained plays on words or puns. Moreover, the slogan 'Smart that you can trust' was most attractive to participants to have purchase intention because it was more easily understood by participants and presumably was more familiar than other slogans.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the use of English slogans in Indonesian advertising may not be effective to give information about smartphones but because Indonesian consumers interpret the different meaning of the slogans from what is intended by sellers. It is because of the way of English as used in Indonesian advertising is at variance from the way of native speakers. Indonesian consumers have limited vocabularies to impress the meaning of English language that is used on advertising. Indonesian consumers have a favorable impression of the English language as a symbol to ascribe a product that is advertised using an English slogan.



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