

Pragma- Discourse Study of Idiomatic Implicatures in Selected English and Arabic Advertisements

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Abstract

An idiom is a phrase or expression whose meaning cannot be understood from the ordinary meanings of the words in it. The meanings of words are arbitrarily stipulated in memory.

Idiomatic expressions have been treated as lexical components for decades. It has been hypothesized that idioms shall be investigated via their pragmatic properties. Hence, idioms may be classified as an implicature from the point of view of pragmatics so that idiomatic implicature is one of the sub-species of conversational implicatures. Idiomatic implicatures in general do not bring problems for native speakers this is the main reason that make the advertisers use them in their work.

The aim of this study is to prove that advertisers use idioms to make the audience be closer to their products. In addition, the researcher tries to make a comparison between the idiomatic expressions that are used in Arabic and English advertisements.

1. Introduction

Advertising is a used persuasive technique in today's world. Many kinds of advertisements can be noticed whether in newspapers, magazines, on television etc. Whether the advertisement is verbal or non- verbal communication, still language in advertisements is considered as a powerful tool to achieve advertising goals. Dyer (1982:111) adds that the main function of advertising language is to capture the audience's attention, imagination and assisting memory.

Idiomatic implicature is a linguistic technique which is fruitful in helping advertisers to achieve advertising goals. It is used by advertisers to persuade and manipulate the audience.

2. The Problem

The use of idiomatic implicatures in advertisements can be considered as an important issue. Three issues are focused on through this study:

1. What is meant by idiomatic implicatures?
2. How do the advertisers use the idiomatic implicatures and in which condition?

3. What are the reasons behind using idiomatic implicatures in advertisements?

3. The Hypotheses

The following points are hypothesized:

1. Idiomatic Implicature is used widely in everyday speech.
2. Idiomatic Implicatures are used in advertisements because they can draw the attention of the audience and they have powerful effective roles more than using ordinary words or phrases.

4. The Aim of the Study

This study aims to examine the use of idiomatic implicatures in advertising. The argument is based on that the use of idiomatic implicatures in advertisements tends to provide enormous benefits for advertisers.

5. The Procedures

The following are the procedures of this study:

1. Giving a literary view about idioms
2. Giving a literary view about implicatures
3. Discussing the idiomatic implicature with shedding light on its relation to idioms and implicature
4. Discussing the use of idiomatic implicature in advertising specifically printed advertisements.
5. Presenting the results that have been reached after analyzing the collected data.

6. The Significance of the Study

This study sheds light on idiomatic implicatures and how they are used in advertisements, how advertisers use them to persuade the audience of the values of their products.

7. The Limit of the Study

The study is limited to analyze only the idiomatic implicatures and how advertisers use them in their work to achieve certain goals.

8. Idioms

Idioms have been treated as lexical components for decades. But they should be treated from pragmatic perspective too because they have hidden meaning. Several reasons lead to discuss idioms pragmatically. Firstly, an idiomatic expression cannot be easily understood from the meaning of its words, for example when somebody says (*a red herring*) to describe an argument, it does not mean that the argument is a fish of the genus *Clupea* that is colored red but that it is irrelevant and distracting (Thornbury, 2006: 99).

Idioms are considered as having non-compositional meaning. Hudson (2000: 275) defines idioms as "phrases derived by metaphor and other types of semantic extension" for example:

1. Get up on the wrong side of the bed.

The meaning of this utterance is fully non-compositional. It expresses the meaning of (*be surely\ be in a bad mood*) and this meaning is unrelated to the compositional meaning of get up on the wrong side of the bed.

For being non-compositional, idioms can be studied pragmatically. They do not have a compositional meaning, i.e., their components meaning does not reflect their real\actual meaning. The meaning of the idioms can be interpreted depending on the context in which they are used. Strässler (1982: 72) considers idioms as indirect speech acts because both of them indicate the same thing which is that the meaning of their constituents does not reflect their actual meaning, such as:

2. Can you close the window?

This utterance has two different interpretations:

a. Literal meaning: questioning the hearer's ability of possibility

b. Idiomatic meaning: paraphrased as:

- I hereby request you to close the window.

Idioms occur in certain contexts more frequently than others, being used more often in informal spoken than in formal written language and often with an interpersonal function. Those written texts that do not use a lot of idioms tend to be conversational in tones as in magazine horoscope (Thornbury, 2006: 99).

Hudson (2000: 318-19) adds that idioms are "figures of speech", specifically phrases which have become common and routine, for example "stand up for" as in:

3. Stand up for the rights!

This is a case of metonymy, standing up usually associated with but not otherwise similar to assistance and assertion.

4. Necessity is the mother of invention.

This is a case of metaphor, to mean necessity gives birth of invention (ibid).

There are three statements about idiomatic expressions and they are:

- a. Several words are combined and in this case they may lose their literal meaning and express a different meaning as (*black list, layup, bed of roses*)
- b. Idioms can be about parts of the human body and words expressing activity have suggested many of them: (*burn one's figure, keep body and soul, keep one's eyes open*)
- c. Hundreds of idiomatic phrases contain adverbs or prepositions with other parts of speech, no rules cover their rules: (*walk off, run down, get nowhere*)

(Shaw, 1986: 236)

Thornbury (2006: 99) adds that there are number of ways to classify idioms, according to their form and function:

- a. metaphorical compounds/ phrases:

(*a hot potato, the tip of the iceberg, a king's ransom, a long wolf*)

- b. restricted collocations (i.e. collocations that are relatively fixed) such as (*pitch black, break neck speed, the bitter end, fat chance,*)

- c. phrasal verbs:

(*pick up (eg. Language), get on (with somebody)*)

- d. frozen similes:

(*as old as the hills, as easy as a pea*)

- e. binomials and trinomials:

(*kith and kin, spick and span, lock, stock and barrel*)

- f. proverbs and catch phrases:

(*want not, get a life*)

- g. euphemisms:

(*spend a penny, pass away*)

- h. true idioms, i.e., fixed and non-literal turn of phrase:

(*spill the beans, fly off the handle, let the cat out of the bay*)

9. Implicature

Implicatures are parts of the meanings of utterances which are not strictly part of what's said in the act of utterance, nor do they follow logically from what is said to deliver his intent without explicitly mentioning it in his utterance (Grice, 1975: 419). Depending on the common back ground knowledge, a hearer is able to comprehend the speaker's message, such as:

5. **Alan:** Are you going to Panl's party?

Barb: I have to work.

(Davis, 2014)

Here Alan asks a straight forward question to Barb who is supposed to say yes or no. but Barb's answer is a non-straightforward one. Her answer implies that she would not come to the party.

An implicature is a pragmatic phenomenon in which a speaker uses a coded utterance. To reach a reasonable and understandable implicatures, the speaker and the hearer must share a common perception of at least four facets of any conversational context:

1. the utterance from which the implicature is to be derived.
2. the roles and expectations of the participants in a conversation.
3. the context in which the utterance occurs.
4. the world around them as it pertains to their interaction.

(Bouton, 1994: 90)

There are two basic sorts of implicatures:

1. Conventional Implicatures which have a stable association with particular linguistic expressions
2. Conversational Implicatures which must be inferred, and for which contextual information is crucial.

(Cruse, 2006:85)

The main interest of this study is the conversational implicature because of its connection with the idiomatic expressions.

Conversational implicature refers to the meaning of an utterance which can be understood in terms of the context in which it occurs. For example the question:

6. Do you have any coffee?

If this utterance occurs in a fast food restaurant, the speaker is asking for a cup of coffee. But if the same utterance is used in a grocery store, the speaker is asking about coffee beans. The same utterance is being used in different contexts to express different meaning in each situation (Bouton, 1994: 88).

10. Idiomatic Implicatures

It can be noticed from the previous sections in which idiomatic expressions and implicature have been discussed, idioms and implicatures both can be interpreted depending on the context in which they are used. Idiomatic expressions work as implicatures. They have given clue to an utterance that the utterance itself may contain an implicit message. This pattern suits the definition of an implicature.

According to Grice (1975) and Bouton (1994), conversational implicature has ten types:

1. Formulaic
 - a. POPE –Q
 - b. Minimal Requirement Rule
 - c. Sequential
 - d. Indirect Criticism
 - e. Scalar
 - f. Idiomatic
2. Idiosyncratic
 - a. Quantity
 - b. Quality
 - c. Manner
 - d. Relevance

So idioms are considered as a type of conversational implicature. Consider the following example:

7. **John:** I think I'm still buying this house although it's next to a toxic waste dump.

Kelly: Have you lost your mind?

Here Kelly disagrees with John's idea. She uses idiomatic expression that implies her disagreement of the presented idea.

11. Sources of Idioms in Modern Standard Arabic

Arabic idioms come from several sources, for example some of them clearly originate in Classical Arabic (mainly the language of Islamic scriptures and classical Arabic literature) and can be found in classical Arabic dictionaries. Second, many contemporary Arabic idioms have occurred as a result of the intensive translation process that has been going on for decades from western languages, in particular English into Arabic, especially in the print media (Abdou, 2012: 5).

Holes (2004: 315) notes that a lot of the reports in the Arabic media is rather literal translations of English and French language news agency reports so "quantities of new phrases are coined and hoc by journalists and hence find their way into everyday use".

Abdou (2012: 5) adds that spoken Arabic dialects also represents a source of idioms for modern standard Arabic. In this case, those idioms may need to undergo some lexical, grammatical and phonological modification in order to adhere to and become fully integrated in the modern standard Arabic system.

Abdou(2012: 15) lists the most prominent types of idioms in Arabic:

1. Discourse Structuring Devices:

Bi-'ibārat-i-n 'ukhrā (in other word)

min jihat-i-n 'ukhrā (on the other hand)

2. Proverbs: expressions that convey a general truth or piece of wisdom:

al-wiqāyat-u khayr-u-n min-a-l-'ilāj-i (Prevention is better than cure)

3. Literal expressions that directly comment on one or more aspects of the situations:

Murgham-u-n 'akl-ā-ka lā batal

4. Expressions that convey a rule of conduct

Udhkur-ū mahāsin-a mawtā-kum (talk good about your dead)

5. Greetings

al-salām-u 'alaykum (may peace be upon you)

12. Advertising

Advertisements are forms of discourse which "make a powerful contribution to how we construct our identities" (Goddard, 2005:4). Advertising texts occur in magazines, newspapers or T.V. Through several ways, advertisers use language to present their products. The basic aim of any advertiser is to get attention.

Fowles (2001: 61) adds that advertisers have to know what people privately yearn for, so they will arrest people attention and establish communication.

Advertisers do not just promote their products but they can also encompass the idea of texts whose intention is to enhance the image of an individual, group or organization" (Goddard, 2005:8).

13. Data Analysis

16 print advertisements have been selected for this study to be analyzed. The focus is on the use of idioms in advertisements and how the advertisers manipulate with words to promote, tempt and convince the reader or audience of the value of a product.

The analysis takes into consideration only the linguistic aspect of print advertisements, excluding pictures, drawings and other extralinguistic tools.

13.1. Analysis of English Print Advertisements

8 English print advertisements have been chosen to be analyzed. Those ads have been selected because of their influence on the reader and the advertisers have used the language in a creative way to tempt the reader to know more about a product.

1. It seems, like great minds, great e-business think alike.

Great minds think alike is the idiomatic expression that is used here. The utterance implies that the best way for the reader to do business with someone who thinks alike. Here the advertiser maintains that the company and the reader share the same view on how the business is properly conducted. Using idiomatic expression is to persuade the reader to choose this company. The advertiser has considered the reader as having a great mind.

The idiomatic implicature that is used here maintains that all people who choose who choose this company have great minds.

2. Before your back attacks you. Ashtanga Yoga at the Garage Fitness Club

This idiom is a metaphorical one. The advertiser uses this idiom to show the reader the benefit of yoga practice for the back. The utterance implies that the reader can avoid the pain of the back by yoga. The advertiser reminds the reader of the pain that he\she may face if he\she does not take care about their body.

The idiomatic idiomatic expression here is *Before Unknown attacks you*. The advertiser tries to convince the reader of the benefits of this product to avoid the unexpected future pains that might happen.

3. *Turn on your adventure*. Over 620 miles on a single Volkswagen's Amarok.

The idiomatic expression here is the phrasal verb *turn on*. The advertiser wants to draw the reader's attention by using the idiom *turn on* followed by the word *adventure*. The advertiser uses the word *adventure* as an invitation for the reader to have a long trip by using only a single tank of fuel. The implicature here is that

getting that car is a good deal. The best feature of this product has been presented through this ad.

4. Some toys *never die*.

Some habits never die is the idiomatic expression that is used here. This ad is about Duracell batteries. This ad is aimed at a reader of teenagers and older as generally smaller kids are not able to change batteries. The advertiser here uses this idiomatic expression to over exaggerate the life of Duracell batteries.

This ad implies that old things do not die, they cannot be neglected because they are still working. So that old toys can be reused again by using those batteries.

5. *Get in touch* with your inner child and let it play in traffic.

The idiomatic expression of this ad is *Let's be in touch*. This ad is made for Ottawa International Animation Festival. The advertiser tries to take the attention of the reader, not just children watch animation movies, even older can do the same. Using *get in touch with your inner child* gives clue to the reader to take the whole family to that festival. The advertiser encourages the reader to enjoy his\her time and release the child's spirit inside them.

6. *Creativity has no limits*.

This ad is used to promote design tablet king Wacom's popular Bamboo products. The advertiser shows the reader how this product does not have limitations, the reader can expect to do anything and everything by using this product. Being creative is a feature that the advertiser maintains to both the product and the reader. It implies that if the reader wants to be creative, he\she must get that product.

7. Discover the full story.

This ad is about Schusev State Museum of Architecture. The advertiser invites the reader to visit the museum to discover the full story of some of Russia's most famous buildings. The advertiser promotes the information available in that museum. The idiomatic expression here is used to take the reader's attention by saying *discover* implies that a lot of mysteries and information are still undiscovered.

8. Love it or Hate it, just do not forget it.

The idiom expression *love it or hate it* is used here. The advertiser challenges the reader in that if a person has Marmite products, he\she cannot forget it. The implicature is that the product is very valuable so that the reader will not forget it.

The advertiser uses this idiom to draw the reader's attention about the feelings that he/she might have through experiencing this product.

13.2. Analysis of Arabic Print Advertisements

8 Arabic print advertisements have been selected for the analysis.

1. عيش اللحظة (Live the moment)

This utterance is used in Coca-Cola advertisement. The advertiser tries to persuade the reader of the taste of the product, how the taste makes the reader forget everything around and live the moment of drinking. The advertiser tries to make the reader imagines the experience of drinking the product. This utterance implies the happiness that the reader can experience from getting this product.

2. بياض ناصع

This idiom is an exaggeration of the results that the reader can get after using Tide. Tide is one of the cleaning products that has a lot of ads all over the world. The advertiser makes the reader imagine how clothes can be clean and white after using the product. This idiom implies that the best option that the reader can follow is buying this product to avoid a lot of the obstacles which may face the housewives in their laundry.

3. قوة تحدي الالم , حين تكون بامس الحاجة اليه

This idiom shows the power of facing pains, this advertisement is of panadol product. The advertiser shows the reader how the pain can be challenged and disappeared by only one tablet of this product. The advertiser implies that the reader is in need of this product at the critical times when the pain becomes unbearable. Using such utterance tempts the reader to discover and see what the benefits of trying this product are. It just arises the desire of challenge.

4. كن جزءا من العطاء

This idiom sheds light on the charity benefits that the reader can be a part of through getting the product. The advertiser gives the reader the option to be a part of the charity work that Macdonald's burger is doing. The advertiser plays on the emotional side of the reader trying to show him/her that buying this product is not just to have a good meal but at the same time sharing this meal with other poor people. The implicature here is that the reader can help those who are in need of the every help.

5. كل شئ يتقادم بالزمن الا الصداقة تتجدد بالتقادم.

This ad is a Zain Company one. The advertiser uses this expression for two reasons:

1. to show the company costumers how their being member in that company is appreciated. The advertiser shows how the company considers its customers as close friends and this is why the company keeps progress and presents more offers to its customers.

2. to tempt and persuade others of the treatment and service that Zain company presents to the customers. The advertiser tries to show the reader how this company considers costumers.

6. للمحبة طعم

This phrase is a metaphorical one. The advertiser shows the reader that this product is healthy and valuable for all the family. The advertisement shows how the parents take care of their family through buying that product. This idiom implies the love and care that can be presented by the product. The aim of this phrase is to convince the reader of the value of the product.

7. نجاحك بين يديك لاننا الاقرب

This ad shows the success that the reader can reach and make by being a part of the Commercial Jordan Bank. The advertiser claims that the success can be reached through working with that company. It implies the way to build a bright future through cooperating with the company.

8. دائما مع بعض

This advertisement is a Mobinile Company. It shows the reader that the company is always with the customers wherever they are and go. There are no limits for the service of this company. This idiom implies the unlimited service that the company offers for the customers.

14. Findings and Results

It has been found that the advertisers use every way and method to promote their products using a lot of language techniques to take the attention.

Using idioms is one of the ways that the advertisers follow to achieve their aims. The reason behind using idioms is that whenever the reader uses the same idiom in his\her everyday life, he\she will remember the advertisement in which this idiom is used. So the advertisement will be a part of the reader's life. The reader is not going to forget the ad. So the hypothesis of why do the advertisers use idiomatic expression has been improved.

Another reason behind using idioms is that they are understandable and familiar with all readers, and sometimes the reader will use the idiom that he sees and likes from an ad. So this how the advertisers use idioms for their own purposes. The advertisers

rephrase the idiomatic expression to make it easier and understandable by the reader as:

- It seems, like great minds, great e-business think alike.

This ad is derived from the idiomatic expression *great minds think alike*, the advertisers make a connection between the idiomatic expression and their product.

Advertisements have a very big influence on the life of the audience specifically when the ad is attractive and well formed.

15. Conclusions

It has been concluded the following:

1. advertisers have to be creative and use every way to promote their products.
2. the advertisers use language techniques to reach every house and promote their products and one of those techniques is using idioms.
3. using idiomatic expression is very effective and the advertisers send a big message through least words
4. idiomatic expressions are constructions that people use in their everyday speech this is the reason behind making advertisers use them in their ads.

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