

ADJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION IN TELEVISION ADVERTISEMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Learning the Malay language has been a challenging task for foreign language learners. Learners have to learn Malay grammar structure rules in order to write simple sentences. The word choice is important in constructing a sentence. Therefore, the study focuses on the use of adjectives in television advertisements among Korean learners at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea. The objectives of the study were to identify and discuss adjectives incorporated into the advertisements. The students involved in the study were ten male and female subjects from a Malay language class. The subjects had to choose one television advertisement and view it several times. They were given three weeks to identify and discuss the adjectives in the advertisements. The subjects were interviewed on their views about the adjectives in the advertisements. The interviews were video recorded and analyzed for the purpose of the study. The results of the study revealed that each subject managed to identify five adjectives per advertisement. They also managed to offer their views on the adjectives, which were not directly uttered by the models in the advertisements. It is hoped that a future study will focus on the use of adjectives via other means of media technology.

INTRODUCTION

Learning a foreign language is a challenging task for learners. Besides having to learn the language, they have to make sure that the foreign language that they learn is not influenced by their own language. Malay language is one of the many languages in the world and it has been introduced and taught at many universities around the world. Malay was taught to students willing to take the languages seriously, where the students will have to use the language in the working environment. Therefore, the choice of choosing Malay as a major or a minor at universities will prove that the students are willing to work in the Malay world either as an interpreter or translator. In addition, students could also work in countries, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia. The Malay language is similar to other languages where it consists of linguistic features. The language is a study in terms of not only proficiency skills but also for sociolinguistic, pragmatics, semantics, psycholinguistics, linguistics and other skills. Therefore, the first major step for a student to learn Malay will be learning the basic knowledge of Malay language proficiency including listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as focusing on the grammatical rules of the Malay language. Moreover, learning Malay or any other languages will be interesting with the help of materials and task designs, which will arouse student interest in learning the language. Subsequently, with the boom of technology, educators will never fail to include the use of technology within the teaching and learning environments. Therefore, this study will focus on the use of technology as in television advertisements in identifying and discussing the adjectives identified.

LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY

Learning the Malay language will also concentrate on the correct use of verbs, adjectives, determiners, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and others. With the knowledge of these words, a student will be able to understand the meaning of each sentence constructed (Nik Safiah Karim, Farid M. Onn, Hashim Haji Musa & Abdul Hamid Mahmood, 2008). According to Normaliza Abd Rahim (2012b), a sentence structure focuses on the basic knowledge of a simple sentence in the Malay language, such as Noun (N) + Verb (V); i.e., *Saya makan* (I eat). Since the translation from Malay to English seemed to show that it will not make a good and simple English sentence, the students therefore were advised not to think in other languages but in the Malay language. Hence, a simple sentence in Malay will show the understanding of the sentence by the students. For instance, *Dia lari laju* (He runs fast) means that the person is running fast and the word *laju* (fast) means that the person is *lari* (running) really fast. On the other hand, Malay compared to English consists of the same expression of adjectives. Therefore, students were often seen trying to translate the word into English in order to find the true definition. Jennifer Yamin-Ali (2011) postulates that the influence of other languages learnt besides the mother tongue language will have a big impact toward the automatic translation in the brain. Therefore, while learning a specific language, a person should not think in other languages for the sake of avoiding confusion in the word choice of a sentence structure (Ellis, 1997:95). As for the Malay language, a simple sentence to describe a Malay adjective can be instantly described by students. The sentence follows the rule of a simple sentence as in Noun (N) + Adjective (Adj). For instance, *Perempuan itu cantik* (The woman is beautiful) implies that the specific woman shown to the person is beautiful. Therefore, the correct use of the adjectives will also be stated in the sentence. Zaharani Ahmad & Nor Hashimah Jalalludin (2012) described the use of correct Malay grammatical rules. The study has given impact toward educators and students learning the Malay language. The

study also disclosed evidences of Malay grammar structure rules, including the use of determiners, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc. The structure rules were discussed and proven to ensure that there would be no mistakes from future learners. The studies (Zaharani Ahmad & Nor Hashimah Jalalludin, 2012; Jennifer Yamin-Ali, 2011; Nik Safiah Karim et al, 2008) above showed that the use of simple sentence and Malay grammatical rules and the influence of other languages would give great impact towards learning a language. This study has taken into consideration on the perspective of learning a language using the correct use of words for Malay language learning among Korean learners. Here, it can be seen that this study concentrates on the word choice that involved adjectives using the technology in learning the Malay language.

Studies on the use of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, determiners, conjunctions and others were widely researched by Malaysian researchers. The researches were focused not only on native Malay speakers but also on other races in Malaysia as well as on foreign students. Brown (2000:35) postulates the principles of language learning and teaching that should be followed by both teachers and learners. The principles show the effectiveness of teaching any language and to make sure that the learning process is a success; students will be able to communicate in the target language and therefore understand the context. Yong Chyn Chye & Vijayaletchumy's (2012) research on foreign students studying the Malay language revealed that foreign students had made several lexical errors in the aspect of phonology. The research focused on the writing process for eight weeks and discovered that there were 182 spelling mistakes; in terms of phonology, the errors were found in terms of changing the different alphabets. This study revealed that foreign learners have difficulty in understanding the concept of a simple sentence in the Malay language. Malay grammar rules were not understood and therefore, errors (Corder, 1974:97) were made due to the influence of other languages. Goh Sang Seong (2011) has researched on the translation of Chinese and Malay languages. The study involved six translators in translating a Malay anthology, *Cerpen Pilihan Sastera Mahua III: Dalam Hujan Renyai*. The results of the study revealed that 10 Chinese verbs had 126 different meanings in the Malay language. The study concluded that the use of verbs in the Malay language has helped to identify meanings in the Chinese language. The studies on the use of foreign languages (Yong Chyn Chye & Vijayaletchumy, 2012; Goh Sang Seong, 2011) in language learning have showed that the involvement of foreign students and foreign language in learning the Malay language have given great impact towards foreign learners. The learners involved found that the errors can be overcome by learning the basic Malay sentence structure. This study has taken into consideration the involvement of the foreign students in learning the Malay language and also, considered the errors involved when dealing with the language barriers from their native language i.e Korean language.

Auzar (2012) stated that the use of technology has helped learners with their reading. The software that was created consisted of design, content and technical assistance to be used for the reading process. The subjects involved in the study consisted of 86 students from a school in *Pekanbaru*, Indonesia. The results revealed that the computer has helped in the process of reading and showed a significant difference compared to the conventional way of teaching. Jhy Wee Sew (2012) agreed with Auzar (2012) and stated that the use of technology allows the lesson to be more interesting. Jhy Wee Sew (2012) has researched the learning of Malay by utilizing the weblog, which has proven that learners were able to write in the Malay language. The use of simple Malay sentences was occasionally found. This way, the subjects were able to avoid making mistakes while writing in the Malay language. Other researchers also have concentrated on the use of technology in learning (Normaliza Abd Rahim, Arbaie Sujud, Nik Rafidah Nik Affendi & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan, 2012; Normaliza Abd Rahim, Kamaruzaman Jusoff & Siti Nur Aliaa Roslan, 2011; Normaliza Abd Rahim & Nik Ismail Harun, 2011) in order to ensure that learning will arise the interest of students in their learning. The studies that involved the use of technology (Auzar, 2012; Jhy Wee Sew, 2012; Normaliza Abd Rahim et al, 2012; Normaliza Abd Rahim et al, 2011; Normaliza Abd Rahim & Nik Ismail Harun, 2011) above has given great impact toward this study that involved the use of technology in learning the Malay language. The Korean learners involved in this study will be able to use the technology to learn the new language. Therefore, the studies as stated above have helped in the process of choosing the appropriate materials in learning.

A number of studies conducted among Korean learners learning the Malay language were carried out by Normaliza Abd Rahim (2012a; 2012b; 2012c). The studies were carried out at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea. The samples involved male and female subjects from a few Malay language classes. Different types of materials and task design were used to ensure that learning the Malay language was effective. The materials were involved with the technology as well as the conventional way of teaching. The study on using simple sentences with verbs and adjectives were found in the study, which incorporated watching a Malay cartoon, *Upin and Ipin* (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2012a). The study focused on identifying verbs and adjectives in the cartoon; the subjects were then involved in a discussion about the characters and storylines of the cartoon. Another study involved the use of antonyms in Malay sentences (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2012b), which revealed that subjects used adjectives in the sentences. Although the subjects focused on the use of antonyms,

they also used adjectives in their description (for example, tall: short), which proved that the subjects were able to identify not only the antonyms but also the use of correct adjectives. Moreover, another study on blog writing among Korean learners learning Malay (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2012c) had showed that writings of subjects in the blog consisted of adjectives words. The words such as ‘happy’, ‘beautiful’, ‘smooth’, ‘sad’, ‘fat’, ‘thin’, ‘tall’, ‘short’ and others were evidence from the blogs. This result revealed that the subjects understood the use of adjectives in the blog in order to describe and express things around them. The studies involved Korean learners learning the Malay language by using technology (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c) as stated above showed that Korean learners were motivated in learning the language. The technology involved in the learning process has given the subjects the chance in understanding and enjoy learning the Malay language. Therefore, this study has taken into consideration the results of the studies (Normaliza Abd Rahim, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c) and used the other means of technology via television advertisements to learn the Malay language.

Although the studies based on learning the Malay language had proven that they were steps to be taken in order to ensure the learning of the target language, it seemed that foreign learners tend to become confused in using the words in sentences. Here, the questions of the study were listed, ‘What are adjectives related to the advertisements suggested by the subjects? What are the subjects’ views on the adjectives related to the advertisements? Therefore, the objectives of this study were to identify and discuss the adjectives in advertisements.

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on the use of television advertisement in identifying the Malay adjectives. This study also discusses the subjects’ views and opinions about the adjectives stated. The study involved 10 subjects from a Malay language class at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, Korea. The subjects were exposed with the Malay language course from the previous semester. The subjects were given a task to view one television advertisement for three weeks. They have to select and identify the appropriate advertisement for the purpose of the study. The subjects’ were to identify and discuss the adjectives within these advertisements. They also had to discuss and give their views on the adjectives that were not directly stated in the advertisements. The subjects were interviewed and their views and discussion were video recorded. The views and discussion were analyzed for the purpose of the study. The discussion was analyzed by using the discourse analysis method (Brown & Yule, 1983). Brown & Yule (1983) have five features of discourse analysis. The features of discourse analyses that were related to this study were the method of language usage among the community, the understanding of the language in written or spoken, the understanding of speech, the understanding of functional language and lastly the understanding of the intentional written or spoken language. Therefore, this study will analyze the results by using all the features suggested by Brown & Yule (1983).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Choice of adjectives in advertisements.

| Subject | Types of Advertisement | Adjective 1 | Adjective 2 | Adjective 3 | Adjective 4 | Adjective 5 |
|---------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| S1 | Cosmetics -Missha | Smooth (licin) | Fragrance (wangi) | Soft (lembut) | Fair (cerah) | Confident (yakin) |
| S2 | Drinks -Coca cola | Sweet (manis) | Delicious (sedap) | Active (aktif) | Happy (gembira) | Gas (gas) |
| S3 | Drinks -Kanu coffee | Sweet (manis) | Delicious (sedap) | Bitter (kelat) | Happy (gembira) | Relax (tenang) |
| S4 | Cosmetics -Faceshop | Smooth (licin) | Fragrance (wangi) | Soft (lembut) | Fair (cerah) | Shiny (kilat) |
| S5 | Fridge -Samsung | Beautiful (cantik) | Big (besar) | Cute (comel) | Cold (sejuk) | Fresh (segar) |
| S6 | Mobile phone -Samsung | Thin (nipis) | Light (ringan) | Beautiful (cantik) | Easy (mudah) | Savings (jimat) |
| S7 | Laptop -Samsung | Thin (nipis) | Light (ringan) | Beautiful (cantik) | Big (besar) | Confident (yakin) |
| S8 | Fragrance -Glade | Fragrance (wangi) | Soft (lembut) | Clean (bersih) | Small (kecil) | Cheap (murah) |
| S9 | Cosmetics -SKII | Smooth (licin) | Fragrance (wangi) | Soft (lembut) | Beautiful (cantik) | Fair (cerah) |

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|-----|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| S10 | Detergent -Downy | Soft (lembut) | Fragrance (wangi) | Easy (mudah) | Liquid (cecair) | Clean (bersih) |
|-----|---------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------|

Table 1 above showed the choice of adjectives in advertisement for each subject. Three female subjects (S1, S4 and S9) chose cosmetics advertisement from *Missha*, *Faceshop* and *SKII*. It seemed that all of the three subjects were wearing make-up to class and they admitted that they used the products every day. S1, S4 and S9 had the same adjectives pertaining to the products. They stated that the advertisement showed the adjectives ‘smooth’, ‘fragrance’, ‘soft’ and ‘fair’. They added that the adjectives were clearly shown in the advertisement. All of the three subjects mentioned that the adjectives ‘smooth’ and ‘fragrance’ were explicitly shown by the model in the advertisement. The model had smooth facial skin with the index finger sliding down the cheek; the model also made it clear she had smooth face. The subjects also stated that the adjective ‘fragrance’ was clearly stated when there were another male model who had his eyes closed but opened them when he smelled the perfume around him. This showed that the subjects understood the meaning of the adjective ‘fragrance’ from the advertisement.

Hence, all subjects stated the adjectives ‘soft’ and ‘fair’ were mentioned in the advertisement. The subjects uttered that the two words were mentioned by the model in the advertisement. S1 stated that the advertisement portrayed the adjective ‘soft’ by having the model touch her cheek as well as with a piece of silk flying on her face, implying the softness. S4 stated that the advertisement showed the face of the model before and after applying the cosmetic, illustrating the softness after applying the cosmetic. The model also mentioned the word ‘soft’ in the advertisement. S9 uttered that the word ‘soft’ was mentioned by the model in the advertisement twice while touching both her cheeks. This was clearly understood as model’s attempt to show the ‘softness’ of her skin.

On the other hand, all three subjects stated that the cosmetic advertisements had implications of the following adjectives: ‘confident’ (S1), ‘shiny’ (S4) and ‘beautiful’ (S9). S1 stated that the model in the cosmetic advertisement showed confidence after applying the product. The model was also seen smiling and walking confidently with her beautiful face. Hence, S4 stated the face of the model in the advertisement had clearly shown than it was ‘shiny’. The ‘shiny’ face was clearly shown on the cheeks when the model was moving from side to side as well as when she smiled. In addition, subject 9 stated that the adjective ‘beautiful’ was dedicated to the beautiful model in the advertisement. The subjects mentioned that the model was really beautiful after using the product and the dress that she wore had made it clear that she was really beautiful.

On the other hand, two subjects (S2 and S3) selected an advertisement based on drinks. S2 chose a soft drink ‘Coca cola’ while S3 chose a coffee brand ‘Kanu’ as the advertisement. According to the adjectives from S2 and S3, both subjects stated the same adjectives ‘sweet’, ‘delicious’ and ‘happy’. S2 stated that the adjectives ‘sweet’ and ‘delicious’ were clearly shown in the advertisement; further, it was obvious that the ‘Coca cola’ drink is sweet. Hence, the subjects also mentioned that the model had acted as if the drink was delicious when he was smiling happily after drinking from the bottle. S2 also mentioned that the advertisement gave her feelings of being ‘happy’. This might be due to the fact that the model for the advertisement was from her favorite boy band and every time she viewed the advertisement, she would feel ‘happy’. S3, who is a big fan of coffee, stated that the adjectives ‘sweet’ and ‘delicious’ were in the advertisement. He stated that the model in the advertisement had shown the ‘sweet’ and ‘delicious’ tastes of the coffee. He admitted that he tasted the coffee before and the adjectives were right. On the other hand, S3 also stated that the adjective ‘happy’ was clearly shown by the model in the advertisement. The model was seen smiling happily after every sip from the cup.

S2 uttered that the advertisement consisted of the adjectives ‘active’ and ‘gas’. The subjects stated that the models in the advertisement showed a group of males who were dancing and moving actively after drinking the product. The subject also stated that the adjective ‘gas’ was clearly showed when bubbles formed after the drink was poured into a glass. Therefore, it was understood by the subjects. On the other hand, S3 said that the adjectives ‘bitter’ and ‘relax’ were in the advertisement as well. The subject admitted that he had tasted the drink and found it to be a bit ‘bitter’. Since he liked it and with his knowledge of the drink, he stated that the adjective ‘bitter’ was suitable. S3 also stated that the adjective ‘relax’ was shown in the advertisement when the model was sitting on a chair while sipping the coffee. The model was seen as ‘relaxing’ and enjoying his moment with the drink.

Three subjects (S5, S6 and S7) selected an advertisement based on electrical products. S5 chose a refrigerator from Samsung, S6 a mobile phone from Samsung and S7 a laptop from Samsung. All three subjects chose Samsung products since Samsung produces a majority of electrical products and are also famous all over the world. S5, S6 and S7 stated that the advertisement portrayed the adjective ‘beautiful’. They stated that the

fridge, mobile phone and laptop were beautiful in the advertisements. They agreed that each of the products had its own beauty; the fridge was beautiful among other fridges, the mobile phone was beautiful among other mobile phones and the laptop was beautiful among other laptops. They mentioned that they had viewed similar products from different companies; however, they preferred the ones that they had chosen. This showed that the adjective 'beautiful' was reflected in the products. On the other hand, S5 also stated that the fridge from Samsung had adjectives such as 'big', 'cute', 'cold' and 'fresh'. He said that the adjectives were his perception when viewing the advertisement for several times. He mentioned that the adjectives were uttered by the model advertising the product. S5 also commented that the fridge was 'beautiful' and 'cute' as an interior object. He also said that when the model opened the fridge door, he could feel the 'cold' and 'freshness', particularly when the compartments were opened to show the 'fresh' vegetables.

S6 gave his views on the mobile phone from Samsung. He stated that the adjectives from the advertisement displayed the following words: 'thin', 'light', 'easy' and 'savings'. The advertisement presented graphics of different colors of mobile phones; the 'thinness' and 'lightness' of the phones were clearly shown. The side elevation in the mobile phones was seen in the advertisement, revealing the 'thinness' of the mobile phones. The subject also mentioned that he observed the adjective 'easy' when viewing the mobile phone advertisement. The applications of the mobile phone were portrayed as 'easy' to use and user friendly. S6 also stated that the use of the mobile phone proved 'savings' in terms of money where due to cheap calling costs. This provided implications that the mobile phone was affordable among university students.

Furthermore, S7 stated that the adjectives in the laptop advertisement were 'thin', 'light', 'big' and 'confident'. She stated that the advertisement had made her want to buy the product. The advertisement clearly showed the 'thinness' and 'lightness' of the laptop. The side view of the laptop had given her the assumption that the laptop was really 'thin'. When the model holding the laptop with one hand was shown in the advertisement, it directly showed that the laptop was 'light'. Moreover, the advertisement also portrayed the size of the laptop, which was big enough and suitable for people of all ages. Thus, the look on the model's face when using the laptop showed that he was confident with using the laptop. Also, the applications in the laptop had also made the subject feel confident.

S8 and S10 selected an advertisement related to a domestic product, such as a fragrance for the toilet and detergent for clothes. Both subjects stated that the products had the same adjective 'fragrance'. Both products consisted of a nice scent. The advertisements for both showed that there were flowers coming out from the products and these flowers represented the nice scent of flowers. Furthermore, the subjects uttered that the models in the advertisements mentioned the word 'fragrance'. Both subjects also stated that the products resemble 'cleanliness'. S8 stated that the adjective 'clean' implies that if the smell is nice, the room would look 'clean' too. Hence, S10 uttered that when the detergent was used on clothes, the clothes would also feel 'clean'. On the other hand, S8 stated that the adjectives in the fragrance advertisement were 'soft', 'small' and 'cheap'. She uttered that Glade fragrances consist of a 'soft' scent. She gave an example of a lemon scent, which was considered as being 'soft'. Moreover, she added that the fragrance was 'small' and can be placed anywhere in the bathroom. According to the subject, the fragrance was put on a shelf near the sink in the advertisement. Since the fragrance was 'small', the subject stated that the product would be 'cheap' and affordable for everyone. The subject was making a true assumption due to the evidence from the advertisement stating that the money paid for the fragrance is worth it.

As for S10, the other adjectives stated in the advertisement were 'soft', 'easy' and 'liquid'. The subject stated that the adjective 'soft' was shown in the advertisement when the model hugged the other model and felt the 'softness' of the clothes that used the detergent while closing his eyes. This showed the 'softness' of clothes after using the detergent. Furthermore, S10 uttered that the adjective 'easy' was in the advertisement. The subject stated that the feeling of 'easiness' was felt when the two models hugged each other. Also, the use of the detergent was seen as 'easy' to use when the model used only one cup of detergent for one load of washing. The subject stated that the combination of the detergent and softener had made the process of washing easier. S10 also mentioned that the product in the advertisement was in the form of 'liquid'. The subject stated that the advertisement clearly showed the detergent was poured out from the bottle in the form of 'liquid' and this had made the subject clearly identify the adjective. Moreover, the subject stated that the adjective 'liquid' had made viewers compare the product with other powder detergents.

To sum up, the study revealed that the subjects were able to identify several adjectives in the advertisements chosen. The study also revealed that the subjects managed to discuss the adjectives in the advertisement and offer their comments toward the related adjectives. The subjects seemed to be able to identify the adjectives that were not explicitly stated in the advertisements; however, they managed to give their assumptions based on their

multiple viewings. It can be seen that the adjectives given by the subjects were suitable and relevant to the advertisement. It was clearly seen that the subjects understood the use of adjectives in advertisement; the success of an advertisement is based on the right perception of the viewers. The process of learning Malay adjectives was successful when the subjects managed to identify and discuss the adjectives in the advertisements. Therefore, learning processes with viable activities must be fully considered in order to have a successful lesson. The involvement of students with the help of technology will therefore create an active environment where the subjects are able to provide their views and opinions toward the task given to them.

CONCLUSION

The study implicates educators in considering television advertisements when teaching Malay adjectives. Educators will be able to provide other forms of advertisements in order to make the lesson more interesting and learner autonomy. Moreover, the study also implicates foreign students in learning the Malay language. Students might find it difficult to understand the language and with the task given to them in identifying the adjectives, the difficulty would be increased. Therefore, learning Malay adjectives would be more interesting when students are given the opportunity to identify the adjectives on their own. With this, students will better understand Malay adjectives. It is hoped that a future study will focus on the study on Malay adjectives with the use of other means of media and technology.

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