Word Building of International Brands Names

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Abstract: The study is devoted to the study of the main word building ways that are used to create names of international brands. The aim of the article is to study the history of the international brands names, classify the main word-building ways that were used to create these names and find out specific ways to form brand name. To complete this research the most valuable and popular brands names were analyzed. The main finding of the study is that we can divide word building ways that are often used to create international brands names into two large groups: traditional (lexico-morphological) and specific. This study has theoretical and practical importance and can be interesting for linguists, students studying English language, advertising professionals. The research has practical implication in the sphere of brand-creation.

Key words: Advertising, word-building, brand name, abbreviation, shortening, phonetics

INTRODUCTION

Brand is the "face" of the product. In the Stone Age or early Bronze Age "marks used to indicate ownership of cattle" (Newton, 2008). Later in Ancient Egypt craftsmen began to label their work. The main purpose of marking was to help the buyer to find the goods of a particular craftsman. Some researchers believe 1671 is the year of the first modern brand. Historians write that in 1671 the English clergyman J. Dwight obtained a patent for the production of transparent clay products, i.e., porcelain. He put his mark on his products and "even that time other craftsmen tried to illegally copy his products" (Muzykant, 2014).

Now a days role of brands is increasing. They are becoming more and more powerful and influence the linguistic landscapes of many regions (Solnyshkina and Ismagilova, 2015). Advertising itself and brands in particular lead to the expansion of borrowings in modern languages (Takhtarova and Shigapova, 2015). Every year Forbes magazine publishes top-100 of the most valuable brands. Jeff Bezos, an American technology entrepreneur and investor, founder and CEO of Amazon.com the 13th most valuable brand in the world in 2015, once said "a brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well" (Covey, 2006).

Over the last few decades a lot of researches have been done to study different sides of the brand: history of their creation (Newton, 2008), role they play in international marketing, language of advertising (Cook, 2001). Much was studied but little is known about the main word building means used to create successful international brands names. What are these means? Are there any specific ways that are used in brand creation and are not used or seldom used in other spheres of language? In this study the attempt to find out the main word building means and specific ways of brands names creation was made.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The target linguistic material for this study consisted mainly of the list of the world's most valuable international brands. The unit of the analysis was the individual brand name. A list of 100 brands names was created on the basis of annual Forbes magazine report (Tanaka, 2005). Then the brands names that were created with the use of word-building means (27% from the total number) were selected and studied. The research is based on the history of brands creation and word building means used to create them. Brand names that were created with the specific word building means are quiet rare that's why to analyze them additional sources were used. To find names of brands that were created with the specific word building means the wide web search was done.

RESULTS

Brand is a name, term, design, symbol or other feature that distinguishes one seller's product from those of others. This definition shows that any brand has several

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components: name, logo, corporate character, packing, etc. From the linguistic point of view name of the brand is the most interesting component. Name is the first and the most important step in brand creation.

Choice of the name depends on many factors: the characteristics of the probable customers, area of distribution of the product, image of the product. The company, owner of the brand, usually doesn't create the name of the brand itself. There are special agencies that professionally do this job. But, the final decision about the name of the new brand can be made only by the executives of the company.

The main criteria of success for any product, its profit. During the last decade the quality of the products is becoming less important because it is quite the same for all of them. What is more important, the image of the product. Consequently brand naming became one of the most important steps in marketing campaigns. After studying the most valuable brands names 2015 that were composed with the use of word building means (27 % of the total number) some of the main and often used traditional word building means were distinguished.

Traditional word building means

Initial abbreviation: Word building way when the name of the brand is composed using the first letters of a phrase. These names can also be subdivided into:

- Names of brands composed from common nouns. For example the name of a famous American engineering corporation GE that stands for general electric
- Names of brands composed from proper nouns
- These proper nouns are usually names of the founders of the company. For example the name of the producer of photocopier equipment HP stands for Hewlett Packard Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard are the founders of the company

Some of these proper nouns are a combination of geographical names+names of the founders. Example is a retail company IKEA whose name represents the mixture of names of people and places. I and K are the first letters of the name of the founder of the company Ingvar Kamprad. E and A are "the first letters from the names of the farm and village where he grew up".

Sometimes it is very difficult to decide which method was used, because names of brands were transformed several times in the course of history. LG a multinational electronics corporation got its name in 1995 when two companies GoldStar and Lucky merged and formed a new company LG. The question is: should we consider the source of abbreviation Lucky and Goldstar as proper or

common nous. It seems better to take into account the last role of these words, i.e., consider them as proper names. In recent years LG began to use phrase "life's good" as a tagline of their corporation (Watkins, 2014). It is an example of a very beneficial decision. Because usually "abbreviated names of brands do not transfer any idea, so consumers' imagination don't work and thus there is no association connection with the name of the brand" (Kurganova, 2004).

Shortening of words: A way when a new name of the brand is formed from a common noun by omitting one of its parts. Some researchers think that these names are especially effective because when customers meet these names they try to guess the full form of the word and "if they guess successfully they feel pleased, realizing how smart they are" (Charmasson, 1999). The example here is the name of a fizzy drink "Fanta" that was formed from the word "fantasy".

Complex shortening: A way when the shortened forms of two or more already existing names are used. According to the source words we can divide these brands names into: names of brands composed from shortened forms of common nouns. For example computer software company Microsoft that got its name from a phrase MICROcomputer SOFTware (Fridson, 2000).

Another example is a multinational technology company Intel. The founders of the company Bob Noyce and Gordon Moore wanted to name their company Moore Noyce. But they had to find another name because Moore Noyce was the name of a famous hotel chain (Blankenhorn, 2002). That is why they decided to create a shortened version of INTegrated ELectronics Intel.

Names of brands composed from shortened forms of proper nouns, usually names of the founders. For example the name of the corporation that designs and manufactures sports shoes and clothing Adidas. This company was "named after one of the founders of this company Adolf Adi Dassler" (Nelson, 2013).

Compound words: Words that consist of two or more base words. Sometimes base words can be shortened. For example the name of a famous social networking website Facebook (faces+book). Usually the advantage of this word building is that the name of the brand speaks for itself or describes properties of the product. For example toothpaste Aquafresh (aqua+fresh), soap Safeguard (safe+guard), shampoo Sunsilk (sun+silk).

Specific ways are some special word formation ways that are often used in the sphere of brand creation and are seldom used or even aren't used in other spheres of the

language. Brands aerated with the use of specific means are characterized by unusualness and expressiveness. Among specific ways we can distinguish.

Numerilization: Use of numbers as a part of a name. For example the names of a famous fizzy drink 7up. Usually numbers play symbolic role. The 7 is a "lucky" number for many people in many countries that is why it is often used to create brand names. Another example 4 you producer of clothes and bags. Here, the role of the number is different. Number 4 is pronounced as [f?:] that sounds like a preposition "for" [f?:]. That's why when pronounced the name of the brand sounds like "for you".

Initialization: The use of a single letter as one of the components of the name. For example the name of the German mobile communications company T-mobile that was initially named Deutsche Telecom and in 1996 got the name T-mobil that in 2002 was transformed into T-mobile.

It should be noted that several ways of brand formation can be used together. The example is the name of a Taiwanese computer hardware and electronics company A 4 Tech. In this name A is an example of initialization with the meaning "the first", "the best", sounds like a preposition "for", Tech shortening from technology. Thus, the name of the brand can be understood as "the best for technology". From our point of view, this way is very complicated. Customer, if he sees this name for the first time, can find it very difficult to decode this name and understand its meaning.

Stylization (personification): Way of formation of the brand names when the name is personified. In this case usually the common noun stands for a proper noun. For example, the name of a famous cleaning product "Mr. Clean". We can see that the name of the product pretends to be a proper noun and at the same time it underlines the main concept of the product it helps to make something clean. What is also interesting about this brand it is unlike other brand names translated into other languages. In the US you will buy Mr. Clean, in Spain Don Limpio, in Germany Meister Proper, in France Monsieur Propre. In Russia you will buy Mr. Proper. Probably it's connected with the belief of many Russians that foreign products are better. In spite of the fact that Mr. Proper in Russia is produces on the four factories on the territory of the Russian Federation.

Another interesting marketing technique is the use of an additive Dr. to the name of the brand. Examples here are the name of a famous stains remover Dr. Clean or the name of nail care products Dr. Nail. The role of Dr. in the names of these brands is to make customers trust these products as they trust their doctors.

Phonetic way: Word formation when the name of the brand is formed using phonemes, not morphemes. For example in 1888 George Eastman decided to create a technology company and he was faced with the problem, what is the best name for his company. He decided to devise the name himself. "K" was his favorite letter and he wanted the name of his company started and ended with this letter. He tried a lot of combinations and finally Kodak appeared. Kodak was "a purely arbitrary combination of letters, not derived in whole or part from any existing word" (Kroon, 2014).

Another interesting example here is the name of a well-known wristwatches brand Rolex that is number 65 in the list of the most valuable brands 2015. The founder of the company Hans Wilsdorf wanted his wristwatches had a very short, simple, easily pronounced and memorable in other languages name. He tried a lot of letter combinations and got 100 names but denied all of them. One morning suddenly he created the name "Rolex" as if someone whispered it in his ear.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated the main word building means that are used to create brands names. It is probably the first study that analyzes the names of the most valuable international brands names and demonstrates traditional and specific word building means of their creation.

The research continues the line of previous studies of the language of advertising and its components. Recently researchers have studied language of advertising (Goddard, 2002; Tanaka, 2005; Kalmane, 2012; Cook, 2001). A lot of researches were connected with studying of brand names (Danesi, 2007; Morris, 2004; Watkins, 2014). All of these studies underline one and the same idea success of your business depends on the name of your brand, so any entrepreneur should pay attention to its creation.

But, in spite of the fact that a lot of researches were done, some aspects of brands creation were not fully studied, for example word-building means that are used to create names of successful brands. Specific ways of brand name formation also weren't studied.

The research has shown that there are word building means that are highly used in all spheres of the language. They were called traditional or lexico-morphological. On the other hand there are word building means that are used only in the sphere of brand creation specific word building means.

CONCLUSION

After analyzing the top-100 names of the most valuable and popular brands it was discovered that 27% of them were created with the use of word-building means. These word-building means can be divided into two large groups: lexico-morphological (traditional) and specific. The most often used traditional word-building means are initial abbreviation, shortening of words (including complex shortening) and compound words. Specific means include numeralization, initialization, stylization and phonetic way. According to the research many names of the brands contain proper nouns: more often names of the founders of the company, less often names of places. It is a key characteristic of brands with long and rich history.

Some of the brands names are easily understood by the customers, because they can guess why the product was named this or that way (usually formed by shortening, initialization, stylization, numeralization). Some names are difficult to decode (usually abbreviated names). So, any entrepreneur who is creating a new product should think about brand name. A good brand name is a part of the advertising campaign and a keystone of prosperity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has theoretical and practical importance. It contains a lot of examples of famous brands names and information about history of their creation. Some specific word building means that are used to create names of brands were also studied. Examples to illustrate specific word-building means were found. This information can be interesting for linguists studying modern word-building processes, students studying English language, advertising professionals who are connected with brand creation.

The research can also be interesting for non-professionals and to awide range of readers. The research has practical implication in the sphere of brand-creation.

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