

Thailand's Exported Food Product Brand Naming: A Focus on Semantics and Pragmatics

Nithat Boonpaisarnsatit*

Dr. Jiranthara Srioutai**

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้ศึกษาองค์ประกอบทางอรรถศาสตร์และวัจนะปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของชื่อตราสินค้าที่มีบทบาทต่อการสื่อสารตราสินค้าในตลาดส่งออกสินค้าอาหาร โดยได้ศึกษาจากชื่อตราสินค้าอาหารส่งออกของไทยจำนวน 175 แบรินด์ตามแนวคิดเรื่อง Sense and Reference (Frege, 1892 and Lyons, 1977), Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975) and Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1985 ; 1995) จากการศึกษาพบว่าองค์ประกอบทางอรรถศาสตร์และวัจนะปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของชื่อตราสินค้ามีอิทธิพลต่อการสื่อสารตราสินค้าในตลาดส่งออกอย่างชัดเจน คือ ชื่อตราสินค้า แต่ละแบรินด์จะประกอบไปด้วย 'Sense' และ 'Reference' ที่ทำให้เกิดความเหมาะสมทางอรรถศาสตร์สำหรับการสื่อสาร ชื่อตราสินค้านั้น ๆ ในตลาด การศึกษายังพบว่าเจ้าของชื่อตราสินค้าทุกแบรินด์มีความตั้งใจบางอย่างในการตั้งชื่อตราสินค้านั้น ๆ และจะสื่อสารชื่อตราสินค้าของเขาด้วยการแปล การถ่ายเสียง การใช้ภาษาอังกฤษล้วน และแบบผสมผสาน ทั้งนี้ขึ้นอยู่กับความตั้งใจที่จะสื่อสารข้อมูลใดไปยังกลุ่มลูกค้าเป้าหมาย เจ้าของแบรินด์มีแนวโน้มที่จะละเมิด Grice's maxim ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับคุณภาพ ปริมาณข้อมูลและความชัดเจนของการสื่อสารแต่ยังคงรักษาความเกี่ยวข้องของข้อมูลกับการสื่อสารอยู่ เจ้าของชื่อตราสินค้าจะให้ความสำคัญกับความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างตัวสินค้าและชื่อที่จะตั้งมากที่สุดส่วนผู้บริโภคจะรับรู้ความหมายของชื่อตราสินค้าตามความรู้และประสบการณ์ของตน ดังนั้นผู้ส่งออกควรพิจารณาองค์ประกอบทางอรรถศาสตร์ และวัจนะปฏิบัติศาสตร์ของชื่อตราสินค้าของตนให้ดีก่อนการส่งออก โดยให้ดูเรื่องความเหมาะสมทางอรรถศาสตร์ และพลังทางวัจนะปฏิบัติศาสตร์ ทั้งนี้เพื่อให้การสื่อสารชื่อตราสินค้ามีความซับซ้อนและใช้คำใช้ฉ้อฉลน้อยลง

คำสำคัญ

ตราสินค้า อรรถศาสตร์ วัจนะปฏิบัติศาสตร์ การสื่อสารตราสินค้า อาหารส่งออก

Abstract

This paper investigates the semantic and pragmatic components of brand names that play roles in brand communication in food export markets. The study examines 175 brand names of Thailand's exported food products based on the conception of Sense and Reference (Frege, 1892 and Lyons, 1977),

* English as an International Language Program, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand

E-mail: nithat@feu.ac.th

**Lecturer, English Department, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand (Principle Adviser)



Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975) and Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1985 ; 1995). The study results indicate that brand name communication in the export markets is significantly influenced by the semantic and pragmatic components of the brand names. Each brand name does contain certain 'sense' and 'reference' that institute '*semantic appropriateness*' for brand name communication in a certain market. The study also confirms that all the brand name owners do have an intention behind the use of certain words for their brand names. They generally present their exported brand names by using various translation, transliteration, English-only and hybrid method; depending on which method can best convey their intended meaning to the target customers. The brand name owners tend to violate Grice's maxim of quality, quantity and manner, but rarely the maxim of relation. Customers are likely to perceive the intended meaning of brand names easier if the brand names exhibit a more direct sense or higher level of relevance ('*pragmatic enrichability*'). The customers tend to be able to interpret the brand names that match their personal knowledge and experience, but they may refuse to interpret the brand names that are not relevant enough to their encyclopedic knowledge. This study suggests that the exporters need to consider the semantics and pragmatics of their brand names carefully. Brand names with '*semantic appropriateness*' and '*pragmatic enrichability*' should make brand name communication less complicated and less costly to conduct.

Keywords

Brand Name, Brand Naming, Semantics and Pragmatics, Thailand's Exported Food Product

Introduction

It is widely recognized that brand names play a very important role in marketing products or services and in their acceptance by the public. A study by Kotler and Armstrong (1997) suggests that brand names contribute significantly to the success or failure of new products. A brand name seems to be the first thing that conveys product information to consumers. It is likely that consumers use brand names as a means to recognize product information such as the product type; for example, the brand name COCA-COLA allows consumers to recognize quickly that the product under that name is a cola drink (Kohli and Suri, 2000). Dawar and Parker (1994) also points out in their study that customers normally use brand names as one of their evaluative tools to justify quality of a product. The choice of a brand name is, therefore, an important strategy a company needs to take into consideration at the beginning stage of its business development. As Ellwood (2000,139) suggests, "creating, selecting and testing brand names should not be left to a minor meeting long after new product development has begun; it needs to be thought of at the start of the business, as it is powerful to highlight and shape the information of the business structure".

Choosing the proper brand name is a very essential point in the introduction of a new product. A wisely chosen brand name can create a favorable image and help in creating and enhancing brand awareness (Keller, Heckler, and Houston 1998). Brand name scholars propose that the brand naming system consists of three basic components: the marketing component, the legal component, and the linguistic component (Chan and Huang, 1997 and 2001, Klink, 2001, Ellwood, 2000). Among the three, the linguistic component seems to be the most fundamental, thus more crucial than the other two. As Charmasson (1988) points out, the degree of market promotion and legal protection of brand names is derived from the use of a brand name, which depends almost entirely on the intrinsic characteristics of its syllables, words and phrases.

The linguistic component of a brand name is often explained by the brand name scholars such as Chan and Huang (1997) that it involves the choice of linguistic elements which consists of three parts: phonetic choice, morphological process choice and semantic choice. It seems that there is a lack of the term 'pragmatics' in the previous literature. However, by investigating the three basic components of brand names carefully, it is quite obvious that the marketing and the legal component of brand names involve the context of a brand name use. As 'pragmatics' is often defined as "the study of language in use" (Cruse, 2006), it can be assumed that the marketing and legal components are parts of the pragmatics of brand names. The basic components of brand names may thus be refined to involve only the language aspect, or the linguistic specification, and the use aspect, or the communicative specification of brand names.

Previous studies on brand names, e.g. Kohli and LaBahn (1995), Klink (2001) Yorkston and Menon (2004), etc., often focus on the phonetic and morphological aspects of brand names, which are considered as a part of the linguistic specifications of brand names. Although the linguistic meaning aspects or the semantics and the communicative meaning aspects or the pragmatics of brand names seem to be significantly essential, only a few researches have paid attention to the semantics and pragmatics of brand names. It is likely that there is very little knowledge on the semantics and pragmatics of brand names. A few researchers proposed that a brand name should convey positive connotations and avoid negative connotations (Ellwood, 2000; Zhang, Schmitt and Haley, 2004 ; Hong, Pecotich and Schultz, 2002 ; Boonpaisarnsatit, 2009). To my knowledge, there was only one research by Klink (2001) that indicates the importance of semantics of brand names. He points out that the semantics, or meaning of a brand name word, could enhance both product liking and positioning" (Klink, 200, 27). Despite these few researches, there is still a lack of clear and systematic explanation for the nature of semantics and pragmatics of brand names or brand name meanings. This study thus aims to reveal the semantic and pragmatic characteristics of brand names, which might be useful for both business operators, and linguists whose works are related to brand naming.

Semantics and Pragmatics of Brand Names

In this study, the semantics and pragmatics of brand names refer to the linguistic and communicative components of brand names. Based on literature in the field of lexical semantics and lexical pragmatics, i.e. Cruse (1986), Blutner (1998 ; 2002), Carston (1999), Bach (1999), Wilson (2003) and Jaszczolt (2005), the semantics of brand name is relevant to the linguistically encoding and decoding process. The pragmatics of brand name is relevant to how brand owners intend their brand names to mean in communication acts, and to how consumers may infer or interpret the brand names in their conceptions.

Regarding the roles of brand name owners and consumers, it can be observed that both parties perform tasks in both semantic and pragmatic domains. The brand name owners have an intention of using a brand name. This process occurs in the pragmatic domain. Then, they encode linguistic information in a brand name in order to convey their intention; this occurs in the semantic domain. For the brand consumers, they decode a linguistic form, which is arbitrarily used as a brand name. This process takes place in the semantic domain. Then, the consumers make inference of the brand name; and this occurs in the pragmatic domain. See figure 1 for the illustration of the semantics - pragmatics boundary of brand names.

Brand Name			
<i>Communicative Component</i>	<i>Linguistic Component</i>		<i>Communicative Component</i>
Pragmatics	Semantics		Pragmatics
Intention to use a brand name	Linguistically-encoding Process	Linguistically-decoding Process	Pragmatic Inference Process
Brand owners		Consumers	

Figure 1: The semantics - pragmatics boundary of brand names

Since the nature of brand name communication is normally not face-to-face, the semantic and pragmatic information used by the brand name owners and by the consumers may be different. It is possible that the brand name owners use one set of conceptual and contextual information when they intend to use a brand name, while the consumers use another set of information for decoding and making inference of the brand name.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following three main questions.

1. What are the typical semantic and pragmatic patterns of Thailand's exported food product brand naming?
2. What semantic and pragmatic factors affect brand name communication in global market?
3. What the semantic and pragmatic guidelines for Thailand's exported food product brand naming can be?

Methodology

1. Population and Sample

The population and sample used in this study comprise three different subjects, as follows:

1.1 Brand Names of Thailand's Exported Food Products

A total of 175 brand names of Thailand's Brand¹ awarded products are used in this case study. Those brand names include: 30 brand names of rice products, 23 brand names of frozen and chilled food, 35 brand names of canned and instant food, 29 brand names of snacks and candies, and 58 brand names of food ingredients and seasonings

1.2 Thailand's Food Exporter Companies

This set of data includes 136 companies who are the exporters of Thailand's Brand awarded products as listed in the Food Category of Thailand's Exporters Directory 2009 - 2010². All related information to the companies, such as the companies' addresses, years of establishment, export markets, etc. are included in the data set.

1.3 Buyers and Consumers of Thailand's Exported Food Products

This data set includes 125 buyers or consumers who attended ThaiFEX-World of Food Asia, the largest food exhibition in Thailand organized by Thailand's Department of Export Promotion on May 25 - 29, 2011. The samples are selected by using convenience sampling method.

2. Data Collection

The collection of data for this study is divided into three stages, as follows:

Stage 1: Collection of brand names

¹ Thailand's Brand is an icon licensed by the Department of Export Promotion under the Ministry of Commerce. The logo comprises of the wordings: THAILAND and Diversity & Refinement inside an oval shape which encapsulate the distinctive image of Thailand as the land of diverse productions of goods with originality, quality, refined-craftsmanship and distinction. Thailand's Brand logo is highly recognized as the assurance that the quality of products and services of Thailand are up to the standard of the world's market.

² Thailand's Exporters Directory is available in two formats, hard copy and online, of the same content. This study uses the online version found at http://application.depthai.go.th/Center_Public/thailand_export_directory.html for it is more convenient to access than the hard copy.

In this stage, the researchers search for every brand name with the Thailand's Brand logo listed in the Food Category of *Thailand's Exporters Directory 2010 - 2011*. The brand names are, then, reorganized, according to their product types, into five categories: rice products, frozen and chilled food, canned and instant food, snacks and candies, and food ingredients and seasonings.

Stage 2: Collection of brand name meanings: owners' intention

In this stage, the brand name meanings as intended by the owner companies are collected initially from the official websites of the brand name owner companies. If the brand name intended meaning is not clearly stated on the company websites, an interview for brand name intended meaning is conducted via either email or telephone.

Stage 3: Collection of brand name meanings: consumers' interpretation.

In this stage, each selected buyer or consumer of Thailand's exported food products are asked to interpret five given brand names. The interviews are conducted face-to-face in a resting area provided at ThaiFEX-World of Food Asia. The customers' interpretations are noted down in a separate form.

3. Data Analysis

The analysis of data is based on the conception of 'Sense and Reference' (Frege, 1892 and Lyons, 1977), Cooperative Principle (Grice, 1975) and Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1985 ; 1995). The process of data analysis is shown in the following diagram.

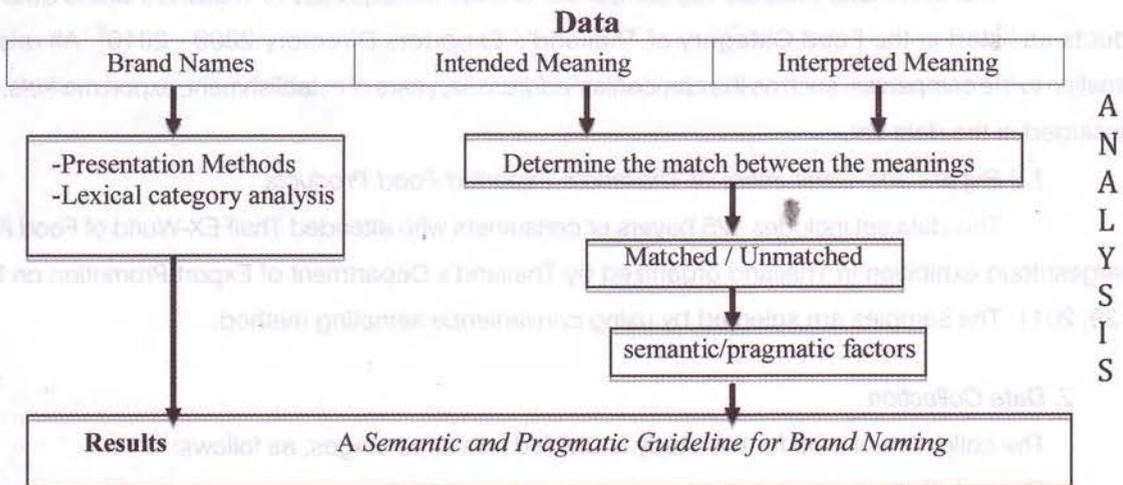


Figure 2: The Process for Analyzing the Semantics and Pragmatics of Brand Names

The data analysis begins with the investigation of brand name presentation methods and lexical choice used in order to find out the patterns of brand naming in each product category. Then, the intended meaning and the interpreted meaning are matched with each other in order to determine if the two meanings of brand names are matched or unmatched. After that, the linguistically -encoded/decoded

meaning (semantics) and the contextual information used for making brand name intention and inference (pragmatics) are investigated in order to find out the semantic and pragmatic factors that influence the matching between intended and interpreted meaning of the brand names. This study assumes that the match between the two meanings of brand names reflects successful brand name communication. The results obtained from the analysis of brand name meaning matching are used for establishing a semantic and pragmatic guideline for brand naming.

Results and Discussion

1. Brand name presentation methods

The analysis of brand name presentation methods showed that the brand names of Thailand's exported food products were presented by using four main presentation methods: translation, transliteration, English - only, and hybrid method. The term 'translation' refers to the method of which the brand name owners attempt to preserve the meaning of their original brand names by translating them into English, which is now considered the language of international trade (Ku and Zussman, 2010). 'Transliteration' is the method used when the brand name owners aim to maintain the sounds of the original brand names in the target markets. It is noted that the term 'transliteration', in this study, includes both Thai-to-English and other foreign languages-to-English transliteration. 'English-only' method refers the case where English words are used for both domestic and export brand names. This includes both simple English words, e.g. 'potato', 'king', 'cook' etc., and modified-English words, e.g. abbreviations (UFC), acronyms (Ampro), clippings (Euro), blending (Vitafood), etc. and 'hybrid method' is the combination of the brand names presentation methods mentioned earlier, for example, Transliteration + English-only (e.g. Tong Garden).

Apparently, the brand names of different product types tend to have different norms of the presentation method used in international markets. For example, the translation method seemed to be significantly used in the rice product category (60%) and the food ingredient and seasoning category (39.66%). It is surprising that no translation method was found used in the frozen and chilled food category and the snack and candy category. Transliteration method was found used in every product category, but it seemed not to be very significant. English-only method was found significantly used in frozen and chilled food category (91.30%), snack and candy category (72.41%), and canned and instant food category (45.71%). Hybrid method was found not to be the popular brand name presentation method used for presenting Thailand's food product brand names in the international markets. See the chart in Figure 3 below.

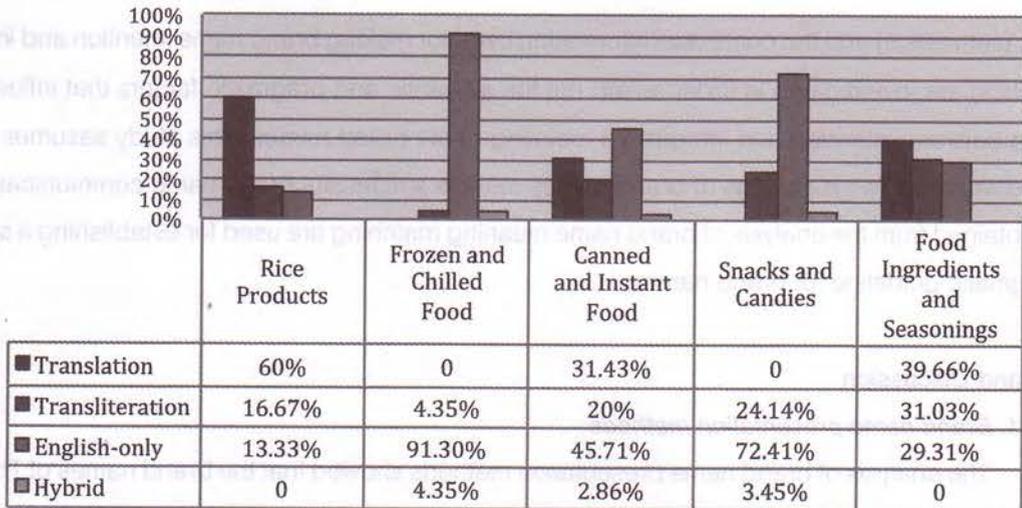


Figure 3: Overview of Thailand's exported food brand name presentation methods

Considering the presentation methods of the brand names and their product types, it is quite obvious that the brand names of traditional products such as rice and food ingredients, based on Chan and Huang (2001), tend to be significantly presented by translation method, while the brand names of modern products such as frozen food and snacks are likely to be presented by the English-only method. No matter translation or English - only method is used, it is apparent that the meaning of brand names can effect the international customers. Thus, the semantics and pragmatics of those brand names should play a very important role in international brand name communication.

2. Lexical Categories of Brand Names

The classification of lexical categories of Thailand's exported food product brand names is based on a single word unit and its referential meaning. That is, every single word of a brand name is categorized into a suitable lexical category. For example, the brand name GOLDEN RABBIT is considered that there consisted of two single words, 'golden' and 'rabbit', thus 'golden' is put into one category {ATTRIBUTE}; and 'rabbit' is categorized into other category {ANIMAL}. For the non-English brand names, e.g. the brand name ROZA, which is originally from Arabic, the categorization is conducted on the basis of their language of origin. The analysis reveals that certain categories are significantly used in different types of products, as being discussed below.

The brand names of Thailand's exported rice product can be classified into eleven categories. The majority of Thai rice brand names are composed of {ATTRIBUTE}, as it was found in twenty-three brand names (76.67%). {ANIMAL} seems also popular among the Thailand's rice exporters. The animal term was found used in eight brand names (26.67%). {PERSON}, {PLANT}, {JEWELRY}, and {HEAVEBODY} can be

one of the significant choices for rice product brand naming. Other categories found but less significant include {ARTIFACT}, {ACTIVITY}, {EMOTION}, {SENSE} and {GREETING}.

The brand names of frozen and chilled food products are composed of eight categories. The most frequently found categories are {PLACE} (47.83%), {EDIBLE} (43.48%), {ATTRIBUTE} (39.13%) and {PERSON} (39.13%), respectively. Other semantic categories found include {ACTIVITY}, {HEAVENLY BODY}, {ARTIFACT} and {DECISIVE OBJECT}.

Canned and instant food brand names fall into twelve categories. The significant categories are {ATTRIBUTE} (34.29%), {PERSON} (31.43%), {PLACE} (17.14%), {ANIMAL} (14.29%), {ARTIFACT} (14.29%), and {PLANT} (11.43%). Other categories found, but less significant, are {HEAVENLY BODY}, {EDIBLE}, {EMOTION}, {FACIAL EXPRESSION}, {ACTIVITY} and {SENSE}.

The brand names of snacks and candies can be categorized into eight categories. The most frequently found categories are {EDIBLE} (56.52%), {ATTRIBUTE} (56.52%) and {PERSON} (26.09%). Other categories found are {PLANT}, {ANIMAL}, {PLACE}, {ENTERTAINMENT}, and {SHAPE}.

Food ingredient and seasoning brand names can be put into fourteen categories, and the most frequently found categories are {ATTRIBUTE} (48.28%), {PERSON} (29.31%), {ANIMAL} (15.52%) and {PLANT} (15.52%). Other less significant categories found include {ARTIFACT}, {PLACE}, {EDIBLE}, {JEWELRY}, {DECISIVE OBJECT}, {FACIAL EXPRESSION}, {SHAPE}, {BODY PART}, {ENTERTAINMENT}, and {SENSE}.

Of all the lexical categories, {ATTRIBUTE}, {PERSON}, {EDIBLE}, {ANIMAL} and {PLACE} are quite significant. It is noticed that by using these categories, the exporters expect to communicate certain information through the brand names. For example, {ATTRIBUTE} such as 'golden', 'royal', 'imperial', 'super', 'great', 'classic', etc. tend to be concerned with quality of the products. {PERSON} such as 'farmer', 'chef', 'king', 'queen', 'Mae Pranom', 'Mah Boonkrong' can be considered as concerning with the products in some ways. 'Farmer' and 'chef', for example, are the professions related to the products (rice, food ingredient). 'King' and 'Queen' can be related to the superior quality of the products, and 'Mae Pranom' or 'Mah Boonkrong' can be related to original products. {EDIBLE} such as 'fruit', 'food', 'seafood', 'nut', 'candy', etc. can directly tell customers what the products are. {ANIMAL} such as 'dragon', phoenix, 'Pegasus', 'elephant', 'nautilus' can mark exoticness or uniqueness of the products. The lexical category analysis seems to suggest that only certain members of the categories are selected for Thailand's exported food brand names, and those selected members should serve the exporters' purposes of brand naming.

3. Match between intended and interpreted meanings

This study indicated that all exporters did have intentions behind the use of their brand names. However, not all the intended meanings were perceived in the international markets. The matching between intended and interpreted meaning of the brand names helped figure out what characteristics of the brand names were likely to be influential in brand name communication.

The two meanings of Thailand's exported food brand names were found both matched and unmatched. For the matched cases, the brand name meanings could be either fully matched or partially matched. The fully matched refers to the cases where all the customer groups could interpret the intended meaning of the brand names correctly. The partially matched, on the other hand, refers to the cases where not all customer samples could get the brand names' intended meanings. The unmatched means those cases where no customer sample could interpret the right intended meanings of the brand names. The following table exhibits the brand names in each case.

Table 1

List of brand names with intended and interpreted meaning matched and unmatched

Product	Meaning matched		Meaning unmatched
	Fully matched	Partially matched	
Rice Product	GOLDEN PHOENIX, IMPERIAL TASTE, JASMINE GOLD, Q RICE, SUPER DRAGON	GREAT HARVEST, GOLDEN GLOBE, ROYAL ORCHID, GOLDEN CRANE, GOLDEN DIAMOND, GOLDEN HORSE, GOLDEN LOTUS, GOLDEN PEARL, GOLDEN RABBIT, ROYAL DANCER, ROYAL ELEPHANT, ROYAL UMBRELLA, SMART CHEF, URC, GOLDEN EARTH, LOVE FARMER	GOLDEN TUB, KASET, MAH BOONKRONG, PONGLARP, SUN, SURIN TIP, SWAT-D, YOUNG ELEPHANT, DOUBLE ELEPHANTS
Frozen and Chilled Food	FRUIT KING, EXCEL FRUITS, SEA FRESH, CHEF'S CHOICE	FRUIT CELLAR, OCEAN STAR, LITTLE CHEF, KC FRESH, SURAPON FOODS, VITAFOOD, VENTUNA, PFP, PTN, CMR, CNV, AMS, U.F.P, TSF, CSF	MAY, AROY-D, KISS, PAM
Canned and Instant Food	PROCHEF, OCEAN TASTE, ASIAN BOWL, ROYAL SEA	STAR, SMILING FISH, MADAME WONG, PANASIA, KC, YUM YUM, KING BELL, MAMA, QUEEN BELL, HI-Q, THREE LADY COOKS, DELIGHT, O&P, DOUBLE DRAGON, UFC	BATTLESHIP, AMPRO, ROZA, TWIN ELEPHANT & EARTH, S. KHONKAEN, PINE, NAUTILUS, BAMBOO, KIN DEE, RIVER KWAI, TROFCO, BENJAMAS, PIGEON, BEAN, WAI WAI, PICHAYA
Snacks and Candies	FLOWER FOOD, NUT CANDY, MR. SQUID, JUMBO, POTATO, SOFTLINE, MY MINT	WAFRUIT, CLASSIC, CAPUNO, KHAO SHONG NUTS, CRUSTY, TONG GARDEN, YOFRUIT, ONE MORE, FISHO, NUT WALKER, BIGGA	KOH-KAE, MANORAH, RICHU, TARO, COUGAR, EURO, PILLO, OTARI, TAO KAE NOI, JEED JARD, DURIO
Food Ingredients and Seasonings	SUN SAUCE, GOLD LABEL, NEW GRADE, NO.1 CHOICE, CLASSIC THAI, THAI CHOICE, SIAM KITCHEN	KING, OREINTAL CHEF, NEO SUKI, COOK YIM, 3 CHEFS, FLYING RABBIT, TALAD THAI, CHAO THAI, GOLDEN COINS, HAND NO.1, STAR LION, ALFA ONE, MEGACHEF, FOODEX, THAI SMILE, RED SPOON, SHOICE, WHITE ELEPHANT, FLYING TIGER	OLEEN, MORAKOT, RAMWONG, DESERT ROSE, LOBO, SUREE, PANTAINORASINGH, RIZI, RAZOR CLAM, FUANG FAH FLOWER, ROSE, THREE TRAIANGLES, MAE PRANOM, GOLDEN BOAT, KANGAROO, MAE KRUA, RUAMROS, OYSTER, GOLDEN BOY, GOGI, JADE LEAF, CHAO KOH, MAE PLOY, MAE SRI, ARROZA, TREE, RAITIP, MORADOK, JUTHATHIP, GOLDEN FISH, THAI DANCER, PEGASUS

Considering the fully matched cases, it is noticed that only a small number of brand names can effectively convey what the exporters want to mean to their customers. Even though many brand names in the partially matched and unmatched cases seem to be meaningful, they could not completely communicate the exporters' intentions to customers. It can thus be assumed that there are certain factors that affect the meaning communication of those brand names.

4. Factors influencing semantic - pragmatic based brand naming

Based on the match between intended and interpreted meanings of the brand names, it was found that there were at least four semantic and pragmatic factors that influence the success of brand name meaning communication in international markets. Those factors are: 1) selection of presentation method and lexical choices, 2) reference shift and sense relation, 3) observation of Gricean Maxims, and 4) level of relevance.

4.1 The selection of presentation method and lexical choices

Obviously, the brand names in the matched cases were presented by translation, English-only and hybrid method. The transliteration method was found only in the meaning unmatched case. Presenting brand names using English language in international markets seems to work better than using other foreign languages. It might be because English is the language known by both exporters and consumers. The meanings of brand names are thus more understandable. However, not every translation and English-only brand name communicates the exporters' intentions effectively. Lexical choices also affected the communication of brand name meanings. For example, the brand name GOLDEN PHOENIX, which is translated from 'หงส์ทอง', was intended to mean 'premium quality'. The use of the words 'golden' and 'phoenix' seems to be effective since, internationally, 'golden' can be associated with "high value"; and 'phoenix' are often known as a special and magical bird. 'Golden' and 'Phoenix' can thus be a good combination for presenting 'premium quality'. Nevertheless, not every word accompanied 'golden' can mean 'high quality'; for example, the brand name Golden Tub, which was also intended to mean 'high quality' product, was viewed as a strange name because the word 'tub' is associated with 'bathroom', not with 'food'. To get a good brand name, exporters should firstly concern about how to present their brand names in the markets and what lexical items to be used to present their intentions.

4.2 Reference shift and sense relatedness³

It is the fact that a brand name is used for a certain type of product, references of the brand names are, thus, shifted to refer to the product they labeled on. For example, the brand name Siam Kitchen, which is originally referred to "a place for cooking Siam (Thai) food", is shifted to refer to 'different kinds of Thai food ingredients such as chili paste, dipping sauce, curry paste etc.' It is noticed that the shift of reference of Siam Kitchen seems to occur within the domain of 'cooking'. This suggests that if the brand

³The terms 'reference shift' and 'sense relatedness' were adapted from Frege (1892)'s 'Sense and Reference'.



name reference is shifted within the same or very close domain, the communication of brand name meaning is potentially successful. In addition, the brand names in the matched cases tend to be related to the product characteristics in some senses. For example, Jumbo can be well related to the 'size of product'; Sea Fresh is clearly related to 'freshness' of the product. This 'sense relatedness' of the brand names can be one of the factors that enable effective brand name meaning communication.

4.3 Observation of Gricean Maxims⁴

The study showed that the more maxims the exporters observed, the more successful in brand name meaning communication it would be. In the meaning matched cases, exporters tended to observe the four maxims when they named their brand. Some exporters observed the maxims by telling customers directly what their products are, e.g. the brand names Q Rice, Fruit King, Nut Candy, Flower Food, etc. Some exporters chose to talk about their product properties, e.g. New Grade, Imperial Taste, Jumbo, etc. Among the four maxims, exporters seemed to violate the maxim of quality, quantity and manner, but rarely the maxim of relation. In the cases of deviated words, e.g. Durio, Capuno, etc., abbreviation, e.g., URC, CMR, AMS, etc., blended words, e.g. Trofco, Ampro, etc. it is apparent that the maxim of quality, quantity and manner are violated. It seems that the exporters of these brand names observed only the maxim of relation. In case only the maxim of relation is observed, exporters might need to consider the level of relevance of their brand names.

4.4 Level of relevance

Based on the Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986 ; 1995), the successful communication is relied on the so-called 'optimal relevance'⁵. In the case of brand name communication, it is thus the duty of exporters to provide customers with the brand names' optimal relevance if they want their brand names to be communicated effectively. This study revealed that the relevance of brand names could reach its optimal level if things surrounding the brand names were relevant enough to intended meaning of the brand names. For example, the abbreviation brand names should be understood easier if the words the abbreviation stood for are provided immediately after the abbreviation. The brand name Q Rice can be a good example for this as the exporter showed the word 'quality' in the slogan right after the brand name: *Q Rice, the Quality of life*. Types of products can also bring about optimal relevance to the brand names. For example, the brand names such as Asian Bowl and Ocean Taste can be relevant enough because they fit their product types, instant Asian food and canned seafood. The study suggests that level of brand name relevance can also be used to determine the potential of success in brand name meaning communication.

⁴ Gricean Maxims describe specific rational principles observed by people who obey the cooperative principle. There are four of them: quality, quantity, relation and manner. These principles are believed to enable effective communication. (see Grice, 1975)

⁵ An utterance is optimally relevant to the hearer just in case: (a) It is relevant enough to be worth the hearer's processing effort; (b) It is the most relevant one compatible with the speaker's abilities and preferences (Sperber & Wilson 1985)

Conclusion

It can be generalized from this study that the success of brand name meaning communication is apparently affected by the semantic and pragmatic characteristics of the brand names. Therefore, in brand naming a product, business owners might have to consider different factors that influence brand communication. These factors can be summarized into two main aspects: (1) '*semantic appropriateness*' and (2) '*pragmatic enrichability*'. Semantic appropriateness deals with the linguistic aspect of the brand names. That is, the brand names should exhibit both reference and sense that are suitable for its product types. Pragmatic enrichability is, on the other hand, responsible for the communicative aspect of the brand name. This means that business owners should provide contextual environments around the brand names that enrich their intended meanings in communication. Business owners might have to observe Grice's maxims or provide optimal relevance that enable the successful communication. It is noted that customers tend to perceive the intended meaning of brand names easier if the brand names exhibit both semantic appropriateness and pragmatic enrichability. Also, the customers are likely to be able to interpret the brand names that match their personal knowledge and experience, but they may refuse to interpret the brand names that are not relevant enough to their encyclopedic knowledge.

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