

Implementing Marketing Strategies in EFL Classes in the Age of ‘Clip Thinking’

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Abstract

The object of the article is new strategies used in EFL classes in the age of ‘clip thinking’. The subject of the article is marketing strategies used in the EFL training. It is suggested that the ‘clip thinking’ of the new generation must be accommodated when making up EFL lesson plans by employing marketing strategies, including commercials, advertisements, and film promotion interviews. The purpose of the article is to prove that the above mentioned marketing strategies can provide outstanding listening comprehension material, interesting discussion points and a new perspective of the topics suggested in the textbook. The research uses the empirical method, with classes based on the textbooks for second and third year MGIMO students enhanced by the suggested marketing strategies. The results of the present study demonstrate that these materials can be used to create some additional classroom activities, making EFL classes truly educational.

Keywords: classroom activities, clip thinking, EFL, marketing strategies, visuals.

Your EFL classes are truly interesting and educational, and your students enjoy coming to your classes — they know they are going to learn a number of exciting and important things and improve their English significantly. Perhaps they even avoid looking at their phones during your class. But you might want something more — you would like to make your classes more varied or

even more dynamic, offering a new perspective, enhancing your students' listening comprehension noticeably and adding a number of idioms to their vocabulary. To rise to this challenge, you can resort to a number of marketing strategies, including the use of advertisements, commercials and film promotion videos in your EFL classes.

There are some important types of conventional marketing strategies: outdoor marketing, which consists in public displays of advertising materials; print marketing that is essentially some printed content easy to copy and distribute; and electronic marketing (using the radio and TV) [Marketing in business: strategies and types explained. Investopedia. <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/m/marketing.asp>, 09.05.2023]. These marketing strategies integrated in the lesson plan wisely can enhance your EFL classes in the age of 'clip thinking'. How do we know this? If we compare the lyrics of various songs performed at a different time, some nuances will be easily noticeable. For example, the song "*Perhaps Perhaps Perhaps*" performed by Doris Day in 1965 is characterized by full sentences and a clear narrative: "*You won't admit you love me / And so how am I ever to know? / You always tell me / Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps. / A million times I've asked you / And then I ask you over / Again, you only answer / Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps...*" [<https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/8990169/Doris+Day/Perhaps%2C+Perhaps%2C+Perhaps>, Lyrics.com, 04.10.2023]. At the same time, the narrative in the song called "*Cardigan*" that was released by Taylor Swift in 2020 is essentially different: "*Vintage tee, brand new phone / High heels on cobblestones / When you are young, they assume you know nothing / Sequin smile, black lipstick / Sensual politics / When you are young, they assume you know nothing*" [<https://www.lyrics.com/lyric/37352128/Taylor+Swift/cardigan>, 04.10.2023]. The second song plays with imagery, the narrative is not quite clear, the sen-

tences are not complete and it is more like a few delicate brushstrokes rather than a full picture. This dissimilarity between the two songs written in different decades is truly telling. The new generation tends to have ‘clip thinking’ — this is a concept that was first introduced and developed by the American philosopher, sociologist and futurist Alvin Toffler [Toffler 1980].

For the purpose of the present article, this definition of ‘clip thinking’ will be used for practical concerns: it is *“the process that allows humans to make sense of the world they experience and of various properties of multiple objects, characterized by a lack of a holistic perception of illogical flow of heterogeneous information and rapid switching between its fragments, without analyzing their connections”* [Tatiana Volkodav. Dichotomy of clip thinking. Researchgate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/320225378_Dichotomy_of_the_%27Clip_Thinking%27_Phenomenon, 02.08.2017]. It is believed that the ‘clip thinking’ of the new generation calls for a change in the way EFL teachers employ visuals and multimedia in class because “the use of modern information multimedia technologies in the educational process can significantly increase students’ cognitive abilities” [Kraynov, Shalaeva 2020]. Multimedia defined as *“a combination of pictures, sound, and words, used especially in computers or entertainment”* [Cambridge dictionary. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/multimedia>, 2023] can be easily supplemented by marketing strategies, which are just an extension of employing multimedia in class.

To start with, commercials are the easiest to use in EFL classes. If you would like to integrate commercials into your lesson plan, there are certain rules of the game you might consider important:

1. The commercial should not advertise anything easily buyable. This cannot be snacks, clothes or any other items which can

be bought immediately because naturally students must not be encouraged to consume more goods. Instead, you might opt for commercials that advertise more expensive things like cars or better still, new technologies.

2. The commercial should have enough language material. If it is just beautiful visuals but not enough ‘vocabulary’, it will be entertaining but not beneficial.
3. Commercials which have a topic similar to what you are discussing in class can be the most valuable.

To clarify this, when studying the topic “Cybersecurity” (“Phishing in troubled waters”, with 3rd year students) we discuss the ease of tapping into people’s private conversations and gadgets [Anglijskij yazyk dlya mezhdunarodnikov 2021: 111]. You can start this class by playing the “*First Date commercial*” as a warm up activity [First date Hyundai Super Bowl commercial. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&app=desktop&v=VQItMZ9WGV0>, 06.02.2016]. You can find some other great commercials by googling “*SuperBowl commercials 2022*” etc. These are some videos that are shown during the championship game of the National Football League (NFL). Naturally there is a need to sift through a number of them to choose some great ones that will suit your lesson plan.

Besides, advertisements are another great way to introduce new vocabulary or feed in some grammar (in this case, the Present Perfect and the Past Simple) in EFL classes. Here is an example of brand wars when several brands tried to surpass each other in the advertising game. ‘*Jet Airways*’ wrote on a billboard: “*We’ve changed*”. ‘*Kingfisher*’ airlines responded by placing another billboard above reading: “*We made them change!*” But ‘*GoAir*’ airlines beat them all: “*We’ve not changed. We’re still the smartest way to fly*”.



Picture 1.

In addition to commercials and advertisements, film promotion interviews are also a type of advertising. And they might be the best thing available to enhance your students' listening comprehension, find out some new perspectives for the discussion and learn idiomatic vocabulary. It is common knowledge that foreign actors and directors endorse a film they have been working on by going to shows and interviews and speaking about their new film. These videos are numerous and you can use them in class if the film and its topic are appropriate for the audience and if this will contribute to your discussions. To illustrate, some extracts from the book "*Dune*" by Frank Herbert are used in the textbook for second year students at MGIMO University [Yastrebova 2022: 176]. "*Dune*" is phenomenal and there is also a great film by Denis Villeneuve based on the book, so watching some film promotion interviews with the actors (who have different accents as well) might be a good way to start discussing the fu-

ture of humanity, a possible scarcity of resources and a need for sustainability. Watching such videos can also be a good way to finish a class by making some of the characters in the textbook come alive [“Jason Momoa Owes Me Money” – Rebecca Ferguson On Her “Dune” Castmates. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EINHC638hq0>, 02.10.2021].

To conclude, the ‘clip thinking’ of the new generation calls for a change in some teaching methods and using more visuals and multimedia in EFL classes. Some marketing strategies might be successfully employed to adjust the current lesson plans and include eye-catching commercials, advertisements, narratives about brand wars and film promotion interviews. Providing some ethical and practical requirements to them are met, these new elements in the lesson plan can serve as perfect listening comprehension material, interesting discussion points and a source of idiomatic vocabulary. They can serve as a ‘warm-up’ or a ‘wrap up’ part of the class, making it informative, engaging and satisfying for the students.

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