

TELEVISION COMMERCIALS AS A WINDOW ON AMERICAN CULTURE
FOR TEACHING ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS

by

CLIFFORD J. BIEBERLY

B.A., Wichita State University, 1972

M.A., Wichita State University, 1981

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2008

Abstract

Educators teaching English as a second language to adult students must keep course materials relevant, up-to-date and low cost. This research examines the possibility of using television commercials to supplement existing teaching materials, making lessons more culturally relevant.

Often direct translations reveal that the translator, while knowing the rules of the language, did not fully understand the nuances of that language's culture. The idea that language and culture are interwoven is well established. While some understanding of one without the other is possible, finding ways to blend language and culture in the classroom can give non-native speakers an aid to understanding implied and literal meanings.

This dissertation describes research on how American culture is intertwined in the ubiquitous television commercial and how these 30-second "slices of life" could benefit ESL education. It examines American concepts depicted in television advertisements on the four largest networks and then investigates the relative merits of using TV commercials as a teaching tool.

This study uses the *Map of Culture*, developed by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in 1959, for content analysis of ten primary message systems that can categorize cultural descriptions. A sample of nearly 2,000 national television commercials was recorded from four major networks—ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC—during primetime in November 2001. Only national commercials aired more than six times that month were analyzed for trends in illustrating both manifest and latent cultural meanings, and even cultural taboos. Random examples were then selected to create a suite of ESL classroom materials.

Television advertising was chosen for this study because of its accessibility and its ability to provide both visual and auditory content. Materials created for use in the classroom included a discussion model with pretest component, a video of selected commercials, a Q&A format follow-up discussion guide, and a post-test measurement instrument. ESL teachers and students who tested the materials and were surveyed on feasibility, logistics, students' interest level, content, and cultural relevance.

Television commercials were found to include cultural content useful in ESL lessons and in-class testing showed favorable outcomes. The study results could positively impact ESL pedagogy.

TELEVISION COMMERCIALS AS A WINDOW ON AMERICAN CULTURE
FOR TEACHING ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS

by

CLIFFORD J. BIEBERLY

B.A., Wichita State University, 1972
M.A., Wichita State University, 1981

A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Leadership
College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2008

Approved by:

Major Professor
W. Franklin Spikes, Ed.D.

Copyright

CLIFFORD J. BIEBERLY

2008

Abstract

Educators teaching English as a second language to adult students must keep course materials relevant, up-to-date and low cost. This research examines the possibility of using television commercials to supplement existing teaching materials, making lessons more culturally relevant.

Often direct translations reveal that the translator, while knowing the rules of the language, did not fully understand the nuances of that language's culture. The idea that language and culture are interwoven is well established. While some understanding of one without the other is possible, finding ways to blend language and culture in the classroom can give non-native speakers an aid to understanding implied and literal meanings.

This dissertation describes research on how American culture is intertwined in the ubiquitous television commercial and how these 30-second "slices of life" could benefit ESL education. It examines American concepts depicted in television advertisements on the four largest networks and then investigates the relative merits of using TV commercials as a teaching tool.

This study uses the *Map of Culture*, developed by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in 1959, for content analysis of ten primary message systems that can categorize cultural descriptions. A sample of nearly 2,000 national television commercials was recorded from four major networks—ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC—during primetime in November 2001. Only national commercials aired more than six times that month were analyzed for trends in illustrating both manifest and latent cultural meanings, and even cultural taboos. Random examples were then selected to create a suite of ESL classroom materials.

Television advertising was chosen for this study because of its accessibility and its ability to provide both visual and auditory content. Materials created for use in the classroom included a discussion model with pretest component, a video of selected commercials, a Q&A format follow-up discussion guide, and a post-test measurement instrument. ESL teachers and students who tested the materials and were surveyed on feasibility, logistics, students' interest level, content, and cultural relevance.

Television commercials were found to include cultural content useful in ESL lessons and in-class testing showed favorable outcomes. The study results could positively impact ESL pedagogy.

Table of Contents

List of Figures	ix
List of Tables	x
Acknowledgements	xi
Dedication	xii
CHAPTER 1 – Introduction	1
Background.....	6
The Cultural Imperative in Teaching English as a Second Language	6
Perspective on the Linguistically Isolated	6
Expanding ESL Curricula Beyond the Artificial	7
The Interdisciplinary Nature of ESL Education	8
Building on the Three Stages of Appropriation.....	8
Research Questions.....	10
Methodology.....	10
Significance of the Study.....	13
Limitations	14
Assumptions.....	14
Definitions	16
Commonly-Used Acronyms	18
Summary.....	19
CHAPTER 2 – Review of Literature	20
Culture and Language.....	21
Defining Culture	23
A History of Definitions	23
A Few of the Many Definitions of Culture.....	24
A Definition for this Study	26
Acquisition of Culture	26
The Connection Between Language and Culture	27
Reality of Perception	29

Translating Thought to Language.....	30
Parallel History: Advertising and ESL Education	31
Pros and Cons of Advertising.....	33
America’s Most Available Teaching Tool.....	35
Television as it Relates to Family Life	35
Commercialism	35
General	36
A New Way of Keeping Score	36
Dissertations.....	37
Summary.....	41
CHAPTER 3 – Methodology.....	43
Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Content.....	43
Examining the Commercial Messages.....	45
Educational Materials for Classroom Use	50
Population and Sample Selection	51
Data Collection	52
Evaluation Survey for ESL Teachers.....	52
Protection of Human Rights	53
Summary.....	54
CHAPTER 4 – Results	55
Research Questions.....	55
Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Content.....	55
Evaluating an ESL Lesson Based on Television Commercials.....	61
Chapter Summary	65
CHAPTER 5 – Discussion	67
Summary.....	67
Limitations of the Findings.....	68
Contributions to the Field	69
Recommendations for Future Research.....	70
Summary of the Study	71
REFERENCES.....	74

APPENDICES	85
Appendix A – Letter for Prospective Participants.....	86
Appendix B – Reply Cards for Potential Participants	87
Appendix C – Cover Letter to Participants	88
Appendix D – KSU Informed Consent Form.....	89
Appendix E – Demographics Questionnaire	91
Appendix F – National Commercials Aired During Prime-Time in November 2001	92
Appendix G – Composite Commercial Rater Grid	107
Appendix H – Primary Message Systems Ratings for 50 Commercials.....	109
Appendix I – ESL Training Materials.....	111

List of Figures

Figure 1	The 50 Most Aired TV Commercials During Prime-Time in November 2001	48
Figure 2	First Languages of Respondents in Study	62
Figure 3	Percentage of ESL Students Who Learned About American Culture from TV Commercial Discussion.....	63
Figure 4	Types of Discussion Aids Used in Respondents' Classes.....	64
Figure 5	Percentage of ESL Students Who Indicated TV Commercials Were a Good Discussion Aid	65

List of Tables

Table 1	Edward T. Hall's <i>Map of Culture</i>	45
Table 2	November 2001 Network Recording Schedule.....	46
Table 3	50 Commercials Evaluated for Cultural Content.....	57

Acknowledgements

Stacia Garlach

John Bieberly

Robert Pirtle

Shannon Stuckert

Eva Washburn Repollo

Mark Inouye

W. Sam Smith

Rusty Kent

Tom Galli

Tracy Trevorrow

Scott Schroeder

Bro. Bernie Ploeger

Dedication

To my mom, who was always a great believer in education and always had faith that I would finish. While I received an extension to see my degree to completion, she did not.

Kathleen Trainor Bieberly

(1916 – 2006)

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

Teachers of adult students in English as a second language classes face a challenge. They need to keep course work current, and when students are already living in an English-speaking world, it must be culturally relevant (Flores, 2007, p. 8). An additional challenge, according to the American Immigration Law Foundation, is that students are often low-income and ESL programs are under-funded (Immigration Policy Report, 2002). Funding for ESL programs has not kept pace with demand. For example, in Colorado, state funding has dropped from \$221 per student in 1992-93 to just \$90 per pupil in 2002 (Hubbard & Mitchell, 2002). That same year, American Institutes for Research conducted a study of the implementation of California's Proposition 227, a 1998 statute requiring English-only instruction in the public schools (Parrish, et al., 2001, 2002). The study documented what Parrish referred to as a significant lack of guidance from the state about the nature of the instruction in Structured English Immersion classrooms. He pointed out that as a result, "teachers were not provided appropriate materials or guidance on how to use materials appropriately" (Parrish, et al., 2001, p. 36). In 2006, the Education Commission of the States administered a survey that examined how California, Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Texas funded their English Language Learner/English as a Second Language (ELL/ESL) programs. The study showed little upward movement in funding for ESL (Griffith & Hancock, 2006).

The report also pointed out that in New York, school districts were receiving \$143 per pupil on average for ELP (English Language Proficiency) students within that state's funding formula, while California provided \$100 per identified student. This survey showed that by 2006, Colorado had set a maximum of \$400 for spending on its English language learners. These studies led the researcher to believe that providing a low-cost, timely resource of culturally relevant teaching material could benefit even the most basic ESL program.

If we, as native speakers of "American" English, think back to our early experiences of learning a foreign language, some of us, for example, might remember our Spanish teachers spending a great deal of time talking about "bullfights" and "fiestas." The use of such stereotypical cultural imagery was intended to stimulate students' imaginations, giving them a desire to learn more. It made sense to learn about the culture of the people who speak the

language. That was because cultures include intangible components that reflect values and influence personal and social behavior (Wood, 2003, p. 106). The idea that language and culture are bound is a common one (Furstenberg, Levet, English, & Maillet, 2001; Russell, 2000; Sapir, 1949; Greenberg, 1971; Hall, 1959). Not only does an understanding of a culture give the learner a reason to become fluent, it also addresses the fundamental question of meaning, i.e., why words and terms are used the way they are. The Whorfian hypothesis of linguistic relativity simply states that the structure of a culture's language determines the behavior and habits of thinking in that culture (Littlejohn, 2002, p. 178).

One only has to take note of a faulty direct translation to realize that there is more to language than mere words. I recently visited an Asian market and bought a small plastic food storage tub. The packaging had one small English translation of Japanese, which explained that the container was "a kitchen ware for merry cooking time." It also promised that this Tupperware-like container would "create your fresh and joyful life." While this seemed to be a pretty good deal for seven dollars, it also revealed a lack of cultural literacy on the part of the writer.

Often the adult English as a second language (ESL) student is already immersed in the American English culture, but the relationships of that culture to the English language are ignored or simply too hard to connect. A review of the literature revealed that the mass media, while not overlooked as teaching tools, remain relatively underutilized as resources especially if one considers their pervasive nature in our society. According to the A.C. Nielson Co., the average American watches four hours of television each day, which equals 28 hours a week, or two months of nonstop TV watching per year (Vivian, 2005, p. 396). Statistics like these seem to tell us that this medium is more than just a reflection of our culture; in a large part, it defines our culture.

Goodenough (1981) writes that "cultural rules," or prescriptions for the ways in which we should behave, are always more obvious to those who have grown up in a particular culture. For example, teenagers often speak to each other differently than they do to adults (Petersen, 1997). If they adopt the same speaking style with an adult, it could mean that they have a familiar and informal relationship with the adult, or it could mean that they are just being insolent and even antagonistic. These are the types of subtleties that are often present in television commercials, but could easily be misunderstood by non-native speakers. We expect the content of culture to

have clear parallels with the content of language, which is a kind of cultural system in itself (Goodenough, 1981, p. 67). So, in considering the content of culture, we must take account of an entire range of phenomena that enter the human experience and that are the subject matter of learning. According to Goodenough, these phenomena are central to television commercials.

Not only could television advertising serve as a window on culture, it could be used to teach syntax, phonology and morphology, as well as pronunciation, intonation, and emphasis. The repetitive nature of TV commercials, along with the desire of the advertiser to make a meaningful “connection” with the viewer, serves to make commercials excellent resources for the ESL educator. Although we can study permanent cultural forms, such as novels or songs from various historical periods, culture is always changing (Campbell, Martin, and Fabos, 2006, p. 10). Culture may be defined as the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life ... when we watch television we are trying to identify or connect with something or someone. Culture, according to Campbell et al., delivers the values of a society through products, namely the mass media.

Educators discussed in the literature typically sought out additional resources to supplement their course materials. The daily newspaper was the most typical resource added to the curriculum (Duff, 2001). This study is aimed at helping define those areas of culture that can typically be found in television advertising, determine what areas might be missing, and then provide a guide, or set of standards, that could be used by the ESL educator to make the best use of broadcast commercial messages in teaching adult learners.

Marketing communication experts typically refer to advertising as a reflection of culture, claiming that it systematically responds and contributes to cultural changes. “The vast library of commercial fables, fairy tales, and troupes represents something more than salesmanship. It can be understood as a cultural discourse in and through goods” (Leiss, Kline, Jhally, and Botterill, 2005). It is, according to Leiss et al., the shared experience depicted in commercials that creates a bond between the target audience and the communicator. Therefore, it is imperative that commercial messages include a cultural “bonding” component. “The strongest advertising ... touches people in ways that come from an insight into human nature. It encompasses all that has brought us to this point,” explains Bob Kuperman of the advertising agency TBWA Chiat/Day. “Given that, I see no problem with using anything that makes up that shared experience” (Wells, Burnett, and Moriarty, 2000, p. 328). This not only draws audience attention, it also builds good

will or brand loyalty. Television advertising options have grown at a remarkable rate over the past two decades. While audience members once had a choice of just three commercial networks, today they have exponentially more viewing options, and they can choose from a remarkable array of programs, both on broadcast and on subscription television (Martin, 2003).

The ability to avoid the commercial message has increased greatly as well. The remote control lets audience members mute sound or even switch to another offering. Aside from other possible factors, such as the increase in the number of TV commercials, longer commercial pods and viewer expectations, these technological developments may therefore contribute to the increase of the number of audience members who avoid TV commercials (Woltman Elpers, 2003, p. 17). The TiVo and ReplayTV system that allowed the researcher to record, juxtapose, and analyze some 2,000 TV commercials for this study, could have been used just as easily to eliminate them. TiVo, ReplayTV and DVR systems allow viewers to record and watch programs while eliminating commercials almost instantaneously. Even the VCR, now considered old technology, can be used to skip commercials and be bought for the price of a month's cable TV service. So, as both competition for viewers' attention and their power to control their own viewing have increased, it has become all the more important that the commercial message include a communicative reward for the viewer (Moriarty & Everett, 1994, p. 352). This reward is almost always a culture-based entertainment component (Bucy, 2005, p. 81). The phenomenon is not surprising; by attempting to close the divide between aesthetic and pragmatic communicational concerns, advertisers are often more in tune with and willing to react to changing public sentiments than many other institutions (Leiss et al., 2005).

While we might assume that understanding a culture is central to developing skill in its language, it is not necessarily guaranteed that the educator of adult ESL students will be proficient at selecting culture rich opportunities for teaching. This investigation was founded on three theoretical bases. One is that language and culture are intertwined (Littlejohn, 2002, p. 177). The second is that a language is not only easier to learn if the associated culture is available to the student, it may be impossible to fully understand the nuances of a language without understanding its inherent culture (Mantero, 2005, p. 4). Thirdly, supplemental materials, through which learners can see and hear the language and culture interplay, will help learners understand and retain more of the material. This was argued successfully by Cary

(2004), who explained that language teachers are eager to supplement their typical ESL textbooks and graded or simplified readers with less traditional authentic materials.

Jacobs and Farrel (2001, p. 4), referred to the concept as a more contextualized, meaning-based view of language, and described it as one of the key components of a paradigm shift in second language education. This further explained why language educators agree that the best way to learn a language is through real interaction with others using real language in real communication situations (Wiburg & Butler-Pascoe, 2002).

According to linguistics scholar Widdowson (1978), to present a student with a set of excerpts and require him or her to read them, not in order to learn something interesting and relevant about the world, but in order to learn something about the language being used, misrepresents the normal language use to some degree. The excerpts are, by definition, genuine instances of language use, but if learners are required to deal with them in a way that does not correspond to their normal communicative activities, then the examples cannot be said to be authentic instances of use. Genuineness is a characteristic of the passage itself and is an absolute quality. Authenticity is a characteristic of the relationship between the passage and the reader, and is more likely to elicit an appropriate response (p. 80).

Widdowson (1990) explained that the whole point of pedagogy is that it is a way to short-circuit the slow process of natural discovery and help learning happen more easily and more efficiently than it does in natural surroundings. He adds that this speeding up of discovery is the purpose of schools, whatever the subject. Pedagogy is bound to be a contrivance: that is precisely its purpose. If what went on in classrooms exactly replicated the conditions of the outside world, there would be no point in pedagogy at all (p. 163).

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate the feasibility of using television commercials as a teaching tool for teaching English as a second language. In addition to investigating commercials themselves, this study examined a model through which the adult educator can select appropriate commercial messages and a system for determining how to best use them.

Background

The Cultural Imperative in Teaching English as a Second Language

ESL is taught in countries where English is the dominant language, such as the United States, Canada, and Great Britain. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), a term that is interchangeable with ESL, focuses on teaching English to students whose native language is not English. English as a foreign language (EFL) is taught in countries where the dominant language is not English. Culture, for purposes of teaching ESL to adults, may be defined as the symbols of expression that individuals, groups, and societies use to make sense of daily life and to articulate their values (Campbell et al., 2006, p. 10). A culture's predominant language is essential in communicating and maintaining its collectively-held values, and the mass media are further able to standardize these beliefs. Campbell et al. explain that when we listen to music, read a book, watch television, or scan the Internet, we are not asking, "Is this art?" but are instead trying to identify or connect with something or someone. Commercial speech attempts to motivate people to action by appealing to their values and beliefs. The success or failure of these persuasive messages relies on an advertiser's ability to make people feel connected with something or someone they value, which varies widely depending on their culture. For example, the Marlboro Man has depicted the American ideal of rugged individualism for decades, but in Japan, he was always riding on a white horse to indicate he was a "gentleman" (Roman & Mass, 1992, p. 121). Hundreds of thousands of adult learners in ESL classrooms across the U.S. would be well served to have guidance in navigating these cultural differences in meaning.

Perspective on the Linguistically Isolated

According to the United States Census Bureau, the population includes more than 37 million adults who speak a language other than English at home. Of those, nearly 10 million have English speaking ability that is weak enough to classify them as "linguistically isolated" (U.S. Census, 2002). Efforts to integrate immigrants would benefit enormously from an infusion of resources. Among the unmet needs of immigrants is a lack of ESL programs. According to the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (2007), almost half of the 1.2 million adults in federally funded adult education programs are there to learn English. Waiting lists for free class slots are often so long that some immigrants wait months or even years before getting a space (Huerta-Macias, 2003, p. 219). Studies by the National Center for Education Statistics suggest a

pool of 3 million or more adults who are interested in ESL classes but not enrolled for a variety of reasons, including the fact that the classes are oversubscribed (Munoz & Murguia, 2005).

People who are linguistically isolated are marginalized by society and simply lack options. In a *Washington Times* article, Widhalm (2006) quotes John Segota, advocacy and communications manager for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), Inc., a global professional organization based in Alexandria, VA: “As debates over immigration illustrate, the key to achieving success in the United States is being able to speak English” (p. B1). It is a sentiment echoed repeatedly in the literature (Huerta-Macias, 2003; Parrish, et al. 2001; Alford, 2001; Munoz & Murguia, 2005): learning English is essential for many jobs, participating in the community, and working toward citizenship.

“You need to be able to speak the language for work, family and community,” explained Lennox McLendon, executive director of the National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium, a resource for the states’ directors of adult education and their staff that provides information, professional development, and policy analysis (Widhalm, 2006). There is even political pressure to establish English as the “official” language of the United States (Pear, 2007). These issues point to a strong need for more and better ESL education, particularly for recent immigrants.

Expanding ESL Curricula Beyond the Artificial

Regarding the classes themselves, Brooks and Fox (1995) reported that ESL students in classes that address genuine issues and social topics tend to be more engaged with the material than students who simply get artificial “made-for-the-classroom” topics. When students were engaged, they seemed to use the English language more, with real purpose and even more passion. Brooks and Fox added that the acceptability in U.S. society of discussing more and more controversial topics has happened gradually. They point out that 25 years ago, discussion of gender issues was limited to such topics as whether it is acceptable for women, especially mothers, to work outside the home. A few years later, the focus shifted to why women were paid less than men.

Today it is not uncommon to find textbook readings and class discussions about women and language, the politics of housework, acquaintance rape on campus, and societal reasons for eating disorders among young women. One recent text (Scarcella, 1994), for example, included

Judy Syfers' classic satirical feminist essay, "Why I want a wife," as well as an excerpt from Gloria Steinem's book, *Revolution from Within* (Brooks & Fox, 1995). It would be difficult to imagine that the ubiquitous television commercial, no matter how edgy, would not be appropriate material for the classroom. The authors described modern ESL classrooms as less artificial, less neutral, more vital, and more like the real world. These classrooms reflected the changes that have taken place in U.S. society over the past three decades. This openness to discussion of a variety of topics indicated there could also be a general receptiveness to the use of commercial television messages as a teaching aid.

The Interdisciplinary Nature of ESL Education

Also like the real world, ESL draws on many disciplines: linguistics, literature, anthropology, education, and modern languages, and has clear connections with some of the newer disciplines, such as ethnic studies. ESL faculty's professional training necessarily includes study and research in many of these areas. A look at the works cited in articles in ESL professional journals shows the breadth of the disciplines consulted in order to further theory and practice in the field. For example, articles in Vol. 28 (1994) of *TESOL Quarterly*, the preeminent ESL professional journal, have citations from such journals as *Applied Linguistics*, *College Composition and Communication*, *Journal of Reading Behavior*, *Cognitive Psychology*, and *Harvard Educational Review* (Hafernik, Messerschmitt, & Vandrick, 1996).

ESL teachers who initiate such variety in the classroom and encourage students' ongoing critical reflection on the credibility or bias of different sources of news and pop-culture reporting (the need to interpret information accordingly) are rewarded with engaged learners (Duff, 2001). This strategy, according to Duff (2001), is like others that cross disciplines and is consistent with one of the aims of contemporary social studies education, which stresses that events and accounts (evidence) should be examined from different perspectives using different sources of information, and that underlying ideologies and potential bias should be uncovered as part of the interpretive process.

Building on the Three Stages of Appropriation

The use of any type of realia in the classroom, commercial television messages included, needs to be contextualized for the learner. The ESL learner, perhaps even more than students in other subject areas, is filtering these "tools" through the lens of his or her own culture. That

means that their acceptance will not happen instantly. Scholars writing on the subject (Vygotsky, 1978; Leontiev, 1977; Wells, 1999) point out that the appropriation of linguistic and cultural artifacts and tools occurs in three stages, which can be summarized as:

Cognitive adjustments: Individuals realize that the community and contexts in which they live are very different from their past experiences. This allows learners to begin to interpret their surroundings differently.

Tools or artifacts are transformed: Individuals transform language or objects according to their own experiences and use them to meet their own needs in the community.

Transforming surroundings: As individuals interact with others, they have an impact on any ensuing activity. This is based on participants' interpretation and negotiation of the tools or artifacts involved in communication. This also transforms the community's practices and perceptions regarding the language, communicative activity, or artifacts used during interaction.

According to ProLiteracy America (2004), providers of an online information center for ESL tutors, some of the most effective ESL teaching activities are those that encourage students to focus on the task at hand and not on language skills themselves. Along those lines, the organization also recommended the introduction of music into ESL classes to enable students to encounter the English language in a novel way. Stating that music provides a low-stress, fun activity for those students who like music and enjoy singing, ProLiteracy America (2004) cited benefits to listening comprehension and pronunciation, as well as practice in the stress, rhythm, and intonation of English.

The inclusion of teaching tools like music, movies, and TV commercials is consistent with Gardner's (1999) multiple intelligences theory. According to this theory, every person has eight intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist. Instruction can be most effective by accessing these multiple intelligences (p. 41).

In fact advertisements, as they have evolved, can take their place on several levels of Arendt's (1974) "cone of experience." This system classifies the meaningfulness of experience according to mode of expression, and hence their usefulness as an educational tool. He lists the following entries in ascending order of meaningfulness:

1. Verbal symbols
2. Visual symbols

3. Recordings, radio, still pictures
4. Motion pictures
5. Educational television
6. Exhibits
7. Study trips
8. Demonstrations
9. Dramatized experiences
10. Contrived experiences
11. Direct, Purposeful experiences

Mediated advertising, particularly that found on television, which typically includes verbal and visual symbols, exhibits, demonstrations, and especially the dramatized experience, could conceivably work on many of Arendt's levels. By investigating how adult ESL students accept the use of commercial television messages, the profession may be able to develop strategies to facilitate this area of education even more. These educational strategies could be incorporated into the field and ultimately speed ESL instruction at a very limited additional cost.

Research Questions

This study will investigate the following research questions:

- RQ1:** What, if any, elements of American culture do television commercial messages contain?
- RQ2:** If television commercials do contain culture, can they be used to teach English to adults who are learning it as a second language?
- RQ3:** Finally, do participants report that commercial messages used as a teaching tool are an effective addition to their program?

Methodology

The methodology for this study was twofold. The first part centered on the collection and treatment of the commercials sampled for use in the study. The second involved the creation,

use, and evaluation of a suite of teaching materials tested by teachers in actual ESL classrooms and rated with a system to measure the value of commercials in teaching the subject.

Such qualitative content analysis is appropriate because it offers an unobtrusive means of studying media and therefore, advertising messages. There are two main characteristics that make this aspect of the study a qualitative content analysis rather than a quantitative analysis or cultural criticism:

1. The use of qualitative assessment in the coding process; connotative vs. denotative content categories (i.e., what constitutes *culture* to be counted and what are the observable characteristics that manifest that concept.)

2. The use of qualitative assessment, or inference, in the analysis of the findings (i.e., attempting to answer the broader “So what?” question). Edward T. Hall’s (1959) *Map of Culture* was central to the analysis because it offered a comprehensive rubric for examining elements that were included or not included in the commercial messages.

The sample of commercial messages for this study took place in November 2001. The four network stations, ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC, were chosen because they offered entertainment and news funded by commercial messages. These networks are typically included with basic cable, but are also broadcast over the air and, thus, can be viewed at no cost.

As part of the study, nearly 2,000 national television commercials were recorded during the month of November 2001. They were recorded only during prime time, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the Central Time Zone, which equates to 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the Eastern and Western Time Zones (Avery & Ferraro 2000, p. 218). The recordings were made on a rotating basis: ABC, CBS, Fox, and finally, NBC. Only one network was recorded each night, and every fifth night the cycle started over with ABC. Since the sequence started over every five days, networks were not recorded on the same night. At the end of the month, all commercials were dubbed together, and local commercials and station promotional advertisements were eliminated. Only national commercials were selected for the study because of their typically higher production values, better quality, and nearly universal availability. Typically, national commercials are targeted to larger audiences (Vivian, 2005, p. 212).

After the samples were viewed, counted and categorized, only ads that aired more than six times during the month were included in the sample. This frequency was selected because advertising industry protocol is that a commercial message must be viewed at least six times to

provide effective recall (the ability to remember desired message details) in audience members (Roman & Mass, 1992, p. 83).

The commercial messages gleaned from this sample were then applied individually to Edward Hall's 100-cell cultural content matrix (Appendix A) and analyzed for trends that identify areas of culture that are common, rare, or omitted from national television commercials (Hall, 1959). These examples were then be edited onto both DVD and videocassette and used to create a suite of discussion materials for use in the ESL classroom. Cultural content information was used to create a discussion guide for teachers and to create appropriate questions for the final survey of adult educators and students involved in the study.

Commercially broadcast television advertising messages were selected because the researcher was looking for a medium commonly accessible to the target audience, available at little or no cost, with visual as well as auditory information. Young (2004) explains these messages specifically aim to please the audience as a way of holding their attention. He states:

In general, the attention-getting power of a commercial is a function of two factors: the content and the form of the execution. Attention-getting content provides the viewer with a reward for the 30 seconds of time that the advertiser is asking the consumer to spend with the advertising. This reward can be content that is fun or entertaining or that is unusual and different (p. 202).

This multi-faceted effort to keep and entertain the audience as a whole could benefit, rather than distract or confuse, ESL students because they can see the action and hear the language being spoken. This "action" includes visual clues such as facial expression, use of personal space, gender roles, social status, and age-related portrayals. The auditory component includes emphasis, pronunciation, and pauses common to Standard English. Critics of television have, in the past, created an unnecessarily adverse distinction between what has traditionally been defined as "entertainment" and what is classified as "education"—a relationship that, in fact, may be more complementary than conflicting (Neuman, 2005, p. 19). To foster the concept of using entertainment to educate, the researcher sought messages of consistently high quality (*high production values* in the lexicon of television). That meant commercials with professional actors and announcers, shot on film instead of video, and with locations and sets that contribute to the overall meaning. It was also mandatory that messages repeat enough to serve as a discussion model for ESL classes on a week-by-week basis. Materials created for use in the

classroom included a discussion model with a pretest component, a video of selected TV commercials, a Q&A format follow-up discussion guide, and a post-test measurement instrument (Appendix E).

The population sampled for this study consisted of volunteers from five ESL classes in Hawai‘i one class from Kansas. All individuals in the population were adult students for whom English was not their native language. The first languages spoken by the majority of respondents were Spanish, Japanese, and Tagalog. Of the 160 surveys that were originally disseminated, only 36 were returned.

A pilot test of the lesson was conducted and effectiveness was examined with teacher/student testing and researcher observation. Also, the ESL teacher and students who participated in the pilot test were surveyed on the feasibility of using television commercials as a teaching tool. They were asked to address such issues as logistics, interest-level on the part individual students, content, and cultural relevance.

The “slice of life” style used in many commercials has potential to broaden cultural content of messages greatly. While the sample chosen for this study was in no way a full spectrum of American culture, it did contain a number of concepts that ultimately proved useful in ESL instruction.

Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the knowledge base in the literature of education as it relates to teaching English as a foreign language, the adult education literature, and commercial speech and marketing communication literature. Perhaps the greatest significance of this study is its potential to improve EFL/ESL education by weaving easily understandable elements of American culture into existing programs from a widely available and renewable resource—television commercials.

Although the literature of language education is robust and has seen prolific contributions for decades (*ESL Magazine*, 2007) none of the studies have touched this area with acuity. The use of mediated messages for teaching EFL/ESL has been studied in terms of feature films (*Multimedia Source Guide*, 1995; McMorrow, 2005) and the use of advertising has been examined in print magazines (Duff, 2001; Drucker, 2003), but no study could be found in which television advertising had been examined for its potential as a teaching tool. Several studies point

to the importance of teaching materials, in general, and “realia” in particular, but make no mention of television commercials as a possible choice (Alford, 2001; Mumford, 2005).

The ubiquitous nature of television advertising and its penetration into our society make it a likely candidate for use as realia in the classroom (Smith, 1997). A tested model that helps establish such relevance would benefit the thousands of non-English speakers who are studying every year (Widhalm, 2006).

By investigating cultural content in commercial television messages and determining whether or not they are usable in teaching English as a second language, the knowledge base of language education will be expanded. This will complement existing literature on education by adding literature on mediated realia and facilitating its use as supplement to existing curricula.

Limitations

This study has the following limitations:

1. Any investigator brings natural bias to a research project.
2. Answers in this study are limited by the format and manner in which the investigator surveys teacher and student subjects.
3. The geographic locations of the selected human subject populations could impart bias to the results.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made for the purpose of this study:

1. Cultural content of the 2,000 television commercial messages sampled, as part of the study, accurately reflected the cultural content of commercials explored in the classroom field test.
2. The participants surveyed were being truthful in describing their experience using the materials.
3. The participants surveyed have equal access to mediated messages.
4. Other variables not investigated during the study are equal across the sample.

5. That “reality” in the qualitative portion of the research is, according to Merriam (2001), “holistic, multi-dimensional, and ever-changing; it is not a single, fixed, objective phenomenon waiting to be discovered, observed, and measured as in quantitative research” (p. 202).

Definitions

The following definitions were used in this study:

American Standard English	English as it is spoken in the United States, including pronunciation, intonation, slang and idiom.
Commercial (TV) Message	A form of advertising in which goods, services, organizations, ideas, etc., are promoted via the medium of television. Typically they are 30 seconds in duration.
Culture	A set of values, views of reality and codes of behavior held in common by people who share a distinctive way of life. Transmitted patterns of meaning embodied in symbols that perpetuate and develop knowledge about and attitudes toward life. It is learned behavior that influences the individual, group and society. Roles individuals play are a subset of cultural expectations.
English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	English taught in a non-English speaking country.
English as a Second Language (ESL)	Studying English as a non-native speaker in a country where English is spoken. Depending on where you are from, the term ESL may be more inclusive and includes EFL.
Foreign Language	A foreign language is a language not spoken by the indigenous people of a certain place: for purposes of this dissertation, any language other than English will be considered “foreign.”
Frequency	In media exposure the number of times an individual or household is exposed to a mediated message within a given period.
Mediated Message	A communication sent via mass media—those media specifically envisioned and designed to reach very large audiences: newspaper, magazine, radio, television, and Internet.
Prime Time	Prime time is the block of programming on television during the middle of the evening. The generally accepted times considered to be traditional prime time are Monday–Saturday, 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Eastern and Pacific, and 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. Central and Mountain.
Realia	Objects or activities used by teachers to demonstrate real life (particularly of peoples studied); objects that educators use to help students understand other cultures and real life circumstances; real things, things that are real.

Reach	The number of different persons who see or hear a message at least once.
Recall	The ability to remember specific information content.
Slice-of-Life	A story which has no real plot, but usually tries to depict the everyday life of ordinary people.
Standard English	The variety of English that is generally acknowledged as the model for the speech and writing of educated speakers. <i>Standard English</i> is a controversial term used to denote a form of written and spoken English that is thought to be normative for educated users. There are no set rules or vocabulary for so-called Standard English because, unlike languages such as French, Spanish, or Dutch, English does not have a governing body.
Student	One who is enrolled or attends classes at a school, college, or university.
Teacher	One who teaches, especially one hired to teach.

Commonly-Used Acronyms

CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
EFL	English as a Foreign Language—Studying English in non-English-speaking countries.
ELT	English Language Teaching (or sometimes <i>Training</i>)
ESL	English as a Second Language—Studying English as a non-native speaker in a country where English is spoken. Depending on where you are from, the term ESL may be more inclusive and includes EFL.
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages (Note: ESL and EFL are often used interchangeably. This acronym is an attempt to make a generic term and then assign more limited meanings to ESL and EFL.)
L1	Language 1— The student’s native (primary or first-acquired) language.
L2	Language 2—The language being learned or studied.
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (Note: It is also the name of an association: <i>Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc.</i>)
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOEIC	Test of English for International Communication

Summary

The teaching profession is faced with the responsibility to identify student needs and develop optimal ways to meet them. This chapter provided the background for investigating the feasibility of using commercial television messages as a teaching aid for teachers of English as a second language. The model for this research was built upon the concept that the education, full understanding, and engagement of students is facilitated by a variety of teaching techniques. This variety, while already appreciated by those working in the discipline so far, does not include the use of the commercial television message.

Research revealed that ESL teachers typically seek out new methods to facilitate their efforts. A brief review of the profession is provided so that the reader can discern why the need for such a study exists. While the typical American, having grown up in the culture, has no trouble internalizing the nuance of the 30-second television commercial, much of it may be lost on the non-native speaker of English. These cultural cues not only serve to engage the student/viewer, they also provide useful cultural insights that can facilitate the education process.

The U.S. Census (2002) revealed that there is a large and distinct pool of students in the pipeline, and limited budgets make low-cost teaching tools all the more desirable. This study will further examine the feasibility of using television commercials as a low-cost and nearly universal teaching tool. The remainder of this dissertation describes how the research questions outlined in this section were examined using a foundation of existing relevant literature. Chapter two presents the work of other researchers who have examined issues similar to those raised in the first chapter. Literature pertaining to learning theory, advertising, and language acquisition is reviewed. The methodology used and data collected in this study are described in the third chapter, and the data analysis and results are presented in the fourth chapter. Results and conclusions are discussed in chapter five.

The literature of the ESL teaching field will be supplemented by this research. Perhaps more importantly, there is a possibility that the research could suggest a suitable model to facilitate education in an underserved population.

CHAPTER 2 – Review of Literature

In the book and movie *Forrest Gump*, the title character was fond of quoting his mother saying, “Stupid is as stupid does.” While this expression of philosophy may have layered meanings, obvious to obscure, it does bring to mind some thoughts about culture. That is, we could as easily say, “Culture is as culture does.” In other words, culture can be anything we think it is; it need not make sense in a logical way, it need only exist. It is a true case of perception that becomes reality. While culture is central to what we choose to talk about, it also shapes the way we use language. One need only look at the way some languages group concept meaning into a single word, while other languages use vocabulary to separate and focus attention on perceived distinctions important to the culture. Adler, Proctor, and Towne (2005) explain that for nearly a century, some theorists have put forth the notion of linguistic determinism: the worldview of a culture is unavoidably shaped and reflected by the language its members speak.

The best-known example of linguistic determinism is the notion that Eskimos employ a large number of words (estimates range from 17 to 100) to describe what we simply call *snow*. Different terms are necessary for describing specific conditions. The need to survive in an Arctic environment led Eskimos to make distinctions that would be irrelevant to inhabitants of warmer climates, and in using language to make such distinctions, speakers become more likely to see the world in ways that match the broader vocabulary (Adler et al., 2005). The English language, for example, makes no verbal distinction between the concepts *mother’s brother* and *father’s brother*. They are both *uncles*. However, in many languages there are distinct and very different words to describe such familial relationships. The fact that such differences occur in languages gives insight to the nature of the culture. And, by the same token, knowledge of a culture facilitates the understanding of its language.

The logical or organized way that we become aware of ourselves, our culture and social institutions, is primarily through the language we speak (Herzog, 1949). Anthropologist Herzog explains that, “It stands to reason, then, that we have a rich, subtle, elaborate tool ... ” (p. 93) for use in the acquisition of culture. It would seem that there is, indeed, a symbiotic relationship between the learning of language and the learning of culture. They can occur separately, but learning of either is facilitated when both are present. According to Hilles and Lynch (1997),

“Culture ... is a critical topic which should be addressed in content-based (ESL) instruction” (p. 376). The authors go on to say, “A knowledge of culture is essential if we are to truly understand diversity.” ESL students engaged in an intercultural interaction with native speakers of English benefit from immediate and authentic context of the language. They can share information and help negotiate meaning. To facilitate this sharing even more, Hilles and Lynch advocated the use of computer-based activities to supplement the content of the class. Stating that it can be a tool through which learning “other content (i.e., culture) takes place,” Kasper (2000) agreed: “Cross-cultural, cross-age interaction seemed to be a fruitful and effective way of bringing the IEP (Intensive English Program) students and the community closer” (p. 153).

Culture and Language

The relationship between culture and language acquisition has not been lost on researchers in the discipline. Edward T. Hall (1959), the founding father of intercultural communication, asserts, “There is not one aspect of human life that is not touched and altered by culture.” These shared attitudes, values, beliefs, customs, norms, and rules, when held in common by a group of people, are known as culture (Korn, 2002). The concepts of culture and communication are so tightly woven that it led Hall to conclude, “Culture is communication and communication is culture” (Hall, 1976). Noted communication author and educator Stephen Littlejohn (2002) surmised that there are four forms of cultural interpretation prominent in the communication field: ethnography of communication, performance ethnography, organizational culture, and interpretive media studies (p. 194). Ethnographic methods are applied to the communication patterns of a group so the interpreter can make sense of the forms of communication employed by the members of a culture. Philipsen (1989) determined four assumptions of ethnography of communication (p. 258). The first is that participants in a cultural community create shared meaning. Second, there is order to the communicative actions. Third, the meanings and actions are particular to the individual groups and, finally, each cultural group has its own way of understanding certain codes and actions. This thesis tells us, though not necessarily agreed upon formally, that culture is a complex construct that is often unique to the group.

As if our own culture did not present us with enough complexity, we are prone to compare other cultures if for no other reason than that they may border one another. In his

writings Littlejohn often cited anthropologist Dell Hymes' set of nine categories that can be used to compare language communication as it relates to different cultures (Hymes, 1974, p. 29). There are 1) "ways of speaking" familiar to group members and 2) an ideal of what constitutes a "fluent speaker." According to Hymes, fluency embodies 3) a so-called "speech community" with boundaries, 4) set times when communication is considered appropriate, 5) "speech events" or episodes that are considered to be communication to members of the group, and 6) the "speech act," which is a specific set of behaviors within the speech event. Also included in Hymes' fluency are 7) "components" of what the cultural group considers to be appropriate elements of the communicative act, 8) rules for speaking in the community and, of course, 9) the function that the communication is believed to accomplish.

A review of the literature on the subject helps us to see that when scholars of the subject speak about a society's culture and refer to the things one must know to conduct oneself acceptably as a member of that particular society, they are referring to multitude of concepts or "a number of distinct systems or standards, not just one" (Goodenough, 1981, p. 106). In *Culture, Language and Society*, Goodenough explains that more than one system, or set of rules, can be applied in a language/culture at the same time. Examples of these could be English speaking farmers, and English speaking fishermen. There are sets of behavioral rules for both and vocabulary for both. In other words, we are examining subcultures that have created their own distinctive *sub-languages*. On television, this could manifest itself as jargon, specialized language of a particular profession, as in "Come on out, we have to move twenty of the cars before midnight." If the speaker is a car salesman, that means he must sell twenty cars to reduce inventory. It could be slang, as in "he should get props for that" meaning the person should receive recognition or encouragement, not some kind of physical brace. The creation of distinctive a *sub-language* often comes in the form of *argot*. Futurist Bruce Sterling defines argot as the purposely hermetic language of a "small knowledge clique... a super-specialized geek cult language that has no traction in the real world" (1992). An example might be to say that the team needs to get "granular on an issue" meaning to examine the fine details.

Slang and argot can change rapidly and thus make it difficult for ESL teachers to keep current. As if the additional vocabulary did not present enough challenge, subcultures often create new rules seen in terms of body language, intonation, and personal space rules. These behaviors are more obvious to those who have grown up in a particular culture. For example,

teenagers often speak to each other in different ways than they do to adults (Petersen, 1997). If they were to adopt the same speaking style with an adult, it could mean that they have a familiar and informal relationship with the adult, or it could mean that they are just being insolent and even antagonistic. If they adopt “adult” style with their peers, they might risk losing acceptance in the group. These subtleties of interaction are often infused with television commercial messages in an effort to create an emotional connection with their intended audience; but these embedded cultural messages are often cited as influencers of the nation’s values, habits, and behavior (Biagi, 2003). They can be, and sometimes are, easily misunderstood by non-native speakers. The reply, “what ever,” especially with emphasis on the “ever,” is not an expression of passive agreement, but rather dismissal of the other person’s statement as stupid or inconsequential. Recognition and discussion of these phenomena might provide teachable moments essential for ESL learners.

Defining Culture

We expect the content of culture to have clear parallels with the content of language, since language is a kind of cultural system in and of itself (Goodenough, 1981, p. 67). So, in considering the content of cultural depictions, we must take account of an entire range of phenomena that enter the human experience and that are the subject matter of learning. These might include dimensions such as gender, age, and power relationships, but they can also include observed depictions of race and ethnicity common on primetime television (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005).

A History of Definitions

With this in mind, it seems obvious that a review of the literature would reveal many different definitions of culture. Some view the world through the lens of anthropology (Hall, 1969), sociology (Benedict, 1934), technology (McLuhan, 1964) and business (Bechtel, 1972).

Culture is a term that is extremely difficult to define precisely because of the complex interrelationship of factors that constitute it. Ovando and Collier (1985) state:

... such vagueness, however, can be useful. Culture is a deep, multilayered, somewhat cohesive hodgepodge of language, values, beliefs, and behaviors that pervades every aspect of every person’s life, and it is continually undergoing minor—and occasionally

major—alterations. When it is studied, it becomes an abstraction—albeit a useful one—for giving meaning to human activity. What it is not is an isolated, mechanical aspect of life which can be used to directly explain phenomenon in a multiethnic classroom, or which can be learned as a series of facts (p. 101).

The myriad classifications of what culture is, or embodies, is so broad that one is inclined to “pick one and go with it.” The logical alternative would be to develop an operational definition. An operational definition describes what is to be observed by indicating what the researchers must do to make the observations (Reinard, 2001). Such a definition might describe the steps taken by an individual to become acculturated or exhibit culture. Ideally, an operational definition will be used with a conceptual definition. There is an ample supply of definitions available. While picking one definition and “going with it” was indeed considered for this study, the review produced samples from different disciplines and authors that tended to be either too generalized or too meticulously detailed for use in this investigation. The following is a small sampling of that array gleaned from the literature.

A Few of the Many Definitions of Culture

- “Cultures are structured systems of patterned behavior” (Lado, 1959, p. 111).
- “I am not talking about something in the abstract that is imposed on man and is separate from him, but about man himself, about you and me in a highly personal way” (Hall, 1969, p. 33).
- “The concept of culture is associated with a coherent system of identifying attitudes, values, and frames of activities linked to a given pattern of behaviour” (Sapir, 1921 & 1967).
- “A society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from their biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning: knowledge. ... By this definition we might conclude that culture is not a material phenomenon. In other words, it does not consist solely of things, people,

behavior, or emotions. Instead it represents an organization of these”
(Goodenough, 1964, p. 36).

- “Culture is always changing. It includes a society’s art, beliefs, customs, games, technologies, traditions, and institutions. It also encompasses a society’s modes of communication: the process of creating symbol systems that convey information and meaning. Examples include language systems, Morse code, motion pictures, or even computer codes” (Campbell et al., 2006).
- “We define culture as learned patterns of perception, values, and behaviors, shared by a group of people that is also dynamic and heterogeneous. Culture also involves our emotions and feelings” (Martin & Nakayama, 2007).
- “All human cultures and societies are, by nature, highly patterned complexes of shared behavior, and their parts are sufficiently interdependent to form a functional whole” (Nostrand, 1974).
- “The culture of a group of people includes all the systems, technologies, and tools which make up their way of life” (Saville Troike, 1976, p. 45).
- “Culture is a set of values, views of reality, and codes of behavior held in common by people who share a distinctive way of life” (Smelser, 1991).
- “Culture is a sort of lens through which we view the world. All the information we receive in a given day passes through this perceptual lens” (Singer, 1998).
- “Culture ... refers to a socially constructed and historically transmitted pattern of symbols, meaning, premises, and rules” (Philipsen, 1992).
- “[Culture is] (1) that set of capacities which distinguishes Homo sapiens as a species and is fundamental to its mode of adaptation; (2) the learned, cumulative product of all social life; (3) the distinctive patterns of thought, action, and value that characterize the members of a society or social group” (Winthrop, 1991).

- “Culture denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life” (Geertz, 1973).

A Definition for this Study

The review samples were blended for use in this investigation after Widdowson (1987) offered a helpful view that refined the definition of culture even more by describing “roles” we play within a culture. He explained that these are “a part that people play in the performance of social life.” Roles, according to this author, are kinds of conventional script, or pre-script, which constrains the individual person to “assume a persona in conformity” to what others in the given society see as normal and expected patterns of behavior (p. 83). While Widdowson’s characterization comes close to an operational definition, it still seemed evident that no single definition would be ideal. It was therefore appropriate to formulate another specifically for this study. This definition borrows concepts from several others.

Toward that end, for this study, “culture” will be defined as: a set of values, views of reality and codes of behavior held in common by people who share a distinctive way of life. Culture is a transmitted pattern of meaning embodied in symbols that perpetuate and develop knowledge about and attitudes toward life. It is learned behavior that influences the individual, group and society. Roles individuals play are a subset of cultural expectations.

Acquisition of Culture

If, as the literature suggested, language and culture are deeply implanted in one another, then investigations are necessary to determine how one may be acquired with the other or how one may facilitate the learning of the other. Goodenough (1964) found that it all came together quite naturally in the native speaker’s case. He explained that, “in the course of learning his language and how to use it, every human being acquires his culture” (p. 39).

Saville Troike (1976, p. 45) agreed and stated that she regarded language as a key component of culture. Since, as she explained, the spoken language is the primary medium of transmitting much of culture, the process of language learning in children becomes, in part, a reciprocal process of enculturation. Saville-Troike contended that since language is an extensive

expression of culture and a primary means of transmitting it, the teacher of language is inescapably a teacher of culture as well. Marchand (1975, p. 2) emphasized this concept that anyone who teaches language is teaching culture. He explained that it is not only through language that we convey cultural values best, language is also the means for human articulation and cognition of the universe in which they live. This continuum of relationships between language and culture has far reaching ramifications for teachers of second and foreign languages, for the concept of cross-cultural communication, and for the field of language acquisition in general.

The Connection Between Language and Culture

When considered in the way Marchand (1975), Saville Troike (1976), and Campbell et al. (2006) look at the phenomenon, enculturation and socialization become so similar as to be indistinguishable. The part that language plays in the enculturation process becomes even more evident when one takes note of how difficult it is to learn a particular language when disassociated from the target society, as in the case of EFL learners. While many college level EFL students come from their native countries well prepared in their major and with appropriate English vocabulary, many face major challenges when confronted with cultural components of their new venue. This is not surprising since considering that language is learned through social interaction and that language becomes a primary vehicle of socialization. Watson-Gegeo (1988) explained:

When we learn a second language, we are learning more than a structure for communication; we are also learning (for example) social and cultural norms, procedures for interpretation, and forms of reasoning ... not only on the teaching and learning or acquiring of language skills, but also on the context of that learning and on what else (values, attitudes, frameworks for interpretation) is learned and taught at the same time as language structure (p. 582).

Similarly, Tang (1999) stated that culture and language should not be treated as something that is even separable:

I remember that, as a student of German, I wanted to watch all the German television programmes I could find. I fiddled for hours with my radio set, trying to find a German station. I found myself quietly rooting for anything German. This last was not a conscious

choice. I see it as language affecting who I was, for ultimately, language is not dead; it is alive, and as such can never be divorced from the culture that produced it and the people who speak it (even) halfway across the world (p. 417).

According to Pica (1994, p. 70), the question, “How necessary to learning a language is the learner’s cultural integration?” is a concern to teachers, whether they work with students in classrooms far removed from the culture of the target language, or with students “physically immersed in the culture but experientially and psychologically distant from it.” In addition to Pica, numerous other researchers have tried to address issues along similar lines. Gardner and Lambert (1972) postulated that learners might have two basic kinds of motivation. The first is *integrative motivation*, which refers to the desire of language learners to acquire the language while immersing themselves into the whole culture of the language. Agreeing with Gardner and Lambert, Brown (1994, p. 154) stated that they do this in order to “identify themselves with and become part of that society.” The second motivation is *instrumental*, which refers to the functional need for learners to acquire the language for a true “utilitarian” purpose, such as securing employment, or being accepted into an American university. Key to the argument, according to Tang (1999), is that even though instrumentally motivated learners might not be concerned with the culture of their target language, nor interested in developing any feelings of affinity with the native speakers of that language, culture is still integral to the learning process. “I would like to suggest that language and culture are inextricably linked, and therefore it may be pointless, and perhaps even impossible, to ask ourselves: ‘How much of the culture of a country should be taught along with the language?’” According to Tang, the answer would be “as much as possible” and from as many sources as possible.

Other scholars and researchers agree, but tend to see culture as an even more powerful, dominating component of language and vice versa. For example, Hall (1969) stated that culture should be regarded “in its entirety as a form of communication” (p. 28). In his earlier writings, Hall (1959) also took the view that language is a mirror of society. Agreeing somewhat, but also adding to the considerable power language has, Kelling (1975) told readers that it is an ambiguous “mirror” and may be a reflective/projective instrument.

Reality of Perception

What has become known as the *Sapir-Whorf hypothesis* (Fishman, 1960) is popular and common to the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, and communication. It and its many variations have been explained (Sapir, 1949; Whorf, 1956), and correlated to other hypotheses (Lander, 1966). The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argues that the nature of a language influences the thinking of its speakers. Different language patterns yield different or unique ways of thinking about a topic. The literature indicated that the idea challenges the possibility of representing the world perfectly with any language, because it acknowledged that the mechanisms of that language influence (train or condition) the thoughts of its speakers. The central idea of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is that language does not just function as a device for reporting experience, but also, and more significantly, as a way of defining, or framing the experience of its speakers.

Saville Troike (1976, p. 46) posited an interesting question, similar to the question of whether television is a reflection of world norms or the world has become a reflection of television. Similarly, she asked, “Is language reflecting a world-view of the culture?” or is language “shaping and controlling the thinking of its speakers by the perpetual requirements it makes of them?” Regardless of which side one argues, language remains a guide to social reality or “norm,” and no two languages are sufficiently similar to represent the same social reality. As Bartsch (1987) put it:

Norms are the social reality of the correctness notion. ... Norms are the constellations in social reality that create, delimit, and secure the notions of correctness. These norms consist of relationships between people, in which it is determined what the models and standards which have to be followed are, who has to follow which model, who provides models, and who enforces, if necessary, adherence to the models (p. xii).

Kramersch (1998) agreed that this attention to norms through language use extends to the cultural domain, since language is closely related to cultural reality. Citing Widdowson (1994), Kramersch put the concept in perspective for classroom discourse: “English presented in the classroom should be authentic, naturally occurring language, not produced for instructional purposes. ... What this means is language naturally occurring as communication in native-speaker contexts of use ... ” (p. 386). EFL learners wish to be exposed to the spoken discourse of native speakers and, thus, attempt to learn ‘native-like’ speech and communicative strategies.

Adding to that, in a sense, non-native speakers have a lower status than native English speakers, since they cannot provide “real” or “authentic” language use (Kramsch, 1997; 1998).

As one learns a new language, reality is perceived differently simply through the processes of thought and the senses. Debord-Schulze (1980) pointed out that Hall’s (1969) notion that different cultures perceive reality differently “through the senses,” was questioned by Mead (1961, p. 8) regarding its concrete value in the study of culture. Mead stated, “I do not think we are ever going to have as perfect a coding for the study of any other part of the culture as we have for language.” She offered the comparison of a linguistic experience with one of the senses—taste. In language, as Mead explained, there are two codes (listening and speaking), whereas in eating cake there is only one code (tasting). She wonders how it is possible to know how the sensory act’s perception can be compared from one individual to another. On the other hand, the perception of linguistic codes is quite easy to compare for individuals. In answer to this, Hall’s (1969) discussion of space and time perception, and his example of Navajo and English (1959) serve as a reminder that many of these concepts (polychronism and monochronism, for example) may not be tangibly observable, but that their manifestations (chronic tardiness vs. punctuality) are. Hall mentioned that even the idea of dividing time into weeks and days, with names, makes no sense to them, instead of having “a *natural* succession of days which began with the new moon” (p. 24).

Translating Thought to Language

Since the 1950s, cognitive theorists have assumed that any complete theory of human cognition must include an analysis of the plans or strategies people use for thinking, remembering, understanding, and producing language. Chomsky (1965) argued that traditional stimulus-response and behavior theories are inadequate to account for the acquisition and use of human language. Since language plays such a central role in human thought and human affairs, Chomsky argued that a theoretical approach that does not encompass language is inadequate for understanding human cognition. In other words, to most efficiently learn a language, some sort of cognitive imagery must transpire.

Perhaps more simply, Torrey’s (1971) concept of language as a tool for thinking and Whorf’s (1956) concept of the inseparability of language and thought restate Aristotle’s idea that language is but a means for a person to articulate cognition of the universe (1991). Rather than

show and tell, we might refer to it as “experience” and tell. If this is indeed true, one might assume that different languages, growing from different cultures, must surely produce or be represented by different thought patterns. Robert Kaplan (1972) postulated that the existence of these different thought patterns is seen in written codes and gives them dimensional forms and shape. To say the least, being aware of these different designs aids in better understanding the culture and language in question. Toward that end, this study examined the incorporation of television commercials into classes that teach English as a second language.

Parallel History: Advertising and ESL Education

The concept of teaching ESL to adults has been around for a century. It developed with all of adult education in America around the time of World War I. The influx of immigration from southern and eastern Europe caused some U.S. citizens to decry the newcomers’ differences in language and custom. They professed that the immigrants would never fit in. That led to the Americanization movement and the teaching of English to adult immigrants. The goal, according to Appel & Appel (1982) was to make the newcomers into “good citizens” accepting of the status quo. Around the same time, advertising had unintentionally become the recorder of the century’s cultural revolution in the external and internal lives (particularly) of women (Kurtz, 1997). He stated:

From the 1890s to the 1990s, women have played the starring role in America’s drama of consumption primarily because they made the majority of household purchases. During the 1890s through the 1910s, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, advertising encouraged women to “buy rather than make.” As a result, (we were presented with) stereotypes of women as either giggling girl consumers or mothers providing for their families (p. 70).

Adding that during the 1920s “advertisers learned to wrap products in ‘the tissue of dreams,’” (p. 71) Kurtz said that instead of selling cosmetics, for example, they sold happiness, placing the emphasis on the consumer rather than the product. The 1930s saw the rise of a carnival culture, as the public craved escapism from the Great Depression. During World War II in the 1940s, advertisers “suggested that victories could be won ... through beauty and patriotic shopping” (p. 72). During the 1950s, television, an upstart medium, offered new consumers for advertisers. In the 1960s, advertisers used lures of sex, youth, liberation, and personal

expression. Kurtz contended that in the 1970s, advertising continued to “plumb popular culture to find selling power” (p. 72). Ironically, feminism, celebrations of ethnic heritage, critiques of capitalism, and the appeal of the so-called *natural look* were all adopted by advertising to bolster arguments for consumption. The key, according to Kurtz, was skillful alignment with popular culture to give advertising resonance.

In this same time frame, the needs for inclusion of cultural materials in the foreign language classroom have been well documented and the demand for culture is not a new one (Marchand, 1975). But, the types of things called for have changed. In 1905 Handschin recommended that songs and geography be used in beginning and intermediate classes; literature, magazines, and anything “real” should wait until the most advanced classes. Debord-Schulze (1980) pointed out that, in 1925, the syllabi for the Austin Independent School District contained cultural listings for the “advanced students.” Here too, they recommended literature, music, art, and architecture. The very last thing listed, she stated, is a suggestion that teachers read about the psychological aspects of the culture linked with the language they are teaching.

Around this time, *schema theory* came to be used to describe the role of prior knowledge in comprehension. Research findings from cognitive psychology related teaching listening comprehension to the listener’s background knowledge (Bacon, 1989; Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Rubin, 1994). Then Bartlett (1932) posited that the role of background knowledge in language comprehension has been formalized as schema theory.

In 1942 Kaulfers spoke of courses offered for Spanish credit, taught in English, that deal with aspects of civilization. Then, in the late 1950s, dialogs were rife with bits and pieces of culture, but advanced students were still taught civilization. In 1961, famed anthropologist Margaret Mead made a case for identifying pertinent goals, approaches, and techniques then seeking appropriate cultural materials to reach these objectives.

As the next decades progressed, scholars on many fronts realized that even beginning students need exposure to authentic language since it is the medium of everyday communication (Oxford, Lavine, & Crookall, 1989; Porter & Roberts, 1981; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992). According to Herron and Seay (1991), the teacher should exploit more authentic texts in all levels of language instruction in order to involve students in activities that reflect real-life listening.

Stagich (1998) made the case that understanding cultural context, through understanding of cultural situations and views, is the most effective way to learn the real meaning of the language. By homogenizing the new language with the culture, ESL teachers are really asking that their students expand their experience and try on a new cultural ego. Trivedi (1978, p. 92) explained that learning a foreign language could result in behavior modification of the learner, including the adoption of a new way of life and new values. McLeod (1976) believed that teachers should not leave students to learn these values and behavior patterns implicitly, pointing out that, since a new identity is being developed, messages may be missed. This study proposed the examination of the capacity of television commercials to provide insight into the American cultural context and thereby facilitate ESL instruction.

Pros and Cons of Advertising

Within the American public there is a love/hate relationship with advertising. On one hand the audience professes to be annoyed by the intrusion. We spend millions of dollars on devices like TiVo machines to be able to zap past these messages that both pay for our entertainment and intrude on our enjoyment (Assael & Poltrack, 2006). On the other hand, millions of Americans claim to watch the Super Bowl for the commercials. Consumer ads regularly warrant their own prime-time TV specials, and have become such a staple of our popular culture that Super Bowl hype now derives as much from the debuts of high-profile ad campaigns as from the game itself (Green, 2004). One of the most popular issues of *USA Today* is its annual issue that rates the best of Super Bowl commercials by using sophisticated, automated response technology to survey selected viewers. Televised reels of the Clio awards draw large audience numbers and “World’s Funniest Commercials” programs are regulars on several networks. In other words, according to Green (2004), we are choosing to watch television commercials sponsored by other commercial messages.

In fact, NBC Universal recently announced a website where the public can go online and watch any and all the TV commercials they want. Dubbed *Didja.com*, the site represents NBC Universal’s expanding battle against YouTube and other viral video sites. The company is using the weight of its top-rated USA cable network to launch the all-advertising website, set to be up early next year. The site will offer a vast archive of current and classic TV spots, movie trailers, and other brand-related content. USA-Sci Fi Channel President Bonnie Hammer told *Advertising*

Age magazine that the goal is to “become the go-to destination for on-demand advertising content. . . . Didja.com is the logical next step in the changing dynamic between consumers and advertisers. There’s no doubt that commercials are major drivers of pop culture—all you have to do is check out traffic on any video-sharing site. We want to own that water cooler conversation.”

The launch of Didja.com—whose name is a play on the phrase “Did ya see that?”—marked USA’s first digital media initiative not directly linked to its cable programming (Adalian, 2007; Hampp, 2007).

Clearly, people do react positively to TV advertising stimuli, or there would be no purpose for the existence of such a tool. As Stephen Colbert would say, “The market has spoken” (2007). It should not be too much of a surprise that as much research goes into the creation of an ad campaign as goes into examining audience numbers and reaction (Reid & King, 2003). Highly skilled and perceptive creative teams collaborate to develop an ad. They point out that, to be successful, the television commercial must be a vigorous dramatization of communal experience. Enough, they write, that it might take a sociologist to approximate the media analysts’ skill in the gathering and producing of exploitable social data. This idea of advertising’s potential value to the study of culture was espoused by Harrington more than 30 years ago (1972, p. 353), but appears to be going strong today. With this in mind, the “net net” seems to be that educators have at their disposal a vast resource for classroom use. Even McLuhan (1964, p. 203) expressed this notion of recycling pooled resources. So much work goes into the creation of television commercials, it seems a waste to use them solely for advertising.

There is even a historical component of culture that using television advertising in the ESL classroom could elucidate. Although people’s exact reactions to advertisements can only be experienced contemporaneously in the eras in which they are introduced (Costa, 2001), we can still study antecedent advertising for clues about how things were, and therefore how they came to be the way they are. As Harrington (1972) asked about advertising, “What better crash course in the values, mores, fantasies, and particularly the fears of Americans?” If the values emphasized and exploited by advertising are indeed no different from the values of the society it mirrors (Lutz, 1974; Henniger, 1974), then educators have at their fingertips an instant historical account of the values of American society.

America's Most Available Teaching Tool

To say that television permeates American life is an understatement. The A.C. Nielsen Co. (2007) tells us that the average American spends more than four hours watching television each day—that's 28 hours per week, or two months of *nonstop* TV-watching per year. A 65-year-old person will have spent nine years glued to the tube. While research on ESL learners (Thanajaro, 2000) revealed that television is omnipresent, even in the homes of recent immigrants, the information below, compiled by TV Free America, (Herr, 2001) helps put the phenomenon in perspective.

Television as it Relates to Family Life

Percentage of households that possess at least one television	99
Number of TV sets in the average U.S. household	2.24
Percentage of U.S. homes with three or more TV sets	66
Number of hours per day that TV is on in an average U.S. home	6 hours, 47 minutes
Percentage of Americans that regularly watch television while eating dinner	66
Number of hours of TV watched annually by Americans	250 billion

Commercialism

Number of 30-second TV commercials seen in a year by an average child	20,000
Number of TV commercials seen by the average person by age 65	2 million
Total spending by 100 leading TV advertisers in 1993	\$61.3 billion

General

Percentage of local TV news broadcast time devoted to advertising	30
Percentage devoted to stories about crime, disaster and war	53.8
Percentage devoted to public service announcements	0.7
Percentage of Americans who can name The Three Stooges	59
Percentage who can name at least three justices of the U.S. Supreme Court	17

A New Way of Keeping Score

Television is a heavily researched medium largely because of its great expense. Advertisers do not want to pay its lofty prices unless they are certain they are accessing their target audience. Nielsen Media Research, the well-known watchdog of the industry, has made efforts to deal with use of TiVo-like recordings and get a true picture of share and rating. A share is a percentage of TV households that have their TV sets on at a given time. A rating is a percentage of all TV households, whether or not their sets are turned on. For example, if a TV program has a 1.0 rating, it means 1% of the total U.S. households with a TV tuned in to that show. Traditionally, advertising costs have been negotiated on the basis of live-viewing figures, but recently Nielsen and the broadcast networks have begun to release viewership statistics that include live-plus-same-day playback on digital video recorders (Rash, 2007). Even if a show is recorded, it can be counted as long as it is viewed within 24 hours.

The TiVo Company itself has a “Big Brother” ability to know when its customers are viewing a particular piece of programming. If a person with TiVo uses the device to avoid a commercial, the company can tell. Conversely, if owners use their TiVos to watch a commercial again, or multiple times, they know that, too. To keep track of who is watching commercials and who is not, the company helped create StopWatch data, used by Publicis Groupe’s Starcom USA and Interpublic Group of Companies. StopWatch made it possible to analyze second-by-second viewership patterns by an anonymous, aggregated, and random sample of 20,000 TiVo units. The increasing availability of such data illustrates the intense scrutiny being placed on the venerable 30-second commercial (Steinberg, 2007).

Dissertations

A search of dissertations, published and unpublished, over the past 25 years was helpful in framing this topic area. The survey resulted in the discovery of several dissertations that were close to some aspects of the topic area, but none that came close to duplicating the concept or chosen research. Several dissertations focused attention on the need for “authentic” examples, while others explored the receptiveness of the audience to non-commercial “dramatic” video messages. One, perhaps the closest conceptually, set about demonstrating a cultural connection useful for ESL in print advertising. Still, none attempted to make the more direct connection of finding useful cultural content embedded in the commercial television message. The failure to do so pointed to a need to build from the perimeter by establishing relevance for various components of the concept first, then making connections through an experimental model.

Two of the dissertations examined were helpful because they focused on so-called “authentic examples” for use in teaching adults English as a second language. Thanajaro (2000) examined the use of authentic materials to develop listening comprehension (the most used language skill) in the ESL classroom. Citing the Rogers and Medley (1988) explanation that “authentic” materials referred to oral and written language materials used in daily situations by native speakers of the language, Thanajaro pointed out that newspapers, magazines, and television advertisements are good examples to use for teaching ESL. He pointed out that “while tasks such as grammar or pronunciation drills do not provide students with the chance for exchanging authentic messages, the use of video and film, radio broadcasts, and television” does. Of the ESL students surveyed in this study, 100% indicated that they watched television every day at home, 43% thought that the pictures help in understanding, and 71% read captions to facilitate their understanding. Later in the study “watching television” was revealed to be the most popular strategy students used to practice their second-language listening skills.

Ultimately, positive attitudes toward the culture experience students develop in this activity transfer to their interaction with native speakers (Oxford, Park-Oh, Ito, & Sumrall, 1993). In her dissertation, DeBord-Schulze (1980) used Hall’s (1959) *Map of Culture* to measure elements of culture found in magazine advertising of the day. This examination revealed that, even in print, commercial speech was rife with cultural messages. The author also made an effective case for using advertising simply because of its low cost, redundancy, and ubiquitous presence in American society. Eun’s (2003) dissertation looked at television, but only at

programming that had been specifically prepared for EFL students in Korea. The researcher explained that while Korean television has produced a number of shows to teach English, relatively few, if any, have centered on the concept of how “American English norms unfold in language teaching concepts” (p. 20).

While it didn’t specifically explore commercial messages, Eun’s examination supported television itself as a valuable tool:

Television programs can provide a variety of authentic resources for the teaching of English, using vivid images, sounds, cultural events . . . a wide range of linguistic structures spanning multiple registers, although there are limitations for communication-based teaching in the classroom setting (p. 41).

Several of Eun’s findings pointed to the idea that even specially prepared educational video programming needs explanation by teachers who understand the target culture. The author went on to cite a difficulty present in the use of these made-up programs in Korea. She stated that teachers often have the notion that language—or even culture—always has a one-to-one correspondence. This kind of oversimplification, she concluded, can perpetuate stereotypes and biases of the learners/TV viewers (p. 190).

Dissertation work by Iheanacho (1997) focused on the benefits of multimedia computer assisted language learning (CALL) for teaching vocabulary. Iheanacho admitted early on that the cultural component of language was somewhat underserved by the method. His study examined the effects of two multimedia CALL programs on vocabulary acquisition. The first program consisted of both motion graphics and text. The second program consisted of still graphics and text. The purpose was to investigate which program represented a better environment for learning vocabulary. The author also attempted to determine which program best aided retention of learned vocabulary. Despite the understandable emphasis on CALL, his writings also paid attention to the popular benefit of closed-captioned TV. Iheanacho pointed to a study by Koskinen, Markham, Knable, Jensema, & Kane (1996) that examined the effects of captioned television on the incidental vocabulary acquisition of 72 inmates of a prison in Pennsylvania. Two groups viewed a science video, one with captions and one without, and, while the group that viewed the captioned video showed no significant difference between the other group on word recognition, it was clear that captions facilitated retention and understanding of meaning (Iheanacho, 1997, p. 22).

The dissertation by Manning (2005) pointed out that the achievement level of the United States' growing number of English language learners continues to lag behind peers. To examine the phenomenon further, the author designed a developmental study to investigate instruction that used many different media to communicate information. Manning's multimedia tutorial embedded rehearsal, elaboration, and compensation learning strategies to help the ELL students understand and recall information about their state's mandated computer competencies. Another doctoral candidate built a similar research program that looked at new ways to approach education. Collins' (2003) study revealed that online education has developed consistent standards for communication behaviors among group members. Her examination showed that so-called moderators often function as an invisible, professional public of informal adult educators, independent of academic adult education institutions.

Several dissertations (Capraro, 2002; Cosgrave, 1999; Hughes, 2003; and Larroy, 2005) focused on the experience of the ESL learner in and out of the class. Larroy, for example, noted that unlike previous generations of immigrants, new Diaspora Latinos seek integration into American society as bilinguals. This extensive study of Latino/a students at Virginia Tech, though they represented only 2% of the total student body, revealed that with linguistic command for both Spanish and English, they had begun to resist abandonment of national identities and culture.

Capraro (2002) noted five themes tied to ESL and the learners' culture. The first was that, despite the participants' prior EFL learning, obstacles in their interactions with native speakers often prevented them from practicing their spoken language. The second was that pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency were main concerns. Third, instrumental motivation played an important role in learning. Fourth, the participants experienced positive changes in their attitude and thinking toward learning spoken English. Fifth, reflection made a difference in their spoken English learning. Noting that television was a good source to learn informal, casual words, Capraro pointed out that overcoming the "limitations imposed from one's own culture and the target language culture" is highly important. She added that further investigation of these cultural limitations would be a valuable topic to pursue (p. 318).

Cosgrave (1999) linked culture and television as a symbiotic relationship. He stated that one can interpret and collect culture in a variety of ways, by focusing on non-visible or ideal aspects like concepts, or "one can choose instances of actual behaviour." He went on to suggest

that television should “be understood as a method or object for collecting cultural identity.” Stating that television is a technological method for collecting identity, he pointed to a need to interpret and examine its particular formulation of culture. Cosgrave then explained that “television can be, and is, used as a technological means for disseminating and representing conceptions of cultural identity.”

Hughes (2003) also observed this connection of culture to television while studying self-development of midlife women. She cited the work of Gledhill (1987), noting that her target audience was very familiar with pop culture through mass media messages “like advertisements” on television. These messages encouraged her to think of and present herself in certain ways. All of us are constantly inundated with pop culture messages through a number of sources called *agents of socialization*: family, peers, public education systems, and mass media (Kendall, 2001). The term *mass media*, for purposes of this study, included television, movies, books, magazines, advertising, the Internet, radio, music, and more. Commenting on the ubiquitous nature of advertising, Hughes (2002) quoted Christensen (2001), saying that mass media messages are such “a proliferate, ordinary part of life,” we’re not even aware of them (p. 4).

Suzanne Panferov (2002) used an ethnographic approach to explore the ESL student development in her dissertation. While seeking the most effective learning strategies for promoting ESL literacy development, Panferov’s study investigated several different factors influencing domestic ESL learner education. These factors included family influences on literacy development, resistance and barriers to literacy acquisition, cultural means of coping with arrival in the U.S., attitudes toward literacy, and the role of L1 in literacy development. Many of these concepts had not been addressed in studies specific to the ESL learner population. The examination brought her to the conclusion that knowledge acquisition is not a process of “banking” or transferring measures of knowledge into “empty vessels.” On the contrary, her research pointed to a more collaborative effort. This is akin to the Freire (1985) argument for reality transforming knowledge that both teacher and student create together, through interaction and engagement. Panferov cited Vygotsky (1978) as a scholar who urged educators to recognize that learning and constructing knowledge must be relevant to the learner. Dewey (1938) suggested that learning be related to prior knowledge. In all, these can be seen as variations on the same theme, collaborative effort between teacher and student based upon cultural experience and authentic examples.

Adeodu (1997) surmised that culture is much more than “dinner, dress and dance, and other tangibles” observable as symbols of changing culture. It also includes less tangible manifestations such as communication style, values, and attitudes. It is relationships and other complex interconnected elements that fulfill specific functions in the lives of members of the society (Nieto, 1996; James, 1995).

Summary

The literature reviewed for this dissertation examined several aspects of the topic to be studied. While there is a substantial body of literature on language learning, cultural adaptation, the use of authentic examples, or *realia*, in the ESL classroom, and the power and influence of advertising messages, there appeared to have been no investigation that connected televised commercial messages with the learning of a second language. However, there is abundant literature that demonstrates a connection between culture and language learning.

Many studies showed the value of authentic materials when used as a teaching aid for the individual student attempting to learn English as a second language. In fact, literature dating back into the last century espoused the use of additional, exemplary materials to assist in teaching the English language to non-speakers in this country (ESL, as it is now called). Iheanacho (1997) looked at the use of computer graphics to improve the study of vocabulary in second language learning. Several studies made a convincing argument that, while they do not have the desired appeal of authentic examples, specially created computer graphics can be used to facilitate learning. Since more than 2 million language minority students have been identified as having limited English proficiency, (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002) it seems imperative that we work to find effective means to improve ESL learning. Eun’s research (2003) testified to this need and identified some of the reasons behind the quest for English language proficiency. Eun’s study postulated that as long as English maintains power and dominance, people will strive to be able to use it with the belief that the closer they are to being able to speak like a native speaker, the more rewards they will reap.

In regard to the variety of media available for language exposure, there was extensive research on the power of the televised message and the popularity of the 30-second, slice-of-life commercial. Even though they are of a commercial nature, some of these messages are so well received that they become entertainment programming in themselves (Hampp, 2007). The hype

around the annual cavalcade of ads on the Super Bowl is a perfect example. The trade press for the advertising industry regularly comments on the latest social phenomena and reports daily on marketers using knowledge of social change to make much needed connections with evolving target audiences. Still, while there seems to be ample anecdotal evidence that television commercials embody American culture, there has been little or no academic research on the matter.

It seems clear that Americans see a lot of television commercials. If, for example, an ESL student had watched television for four hours a night during the month that the sample for this study was taken, he or she would have seen all of the nearly 2,000 commercials recorded. Nearly 20 of the messages would have been seen more than 10 times and four would have been seen more than 20 times. Considering that four hours of TV viewing a night is below the national average, it is safe to say that there is a high likelihood that this population will be exposed to many such messages and will likely be influenced by them. Hughes (2003) explained that mass media is a primary resource of “pop” culture. She presented a historical perspective of American mass media, including film, magazines, radio, television, and romance novels, to illustrate how cultural standards have been ingrained into our society. So, as we begin to see strong, positive connections between culture and English language learning, and evidence of strong connections between culture and the television commercial, it seems to indicate that the next step might be research on the use of the TV commercial in ESL. This study examined that possibility with the idea that a positive outcome could ultimately provide under-funded ESL programs with a low-cost source of “authentic” teaching materials.

CHAPTER 3 – Methodology

The methodology for this research used elements from several different qualitative research systems. It was a twofold approach that first centered on the collection and treatment of the commercials sampled for use in the study, and second, dealt with the creation and evaluation of a suite of teaching materials used by ESL teachers in the classroom and a system to measure the value of commercials in teaching the class.

This study investigated the following research questions:

- RQ1:** What, if any, elements of American culture do television commercial messages contain?
- RQ2:** If television commercials do contain culture, can they be used to teach English to adults who are learning it as a second language?
- RQ3:** Finally, do participants report that commercial messages used as a teaching tool are an effective addition to their program?

Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Content

Qualitative content analysis enabled the researcher to include a relatively large number of videographic samples and systematically identify their properties. This use of content analysis provided an appropriate method for analyzing culture in the sample of TV commercials.

Krippendorff (1980) defined content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context” (p. 21). He listed the following six elements as a framework: 1) the data, 2) their context, 3) the analyst’s knowledge (reality), 4) the target, 5) inference, and 6) validity. Berger (1998) stated that content analysis is useful in making inferences about people indirectly, and is helpful in determining any interesting changes that may have occurred over the years. Content analysis is an unobtrusive means of studying media and therefore, advertising messages. There were two main characteristics that made this aspect of the study a qualitative content analysis rather than a quantitative analysis or cultural criticism:

1. The use of qualitative assessment in the coding process; connotative vs. denotative content categories (i.e., what constitutes *culture* to be counted and what are the observable characteristics that manifest that concept.)

2. The use of qualitative assessment, or inference, in the analysis of the findings (i.e., attempting to answer the broader “So what?” question).

Construct validity (Frey, Botan, Friedman, & Kreps, 1992, p. 197) was attempted by developing content categories on the basis of other similar studies (Signorielli, 1989; Hall, 1959).

Central to the analysis was Hall’s (1959) *Map of Culture*, which he referred to as a by-product of his study of “culture as communication” (p. 171). This grid (Table 1) of 100 components of culture allowed raters in this study to put a numerical identifier on concepts they observed in the sample commercials. The volunteer raters, all of whom were adult college students majoring in communication, spent some time familiarizing themselves with the *Map*, and were then able to spot and identify many different cultural concepts in the a series of 25 commercials chosen for review.

The use of non-specialist raters helped add a level of objectivity to the study. These individuals, with limited knowledge of anthropology or sociology, tended not to bring preconceived notions of culture to the study. Hall himself explained that the *Map of Culture* “satisfied a demand for specificity, concreteness and teachability,” saying that he created it “to enlighten the non-specialist interested in cross-cultural work as to the nature of culture, and to stimulate students to further work” (p. 176).

After the raters’ observations were quantified, the information was used to create a discussion guide for the ESL teachers who used the test lessons.

Table 1 Edward T. Hall's *Map of Culture*

<i>Primary Message Systems</i>	Interactional	Organizational	Economic	Sexual (Gender Based)	Territorial	Temporal (Time)	Instructional	Recreational	Protective	Exploitative
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Interaction	Communication; Vocal qualifiers; Kinesics; Language	Status and Role	Exchange	How the sexes interact	Places of interaction	Times of interaction	Teaching and learning	Participation in the arts and sports (active and passive)	Protecting and being protected	Use of telephones, signals, writing, etc.
0	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09
Association	Community	Society; Class; Caste; Government	Economic roles	Sexual roles	Local group roles	Age group roles	Teachers and learners	Entertainers and athletes	Protectors (doctors, clergy, soldiers, police, etc.)	Use of group property
1	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Subsistence	Ecological community	Occupational groupings	Work; Formal work; Maintenance; Occupations	Sexual division of labor	Where the individual eats, cooks, etc.	When the individual eats, cooks, etc.	Learning from working	Pleasure from working	Care of health, protection of livelihood	Use of foods, resources, and equipment
2	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
Bisexuality (Both Gender Based)	Sex community (clans, sibs)	Marriage groupings	Family	The Sexes; Masc. Vs. Fem.; Sex (biological); Sex (technical)	Areas assigned to individuals by virtue of sex	Periods assigned to individuals by virtue of sex	Teaching and learning sex roles	Participation in recreation by sex	Protection of sex and fertility	Use of sex differentiating decoration and adornment
3	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39
Territoriality	Community territory	Group territory	Economic areas	Men's and women's territories	Space; Formal space; Informal space; Boundaries	Scheduling of space	Teaching and learning individual space assignments	Fun, playing games, etc., in terms of space	Privacy	Use of fences and markers
4	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49
Temporality (Time)	Community cycles	Group cycles	Economic cycles	Men's and women's cyclical activities	Territorially determined cycles	Time; Sequence; Cycles; Calendar	When the individual learns	When the individual plays	Rest, vacations, holidays	Use of time-telling devices, etc.
5	50	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59
Learning	Community lore - what gets taught and learned	Learning groups - educational institutions	Reward for teaching and learning	What the sexes are taught	Places for learning	Scheduling of learning (group)	Enculturation; Rearing; Informal learning; Education	Making learning fun	Learning self-defense and to stay healthy	Use of training aids
6	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69
Play	Community play - the arts and sports	Play groups - teams and troupes	Professional sports and entertainment	Men's and women's play, fun, and games	Recreational areas	Play seasons	Instructional play	Recreation; Fun; Playing; Games	Exercise	Use of recreational materials (playthings)
7	70	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79
Defense	Community defenses - structured defense systems	Defense groups - armies, police, public health, organized religion	Economic patterns of defense	What the sexes defend (home, honor, etc.)	What places are defended	The When of defense	Scientific, religious, and military training	Mass exercise and military games	Protection; Formal defenses; Informal defenses; Technical defenses	Use of materials for protection
8	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89
Exploitation	Communication networks	Organizational networks (cities, building groups, etc.)	Food, resources, and industrial equipment	What men and women are concerned with and own	Property - what is enclosed, counted, and measured	What periods are measured and recorded	School, buildings, training aids, etc.	Amusement and sporting goods and their industries	Fortifications, armaments, medical equipment, safety devices	Material; Systems; Contact w/ environment; Motor habits; Technology
9	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99

Examining the Commercial Messages

A large sample of commercial messages for use in this study was taken during the month of November in 2001. The four networks, ABC, CBS, Fox, and NBC, were chosen because they all offer entertainment and news funded by commercial messages. Not only are these networks typically included with basic cable, they are also broadcast over the air and, thus, can be viewed at no cost by anyone who has access to a television set.

As part of the research, the sample of nearly 2,000 national television commercials that were recorded for this study was quantified and categorized. These commercial messages had already been identified by name and the number of airings for each has been counted. The sample, taken during the month of November 2001, was recorded only during prime time hours, 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. in the Central Time Zone. This equates to 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. in the Eastern and Western Time Zones (Avery & Ferraro 2000, p. 218). The recordings were made on a rotating basis, ABC, CBS, Fox and, finally, NBC. Only one network was recorded each night, and on every fifth night the cycle started over with ABC. Since the sequence recurred every five days, networks were not recorded on the same night. Ultimately, every viewing night of the week was recorded at least once on each of the four networks. Two networks, ABC and CBS, were recorded an extra time on Thursday, November 29 and Friday, November 30.

Table 2 November 2001 Network Recording Schedule

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 / ABC	2 / CBS	3 / FOX
4 / NBC	5 / ABC	6 / CBS	7 / FOX	8 / NBC	9 / ABC	10 / CBS
11 / FOX	12 / NBC	13 / ABC	14 / CBS	15 / FOX	16 / NBC	17 / ABC
18 / CBS	19 / FOX	20 / NBC	21 / ABC	22 / CBS	23 / FOX	24 / NBC
25 / ABC	26 / CBS	27 / FOX	28 / NBC	29 / ABC	30 / CBS	

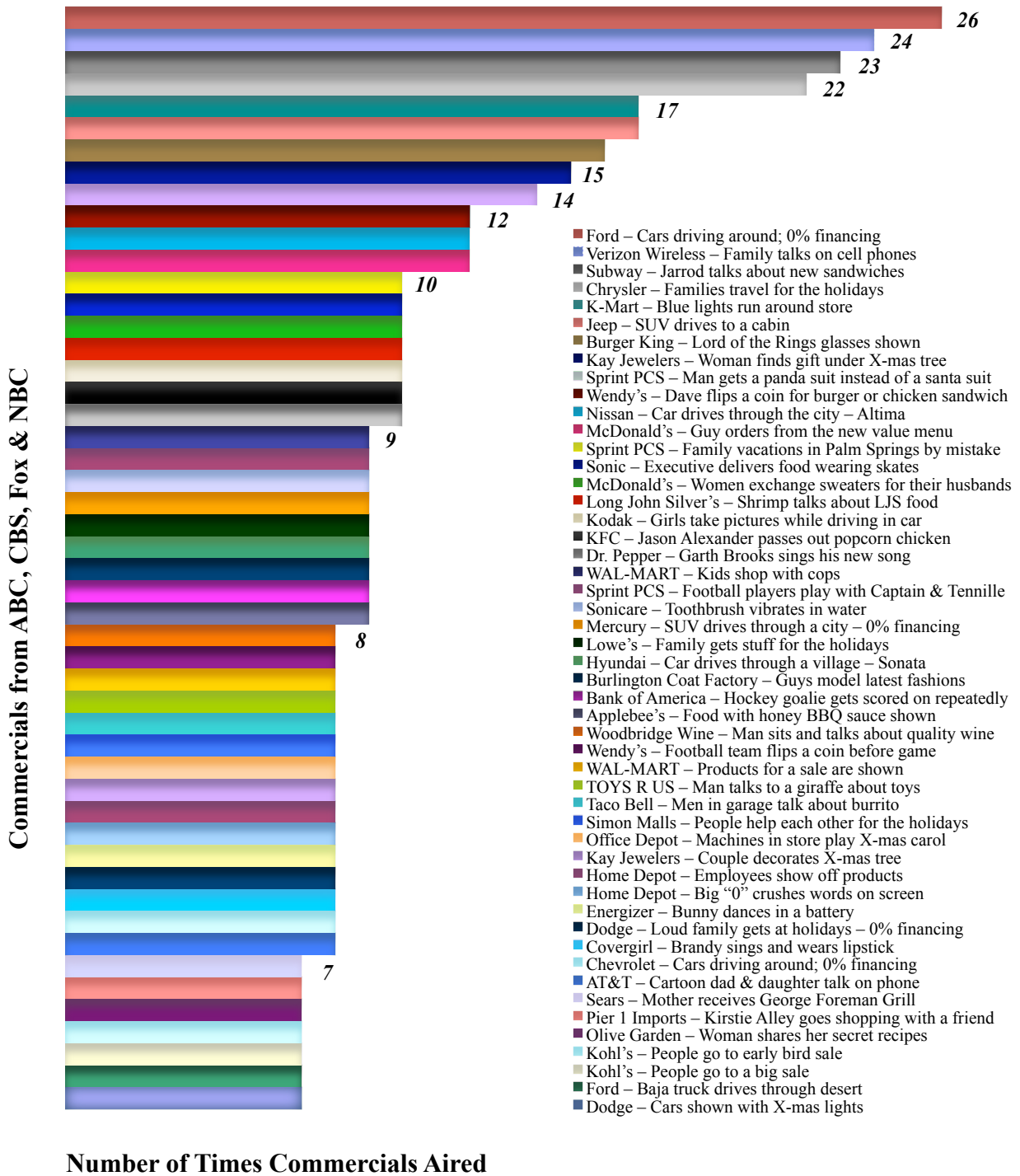
The recording rotation was employed to keep the sample at a manageable size and still assure that every network was represented, at least once, on every weeknight. At the end of the month, all local commercials and station promotional advertisements were eliminated from the sample and all remaining national commercials were dubbed together. Only national commercials were selected for the study because of their typically higher production values, better quality, and nearly universal availability (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2004). Television commercials aired on the national level are nearly universally available and, although many national commercials are intended to reach niche markets (ethnic minorities, one specific gender or age group), even these narrow target audiences represent populations that are typically quite large and can even number into the tens of millions (Vivian, 2005, p. 212).

To limit the scope of commercial messages included in the study even more, specifically in hopes of creating a more manageable sample, after the taped commercials were viewed, counted, and categorized, only those ads that aired more than six times during the month were chosen to be included in the final sample. This particular frequency was selected because advertising industry protocol is that a commercial message must be viewed at least six times to provide effective recall in audience members. Of course, the goal of the media buyer is to have audience members remember the message and act upon it accordingly (Roman & Mass, 1992, p. 83). Most, if not all, of the messages in the original sample taken for this study probably ran more than six times, but the cutoff points, November 1 to November 30, precluded the researcher from knowing that for sure. In other words, commercials that appear on the recorded list less than five times near the beginning of the month, would likely have aired many more times before the sampling procedure began. The same is true for messages that appear to begin airing near the end of the month.

There were 50 commercial messages from the original sample that ran six times or more. Fourteen volunteer raters analyzed the content of each of these commercials using a slightly modified and updated version of Hall's 100-cell cultural content matrix (1959). They looked for both manifest and latent cultural meanings, and even cultural taboos. The reason for making modifications to Hall's matrix, though minor, was that some of the nomenclature on the 1959-vintage matrix was not understandable to the group of student volunteer raters, most of whom were not even born until the 1980s. Some of the wording on Hall's matrix seemed peculiar to them, for example, he uses the term *bisexual* to mean non-gender specific, that is, something that represents or appeals to both genders. This phrasing was confusing to raters and represents a category that received additional explanation before the grid was employed.

Two separate groups of observer/raters examined cultural content information in the commercials, which was ultimately used to create the discussion guide for ESL teachers. These example commercials were edited onto both DVD and videocassette and used to create the suite of discussion materials used in the ESL classrooms. Information from the raters' analyses was also used to create appropriate survey questions to survey the adult educators and students who used the DVD or videocassette in classroom exercises.

Figure 1 The 50 Most Aired TV Commercials During Prime-Time in November 2001



While there are many types of mediated messages that include visual and auditory information, television drama and motion pictures, to name a couple, commercially broadcast television advertising messages were selected because the researcher sought a medium commonly accessible to the target audience, available at little or no cost, with visual as well as auditory information. According to Charles Young (2004) these messages specifically aim to please the audience as a way of holding their attention. He pointed out that the attention-getting power of a commercial is a function of two factors: the content and the form of the execution. Attention-getting content, like cowboys herding cats, as they did in Electronic Data Systems' Super Bowl commercial in 2000, has been shown to provide the viewer with a reward for the 30 seconds of time that the advertiser is asking these potential consumers to spend with the advertising. Stoic cowboys who tell stories of riding herd on the plains are American icons. The fact that these cowboys were herding cats instead of cattle was a humorous payoff, if you understand the embedded cultural implications. As Young (2004) points out, this is quite simply a reward for spending time. The content in the EDS spot was well executed, fun, entertaining, and different, but might not be easily understood by individuals who did not grow up with American television and movies.

The short-form, 30-second stories depicted in some TV commercials use sound and visuals that help viewers create an accurate perception of the story (Balatova, 1994). The spoken words, backed up by actions, are shorter and easier to understand in small doses. By compiling a group of these multi-faceted messages, we can take advantage of the advertisers' efforts to keep and entertain the audience. As a whole, this could work to benefit ESL students because they can see the action and hear the language being spoken. Since the "action" includes cultural visual clues such as facial expressions, use of personal space, gender roles, social status and age-related portrayals, there could be a lot to be learned in 30 seconds. Spoken English depicted in the mass media, particularly in advertising and TV, continues to stress colloquial speech (Shepard, 1996). The idea being that the language, whether it is written or spoken, should "sound" right. The auditory component includes emphasis, pronunciation, and pauses common to Standard English. This often includes word play, irony, and double entendre. This study looked at developing a more inclusive definition of what is actually educational programming. According to Neuman (2005), critics of television have, in the past, created an unnecessarily adverse distinction between that which has traditionally been defined as "entertainment" and programming

classified as “education”—a relationship that, in fact, may be more complementary than conflicting (p. 19).

Educational Materials for Classroom Use

In an effort to foster the symbiosis between entertainment and education, the researcher sought messages with consistently high production values (better filming, editing, acting and scenic work) as typically seen in nationally distributed commercials. This is why the sample was limited only to national TV spots. To serve as a discussion model for ESL classes on a week-by-week basis, it is also mandatory that these messages repeat often enough that there is a high likelihood that student and instructor will see them. This is why only TV spots that aired more than six times were chosen for use in the experimental lesson. Materials created for use in the classroom included a discussion model with a pretest component, a video of selected TV commercials, a Q&A format follow-up discussion guide, and a post-test measurement instrument.

The researcher conducted a pilot test of the lesson and observed the effectiveness of the lesson. All classes were later analyzed with teacher/student testing and ESL teachers involved in the test were surveyed on the feasibility of using television commercials as a teaching tool. They were asked to address such issues as logistics, interest-level on the part individual students, content, and cultural relevance.

The “slice-of-life” style infuses cultural content into many commercials. While the sample already chosen for this study in no way represents a full spectrum of American culture, it does contain a number of concepts that may prove useful in ESL teaching.

Popular feature films have been used in ESL classes for some time and Weschler (2007) offers teachers a list of discussion questions for use with many popularly available movies. These discussion points revolve around topics related to summarizing the plot, listing the major characters, and answering questions about vocabulary words presented in the film. While these types of questions might be useful as supplemental talking points in this study, the research proposes a more fluid approach that hinges on cultural issues. Individual ESL teachers were provided with a list of questions based on the analysis of the cultural content of commercials in the sample. This list was developed after volunteer raters applied Hall’s (1959) cultural content matrix to the sample. Examples of such questions might be:

- Why was the mother surprised when the daughter offered to help cook dinner?
- Why do they make it appear to be okay to make fun of your employer?
- What cultural idea(s) does the idiom *get in shape* represent?

The sample lesson, in addition to providing talking points, invited teachers to inject their own questions to further discussion. These questions supported the intended individualized approach and were based on the particular classroom population. These questions tended to be like the following:

- Would a Japanese employee ever say that to his boss?
- Have you ever seen drivers like that in your country?
- Is driving a pickup truck manly?
- Are grandmothers expected to be good cooks?
- Is being slim an aesthetic ideal in your culture?

Population and Sample Selection

The population from which participants were selected consisted of small ESL classes that volunteered to participate. The sample was limited to ESL classes geographically located in Kansas and Hawai‘i. The geographical restriction was imposed due to the resource restrictions of the investigator. Contacts with the individual classes were made through the Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas (ESSDACK), and the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa English Language Institute, Hawaii Tokai International College (HTIC), TransPacific Hawaii College and the Chaminade University of Honolulu international student program.

Class sizes varied from as few as five students, to as many as 14. First languages for the students included Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Samoan, Serbian, and Spanish. The Filipino languages of Tagalog, Ilocano, and Cebuano were also represented, but Spanish was the most common first language of the sample. Experience in the United States ranged from a few months to as many as 15 years. The goal was to have at least six separate classes with a total of 50 participants. Ultimately, study included results from 36 students in six different classes in two states. One class from Kansas was included because it added another language, Spanish, to the total number of first languages investigated. The results from this group were actually very

similar to those of Pacific Islander respondents, who claimed different first-language families and different cultures.

Since teachers, in essence, self-selected by volunteering to use the lesson material, with signed permission from the students, the sample population was aware that they were using the lesson as a test.

Data Collection

Data collection for this dissertation included some quantitative content data on the commercials to be used in the lessons, but primarily it was qualitative in nature. ESL students answered survey questions, as did the individual teachers. Each class received a DVD with 25 television commercials (12.5 minutes of video). The students watched the video, stopped after each 30-second spot, and engaged in a short discussion about the content. Once they had seen all the commercials, the teacher asked them to fill out the survey provided. Afterward students were asked to pay attention to some TV commercials and be ready to talk about one at the next class. Teachers answered a separate evaluation survey and were interviewed about the class at a later date.

Evaluation Survey for ESL Teachers

Following the use of the Culture Window ESL Lesson materials, the researcher did an exit survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the material and the concept. The individual language teachers were asked questions similar to those that Canning (1998) suggested they ask themselves before implementing a video lesson with F/SL learners. Although the post-use survey questions were modified as the project progressed, the questions below represent typical examples:

1. Did the language learner benefit from the use of this video in the classroom?
2. Did the visual component enhance the auditory component?
3. Did the video bring up any new cultural discussion in your class?
4. Did your students appear to be engaged in the classroom discussion?
5. Did students appear to enjoy the exercise?
6. Did they mention or ask about other commercials they have seen outside the video?

7. Do you think you will use television commercials as a discussion starter in class in the future?
8. Did comprehension of the video support your efforts?
9. What other type of discussion aids do you use in your classes?
10. How important is the link between language and the culture of that language?

The researcher did follow-up surveys of the individual ESL teachers to expand upon the results. The relatively small sample size allowed the researcher to extensively examine each ESL teacher's perspective on the use of commercials as a vehicle to teach cultural components of English. Teachers were also invited to submit suggestions for additional questions for use in class discussion and submit ideas for other ways to improve upon the lesson or garner more student participation.

Protection of Human Rights

Since there was a possibility that respondents might feel their privacy was being invaded, the researcher asked teachers to ensure that the participants fully understood the purpose, nature, and format of the study. Also, a consent form following protocol set by Kansas State University's Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects was included in the study. All participants signed the agreement in an anonymous, non-threatening environment. This assured that participants knew their rights as human subjects participating in a study. When doing qualitative interviews or surveys the investigator made every effort to be a benign entity (Merriam, 2001) so as not to influence the informants to disclose things they did not intend to reveal.

In light of Kansas State University's Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects mandate that certain procedures be followed to ensure that informed consent is given by each research participant, a cover letter (Appendix C) and the Informed Consent Document (Appendix D) was sent to each participant prior to the lesson. In addition, this information was verbally reviewed with each ESL teacher who participated in the research. In addition to the Informed Consent Document, a demographic questionnaire (Appendix E) was also included, but answered anonymously.

Summary

This research evaluated whether or not television commercials could be useful in teaching elements of American culture embedded in American Standard English. The investigator started by examining a sample of television commercials over the course of a month. This sample of nearly 2,000 commercial messages was narrowed down to the fifty most viewed commercials during the month. To qualify, the ad had to have been recorded six or more times during the month. Qualitative content analysis was used to determine whether or not individual messages contained useful cultural elements and, if so, what kinds.

Two groups of volunteer raters examined the commercials to determine which cultural elements were present. The raters used a modified version of Hall's (1959) *Map of Culture* to facilitate identification of 100 different elements of culture possible in each ad message. Most messages had multiple elements present.

From the information gleaned in the content analysis, a set of discussion questions was created for inclusion in a discussion guide used by ESL teachers. This guide was accompanied by a DVD for use in the volunteer ESL classrooms. In class, students were shown the commercials one at a time. Following each commercial viewing, the students committed some of their ideas about the ad messages to a workbook provided for that purpose. Then the class engaged in guided discussion with their teacher as leader. Following the lesson, the teachers were surveyed or interviewed to garner their reaction to the lesson and get their thoughts on using TV commercials to facilitate ESL education. Students were also surveyed, anonymously, to get their thoughts on the value of using television commercials as a teaching tool that reveals elements of American culture and demonstrates spoken American Standard English.

CHAPTER 4 – Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the feasibility of using television commercials as a way to facilitate the teaching of English as a second language by helping adult students identify elements of American culture. Three research questions were investigated.

This chapter presents the results data collection in relation to each of the research questions. Descriptive data on the 36 subjects, whose survey packets were returned, were provided with a comparison of the results. Demographic data on the subjects were limited due to concerns about privacy and to avoid intimidating the respondent population. The researcher was concerned that many of the ESL students, who would otherwise agree to participate, might be wary of authority figures and intimidated by a request for extensive demographic information.

Research Questions

This study investigated the following research questions:

- RQ1:** What, if any, elements of American culture do television commercial messages contain?
- RQ2:** If television commercials do contain culture, can they be used to teach English to adults who are learning it as a second language?
- RQ3:** Finally, do participants report that commercial messages used as a teaching tool are an effective addition to their program?

The twofold approach of the investigation began with the recording of a collection of television commercials sampled for use in the study during the month of November 2001. Repeat and multiple entries were so noted, but only one example of each was taken. Ultimately, a smaller selection of these same commercials was used to create an ESL lesson that was evaluated by instructors and their adult ESL students.

Qualitative Analysis of Cultural Content

The researcher used qualitative content analysis to enable a relatively large number of videographic samples to be included and to then systematically identify their properties. This use of content analysis was employed in previous research (DeBord-Shulze, 1980) to examine

advertisements in issues of *Time* magazine. This provided an appropriate method for analyzing culture in the sample of TV commercials. The sample size for this part of the study was 50 commercials. This created a manageable size so that the one group of volunteer raters could evaluate the entire selection of messages. The 14 volunteer raters were college seniors who looked at the messages and made note of any elements of culture they saw.

The total of 50 commercials was gleaned from nearly 2,000 such messages sampled for the study. These 50 individual samples were chosen because they happened to air six or more times during the month-long recording period. They were evaluated for cultural content by the 14 volunteer raters. The university student raters consisted of nine women and five men, in their senior year. Once the messages were examined for content, 25 of the 50 commercials were selected for inclusion in a test lesson by simply eliminating every other one.

The raters were not allowed to communicate with each other during the session. They simply watched each video and marked a grid with cultural elements they saw. No statistical measure was used to evaluate interrater reliability, but it was noted that on 48 occasions, 12 or more of the 14 raters identified the same element as being present (Appendix G). Taller bars on the Primary Message Systems Ratings chart indicate agreement that elements were present and shorter bars indicate agreement that they were not present (Appendix H).

The second part of the study dealt with the creation and evaluation of a suite of teaching materials used by ESL teachers in the classroom. It included a system designed to measure the value of commercials as a teaching tool in the class. This will be discussed later in the chapter.

The content analysis portion of the study was included in an effort to make replicable and valid inferences from data relating to television commercials in general. The researcher believed that the content analysis would be useful in making these inferences about the target audiences of the commercials indirectly. Content analysis is an unobtrusive means of studying media and therefore, advertising messages (Berger, 1998).

The group of 14 volunteer raters was asked to view each of the 50 most-aired commercials from the original sample of 2,000. Then, individually and without discussion, they marked notes on grid sheets printed with an updated version of Hall's (1959) 100-cell cultural content matrix. This system allowed the researcher to determine which of the elements of culture were presented in the commercial messages (a) most often, (b) sometimes, (c) hardly ever or (d) not at all. It also revealed which of the individual commercial samples had more or fewer

elements of culture. These 50 commercials, examined in this portion of the study, are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 Sample of 50 Commercials Evaluated for Cultural Content

COMMERCIAL	DESCRIPTION
1. Subway	Jared walks into a Subway restaurant and mentions that he has favorites other than veggie sandwiches. The commercial features a barbeque chicken sandwich, which has less than six grams of fat.
2. Verizon Wireless	Parents receive a phone call from a distant relative, they pass the phone to grandparents who appear awed by the concept of long-distance. The company suggests that communication is the perfect gift for the holiday season.
3. Woodbridge	Spokesperson states that choosing a wine shouldn't be stressful because Woodbridge is the "easy choice." He is sitting on a black leather sofa in an elite, presumably authority position.
4. Sonicare	Their powered toothbrush outshines others because of its technology. They guarantee healthier and whiter teeth in 28 days.
5. Kohl's	Various individuals are modeling Kohl's apparel. The company promotes a weekend event where all clothes are 50% off. They suggest that even discounted items are worth giving during the holiday season.
6. Wal-Mart	This commercial emphasizes the gift of giving with their program, "Shop With a Cop." Police officers help poor kids shop for Christmas gifts at Wal-Mart.
7. Office Depot	After an employee locks up for the evening, various items self-activate and collaborate on a Christmas song.
8. Kodak	Two American college girls, of different races, take a quick tour of Rome in a speeding car driven by an Italian guide. One has Kodak film and gets the shots, the other does not and her pictures are blurred.
9. Chevy	This message features various Chevy automobiles in different settings. It promotes 0% financing and a \$500 bonus on select models.
10. Sears	A mother and her grown, identical-triplet sons are opening holiday gifts. The mother gives her three sons all-wool shirts. In return, they give her a George Foreman grill and a package of ground beef. She pretends to be happy.
11. Sprint	Because of bad reception on his wireless phone, an actor received a panda costume instead of a Santa suit for the holiday season. The commercial also promotes one of their plans and free nationwide long distance.
12. Kentucky Fried Chicken	Spokesperson, Jason Alexander, stops Santa Claus from giving chicken nuggets "mystery meat," to children. He presents the kids with KFC popcorn chicken made with all-white meat.

COMMERCIAL	DESCRIPTION
13. Kay Jewelers	Wife is decorating the Christmas tree, husband hands her an ornament with a diamond bracelet on top of it.
14. Sonic	The “chairman” of the Sonic company puts on roller skates to deliver their new specialty cheeseburger to a customer just as the regular wait staff does every day. He not skilled enough to do this entry-level job.
15. Verizon Wireless	This is similar to Commercial 2, but focuses on the Family Share Plan.
16. Home Depot	This commercial features a router kit, which is one of many items on sale for the holiday season. It also promotes gift cards, which were shown as stocking stuffers.
17. Lowe’s	Various individuals are shown shopping at Lowe’s for home appliances. They suggest that the holiday season is a good time to upgrade such items.
18. Dodge	This commercial features a new Dodge pickup truck. Two cowboys are driving through a field of grain, carving out a giant Dodge logo with their tire tracks.
19. K-Mart	Blue lights are flashing inside a dark, empty K-Mart store, an announcer mentions various store promotions.
20. Wendy’s	This message promotes a bacon Swiss chicken sandwich and cheeseburger. The difficulty of choosing is exemplified by a football player who can’t decide on a coin flip. It concludes by offering The Grinch toys.
21. Ford	This message simply showcases various Ford automobiles and emphasizes 0% financing.
22. Dr. Pepper	Garth Brooks sings a country song that promotes Dr. Pepper. The commercial focuses on individuality with a variety of ethnic characters and two attractive, young female models.
23. Taco Bell	Man is working on his car in a garage. His neighbor comes in and asked to borrow the grilled steak burrito. He then has to be shown how to use in the same way a neophyte do-it-yourselfer would learn about tools.
24. Home Depot	Employees are shown carrying various hammers available at the store. The commercial also focuses on low costs.
25. Kohl’s	Promotes a single-day event in which many items are on sale.
26. Dodge	People preparing for numerous holiday parties. The guests for one of these events show up in a Dodge minivan.
27. Long John Silvers	This commercial displays a platter of deep fried seafood and French fries, stating low price.
28. Pier 1 Imports	Kirstie Alley and a friend are shopping for gifts at a Pier 1 Imports store. Alley selfishly buys more for herself than for others.
29. Ford	This message showcases various Ford automobiles and emphasizes 0% financing.

COMMERCIAL	DESCRIPTION
30. Olive Garden	Various chefs are in Italy learning the secret recipe for Chicken Marcella, which is now being served at Olive Garden.
31. Chrysler	Multiple families are decorating and preparing meals for the Christmas holidays. Guests to these gatherings are traveling in Chrysler vehicles.
32. Jeep	Father is driving on rough roads, traveling to his grandmother's house. Over the River and Through the Woods, music plays. The commercial mentions a seven-year or 100,000 mile protection plan.
33. Hyundai	Residents of a small village are delighted as a Hyundai car arrives in their town. When the car leaves, smiles quickly turn to frowns because "life is better with " a car like this.
34. AT&T	This animated cartoon features a father and daughter having a long-distance conversation. The girl seems sad, but says she is "okay." Sensing her state of mind the father queries more. Hearing his voice on the phone makes the girl feel better.
35. Burlington Coat Factory	This commercial features male models wearing BCF clothing. This includes not only coats, but also shirts and sweaters. Plus sizes are also available.
36. Sprint	Because of bad reception, a football team received a singing act, The Captain and Tennille, instead of "a backup for O'Neal. The commercial promotes quality signal and free nationwide long distance.
37. Ford	Working man is training by driving a customized Ford truck through an open field. This unconventional method is possible because Ford trucks are "built tough."
38. Kay Jewelers	Woman sneaks to the Christmas tree and discovers that her present is a diamond necklace from Kay Jewelers. The commercial mentions that diamonds are hand selected.
39. McDonalds	Clerk asks customer if he wants to try an item from McDonalds' new value menu. Customer is astonished with the possibilities. The commercial focuses on the \$.99 chicken sandwich. Other items are priced at \$0.69 and \$.79.
40. Mercury	A Mercury Mountaineer is shown driving on city streets. The commercial mentioned that everyday people will not be "driving off cliffs" as shown in other SUV commercials. It states that no payments are needed for 90 days.
41. Home Depot	This commercial focuses on low costs, it promotes their credit card where shoppers can pay 0% interest until January 2003.
42. Wal-Mart	This commercial promotes a day-after-thanksgiving sale.
43. Energizer	This commercial introduces Energizer MAX, which lasts longer than regular Energizer batteries. The bunny often seen in Energizer commercials is metallic instead of pink.

COMMERCIAL	DESCRIPTION
44. Nissan	The “totally new” V6 Nissan Altima is shown going through various locations. They call it the “cure for the common car.”
45. Toys R Us	Father is shopping at a Toys R Us store and is overwhelmed by the numerous holiday sales. The giraffe helps him locate specific items.
46. Burger King	The commercial starts with footage from Lord of the Rings. Customers are able to buy a Lord of the Rings glass goblet with the purchase of a Whopper value meal. There are four goblets to collect.
47. McDonalds	Four young women exchange gifts and discover they are each giving away a sweater given to them the previous year one of the others in the group. The commercial then cuts to a promotion for the Chili Cheese McDouble and Ranchero Bagel.
48. Wendy’s	Wendy’s founder, Dave Thomas has trouble choosing a new sandwich. He flips a coin to decide between a bacon Swiss chicken sandwich and a bacon Swiss cheeseburger. The coin lands on its side, so he introduces both new sandwiches.
49. Applebee’s	The restaurant is promoting a “sweet” deal of honey-glazed food items for a limited time.
50. Covergirl	Singer Brandy promotes Outlast lipstick that lasts eight hours. She sings a song, which asks the question, “Can your lip color ‘outlast’ that?”

The volunteer raters’ totals from their individual grid sheets are shown for each of the 50 most-aired commercials and for the 100 components of culture on the Composite Commercial Rater Grid (Appendix G). The most commonly identified elements of culture are revealed graphically as taller bars, or spikes, on the color-coded Primary Message Systems Ratings for 50 Commercials graph (Appendix H).

The longer blocks of color within each of the bars represent commercials that had more raters make note of that cultural element. Nine elements: (a) Exchange; (b) Sexual Roles; (c) Use of Foods, Resources, and Equipment; (d) Family; (e) When the Individual Learns; (f) Play Seasons; (g) Food, Resources, and Industrial Equipment; and (h) What Men and Women are Concerned With and Own, each received more than 100 notations of occurrence by the raters. By way of example, the fact that the culture element of “Family” was obvious enough that it received 200 notations indicates that it was highly evident in several commercials much of the time. Considering that advertisers try to build ties with an audience, as discussed earlier, and that

the concept of family is often cited as important to Americans, we can conclude that these references are done on purpose and will continue to be used by advertisers in the future.

These data also revealed that, in some commercials, all fourteen raters identified the same element of culture as being present. (b) Sexual Roles; (d) Family; (e) When the Individual Learns and (i) Use of Sex Differentiating Decoration and Adornment, are examples of some of the cultural elements with occurrences that were obvious enough to be so noted. Other elements, particularly those related to defense, were never, or hardly ever, noted as being present in this sample of 50 commercials.

While a few commercials were evaluated as having almost no cultural content, most did contain several from Hall's (1959) defined primary messages systems' 100 components. The individual commercials with the most identified occurrences of cultural content are shown graphically as longer blocks of color on the color-coded bar chart (Appendix H).

This portion of the study did confirm that television commercials do have elements of culture embedded in a way that is easy to recognize. With these data in hand, the researcher proceeded to develop a suite of materials for testing in actual ESL classrooms with adult learners and instructors evaluating the concept.

Evaluating an ESL Lesson Based on Television Commercials

The books and DVDs created for use in the ESL classrooms were designed to look like professionally produced educational materials. The teacher's guide and the students' workbooks had full-color covers, photos from the actual videos and professional typesetting. The DVDs had full-color printed labels, an animated opening menu, and separate dividers between each commercial selection. The researcher felt that if the materials had a "professional look" it would encourage the volunteer instructors to go to the trouble of using them as part of their regular lesson plan. The appearance of the materials also seemed to add credibility to the concept that television commercials could be successfully used for teaching ESL.

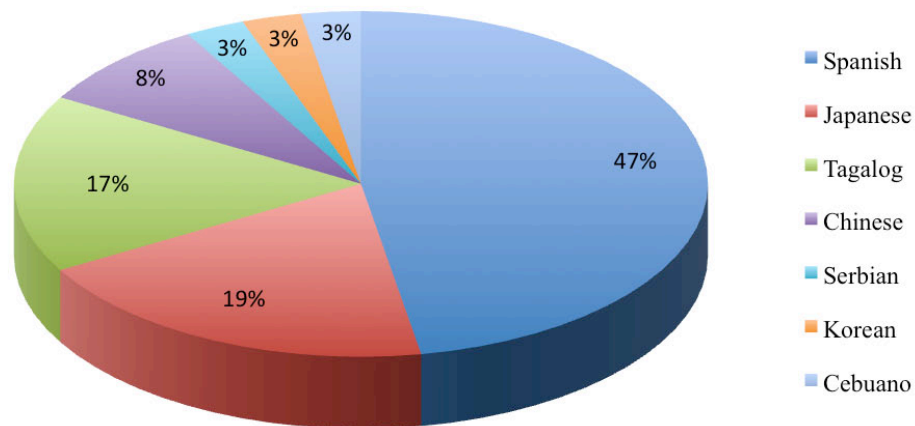
The student workbooks included a still photo of captured video from each commercial along with an adjacent space to take notes. The students' notes on the individual commercials were collected at the end of class, along with pretest and posttest surveys. The teacher's guide was the same design as the students' workbooks. The teacher guide included examples of the students' pretest and post-test surveys, so that they would know what their students were doing.

It also included a post-lesson survey to be filled out by the teachers after they had administered the lesson. The areas for note taking were not included in the teacher books. Instead, they were provided with discussion questions and prompts that would help them facilitate discussion after each commercial was shown.

The 50 commercials evaluated for cultural content were further pared down to 25 for inclusion on the DVD. This was done to limit the length of the lesson in hopes that it could be accomplished in a single one-hour session. Total playing time for the DVD was 12 minutes and 30 seconds. This allowed approximately 45 minutes for discussion, divided up between the individual commercials viewings. Most classes were able to accomplish the lesson in the allotted time with the help of the question-and-answer formatted follow-up discussion guide. The final set of 25 commercials was selected by dubbing only the even-numbered commercials (every other one) from the original 50 that had been evaluated by the volunteer raters. While not exactly random, there was no reason to believe that this methodology for video selection showed any bias for any particular element in the universe of messages recorded in the original sample.

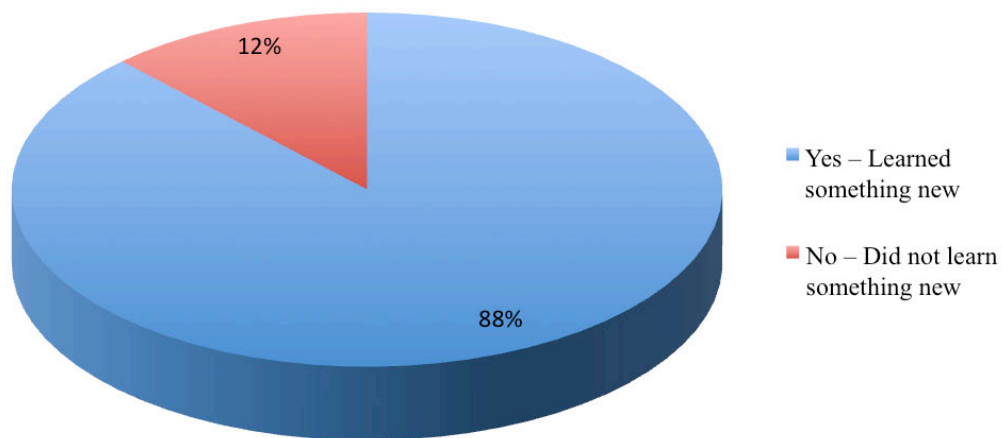
The researcher began this portion of the study by conducting a pilot test of the lesson materials with a group of six Chinese, Japanese and Serbian adult ESL students. As shown in Figure 2, the variety of first languages of the respondents in the total study was ultimately broader than this original pilot test.

Figure 2 First Languages of Respondents in Study



Their time in the U.S. varied from as little as three months to as long as 14 years, but all of them had learned a language other than English as their first language. A communication teacher, who had never seen or used the materials before, conducted the lesson. The results of this test are included in Figure 3, which shows students' opinions of the concept of using television commercials as a teaching tool.

Figure 3 Percentage of ESL Students Who Learned About American Culture from TV Commercial Discussion

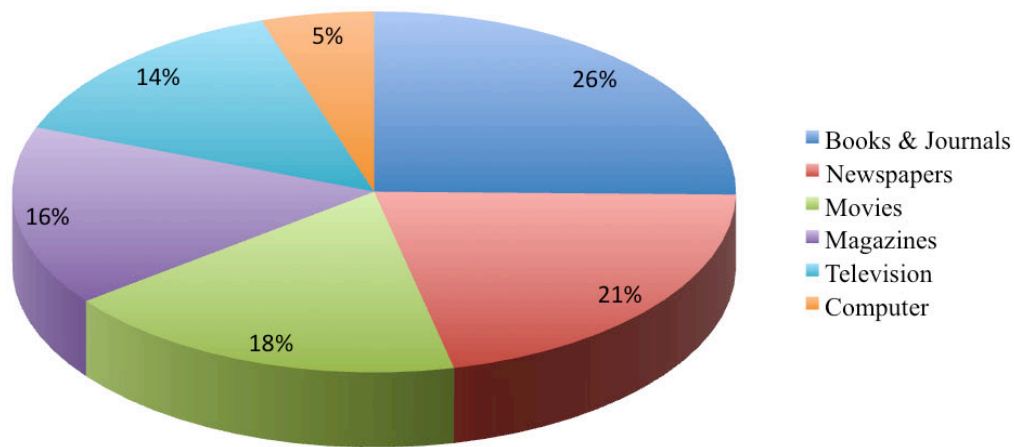


The pilot test was conducted with the researcher in the room. The researcher observed, but did not participate in any way. This initial effort revealed a need, by the ESL teachers, for a better up-front explanation of the video system. This change, an additional set of verbal instructions delivered by the researcher, was made before the study proceeded in full.

Ultimately, a total of 160 student workbooks were disseminated for use in eight different classroom settings. This included one class associated with the Educational Services and Staff Development Association of Central Kansas (ESSDACK), one class done through the University of Hawai'i Leeward Community College, one class at through Hawaii Tokai International College (HTIC), one class done at TransPacific Hawaii College, and two classes done through the Chaminade University international student program. While the sample for this study did not represent the diversity of the adult ESL learner population in America on a percentage basis, it did provide a good cross section of speakers from varying language communities and ethnic backgrounds.

The student pretest survey, included as part of their workbook, attempted to ascertain the students' experience in ESL while also gleaned some basic demographic information on the individual respondents. Even though most students reported watching at least some television and indicated that they saw value in it as a way to learn English, this particular medium was identified as the second least-used discussion aid in their classes when ranked against other options. Movies, books, magazines, and even newspapers, ranked higher in the number of reported usages in their classes (Figure 4).

Figure 4 Types of Discussion Aids Used in Respondents' Classes

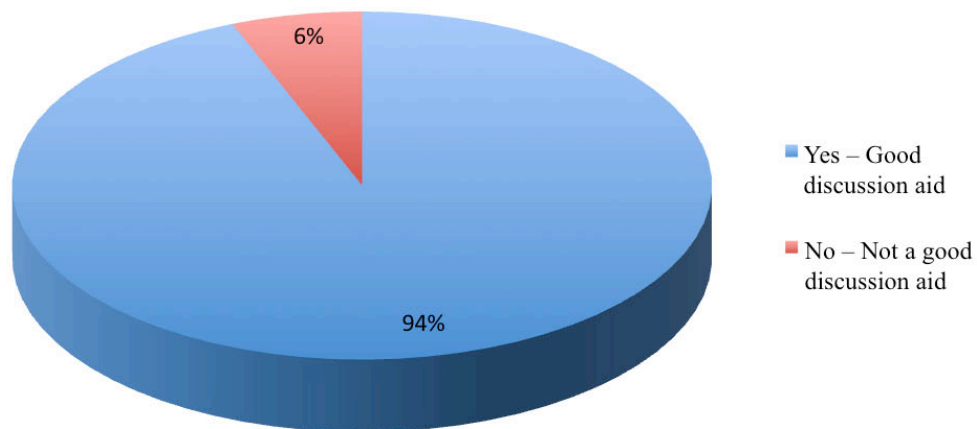


Following each class, effectiveness of the lesson was analyzed with separate surveys for teachers and separate student surveys. ESL teachers involved in the test were surveyed on the feasibility of using television commercials as a teaching tool. The teachers reported positive attitudes toward the concept. These results (Figure 3) seemed to be reflected in their students' attitudes. The teachers indicated a high interest-level on the part of their students, but cited the television commercials' cultural relevance as a concept they had not thought of using for class.

The adult ESL students indicated that the "slice-of-life" style, used in many of the commercials, infused cultural content in ways they had not considered. This placed them in agreement with the volunteer raters who evaluated the initial 50 commercials using Hall's (1959) matrix and helped establish the reliability of that group's findings. The final tabulation revealed that, of the ESL students surveyed, 94% indicated that they found elements of American culture in the TV commercials shown as part of the lesson. The ESL students did not have access to

Hall’s matrix. Eighty-eight percent of the ESL students also indicated that they had learned something new about what they perceived to be American culture (Figure 3). Another 94% indicated (Figure 5) that they thought television commercials would be a “good discussion aid in future ESL classes.”

Figure 5 Percentage of ESL Students Who Indicated TV Commercials Were a Good Discussion Aid



Summary

This chapter has presented the results of the surveys in relation to each of the research questions. The first research question concerning what, if any, elements of American culture do television commercial messages contain, was answered by reporting that they do contain elements of culture. A group of independent, volunteer raters found nine of Edward Hall’s (1959) 100 elements of culture to be extremely common. In fact, of the 50 samples viewed, the 14 raters noted nine of these 100 or more times. One element, (d) Family, was even noted as being evident 200 times. Another 15 elements were noted more than 50 times. This evidence was later confirmed, in a less systematic way, by the ESL students themselves when 94% of them indicated that they had found elements of what they considered to be American culture in the television commercials included in their lesson. Following these positive findings, the second research question was investigated. This part of the study found that television commercials can be used to teach adults English as a second language. The third research question asked whether

participants would report commercial messages used as a teaching tool to be an effective addition to an ESL program. The concept of using commercials in teaching was given positive responses both by students and teachers who used the lesson that the researcher had created for the study. The results reported in this chapter will be discussed further in Chapter Five and recommendations for future study will be outlined.

CHAPTER 5 – Discussion

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the feasibility of using television commercials as a way to facilitate teaching English as a second language by helping adult students identify elements of American culture. The three research questions that guided this study were grounded in theory and supported by research literature on media literacy in the areas of film and video, English as a second language instruction and television advertising. Each question was investigated through content analysis, comparison of treatment groups who received a sample lesson and analysis of their responses, tabulated with demographic factors. Based on the analyses of the data, a significant amount of cultural content was found in television commercials. When these commercials were used to teach lessons in several ESL classes, students and teachers alike indicated that they were useful for teaching cultural aspects of English. This chapter presents a detailed discussion of these findings, provides suggestions for future research, and ends with a summary of the study.

Summary

The first research question investigated what, if any, elements of American culture television commercial messages contain. The researcher hypothesized that they do. A group of volunteer raters, after watching each of 50 commercials presented, indicated that they do contain elements of American culture. Employing a grid of 100 different cultural elements yielded several that were more common, but most of the commercials viewed appeared to contain several different elements. While the raters were not always in complete agreement, there was enough consistency that the researcher could infer a high likelihood that, even when chosen at random, television commercials would have observable elements of culture. This conclusion was verified by the individual students who also indicated that they could not only see elements of culture in the commercials, but had learned new ones in the viewing and discussing process.

The second research question was based on the findings of the first, asking that if television commercials do contain culture, can they be used to teach English to adults who are learning it as a second language? To accomplish this, the researcher created an ESL lesson based

on television commercials. The structure of the lesson was kept quite simple so that the research focus could be on the cultural elements in the randomly chosen television commercials rather than other teaching methods created around them. The scenario was simply to play the commercials, one at a time, discuss them, and move to the next. The teachers were provided with a very short set of discussion prompts specific to each commercial. Surveys of the students and teachers revealed that they did believe that learning had taken place as a result of the lesson. Most students said that they had learned something new and useful. In addition they indicated that they thought television commercials would be a useful tool. This also answered, positively, the third and final research question that looked at whether or not participants would report commercial messages used as a teaching tool to be an effective addition to their program.

Limitations of the Findings

Although several measures were taken to insure that the most authentic and valid, as well as reliable, data were obtained in investigating the answers to the research questions in this study, there are several limitations that must be considered. While many previous studies discussed in the review of literature often looked at language transfer as a purely linguistic phenomenon, this study begins to show a more complex aspect of literacy development.

The primary limitation was that there were only 36 participants in this study from only seven language communities. While the data on these participants were collected in a simple and non-threatening way, and verified on some measures by the teachers to ensure better “triangulation” of results, this did not guarantee that findings are representative of other second language learners in other situations. A broader base, more classes in different areas, with different teachers would have provided more meaningful results.

A second limitation rests on the issue of self-reported data. Ultimately, five classes in Hawai‘i and one in Kansas tested the same lesson with similar results. Those results were that students and teachers reported generally positive attitudes toward the concept and said they had indeed learned something. A control group and several treatment groups provided with actual tests of cultural literacy would have provided additional validation that learning had indeed taken place. Since the learning outcomes in this study were self-reported, the researcher must take the respondents at their word that they actually learned something. While care was taken to gather

data from multiple sources, teachers and students, it is assumed that the data presented to the researcher were truthful and accurate.

A third limitation was in the training of the teachers. Other than some cursory written directions and some written prompts for each commercial, the teachers received no coaching on how to do the lesson. The reason for this was to simply test the concept of using television commercials as discussion starters for lessons on American culture in the English language. Since there is such a high population of students seeking this type of learning, many ESL teachers are overcommitted and teach large classes with limited resources. More training of the trainers would have been helpful. One difficulty was that some teachers appeared to require the short written prompts while others did not. Also, after comparing the results from various classes, it seemed that when the teachers indicated that they were comfortable with the concept, the students indicated that they liked the lesson better and learned more.

Contributions to the Field

The results of this research have implications for teaching practitioners, instructional designers, and researchers involved in English as a second language training. The literature is rich with studies investigating the incorporation of many types media into ESL instruction. Movies, newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and television programming have all been examined as a source of material for instructional design. Despite the fact that television commercials are so tightly woven into the fabric of American life, they have been overlooked as researchers strive for new and better sources of content for instruction. Considering that media researchers now estimate that, in their lifetimes, Americans will spend a total of three years doing nothing but watch television commercials (Kilbourne, 2000; Nielsen, 2007) it seems like an oversight to ignore this “bite-sized” source of culturally relevant material that is plentiful in supply. Kilbourne is not alone in suggesting that advertising is more than a reflection of society, in many ways it directs the evolution of our culture. Creating educational materials that help teachers and students become discerning consumers of this media could ultimately help them in many ways. One of those ways, dealt with in detail in this research, is to help students begin to make connections between American English and elements of American culture that nuance its use. Television commercials include visual content like body language, proxemics, gender and

age relationships, as well as auditory content like tone, emphasis and volume. This makes them particularly rich sources of information on these aspects of language.

Unlike movies and books, television commercials are, by their very nature, current. A typical television commercial is seldom even available to the audience for more than a few months. Often the time in circulation is less. This short “shelf life” means that these advertising messages are on the cutting edge, from a cultural point of view. Words and phrases used in television commercials are likely to contain the latest jargon, not dated phrases that may have already become passé in the vernacular. Teachers who incorporate television commercials into their ESL curriculum will be helping their students pick up on the most recent evolution of American culture and the words, phrases and gestures that frame it.

The fact that television commercials repeat on a regular basis during the time they are available is another plus. As discussed earlier, students can see a message on television, discuss it in class the next day, and then see it again that night. It is an endless source of new material, but there is enough repetition to reinforce teaching points.

A final reason to incorporate television commercials into the ESL classes is that it would present teachers with an opportunity to discuss issues like consumerism in American society, body image and ageism. While these were not specifically tested for in this research, they did come up in class discussion during the study. Awareness of these influences would be particularly helpful to younger students.

This research helped show that television commercials could contribute positively to the teaching of English as a second language. Their ubiquitous presence, the emotional connections they make and their constantly changing content all work to make them a rich source of new material for adult educators. They offer a low-cost way to provide up-to-date, ever changing material. Considering that most ESL programs are cash strapped and the learners themselves are often in low-income status, this could be a true benefit to the field.

Recommendations for Future Research

Grasping the realistic, daily issues that adult learners face in developing their literacy skills in an ESL class is a complicated issue. Depending on the individual situation, learners may even be apprehensive of the research itself. Fear of an anti-immigrant climate can make subjects reluctant to even participate. Considering this, it seems that the most likely source of inquiry

would be with existing classes that have already built a bond of trust with their teacher. This study has addressed, to some degree, a gap in the research pointed out in the literature review. That said, several new directions for future inquiry evolve from this research.

Future research directions might include more studies with pre-screened, rather than randomly selected, television commercials. In this way the researcher could select messages that were laden with specific elements of culture. This would provide a more focused discussion and help make the individual concepts easier to spot for the students. Several instructors, in post lesson interviews, did indicate that they would have liked it if the various commercials had been grouped by concept. Examples of such conceptual groupings might be mother/daughter relationships, worker/boss interaction, or meeting members of the opposite sex and gender roles.

A more extended study, with controls, could also provide meaningful data. As stated earlier, the positive outcomes of this study were largely based on the self-assessments of the students. Basically, they said that they learned something and that they thought the concept of using television commercials was beneficial. A questionnaire that actually tested their cultural knowledge before and after the treatment would provide meaningful data and help validate the concept.

Finally, simply replicating this study, but providing the individual teachers with a more extensive explanation of how to identify and discuss elements of culture would provide verification that the television commercials can be useful tools.

Summary of the Study

In February, 1998 Saatchi & Saatchi, one of the world's largest advertising agencies, began running a series of commercials that reflected their research on women's attitudes toward the agency's commercials for Kellogg's Special K cereal. One ad featured a group of men seated in a bar. Worried about their weight, they "resolve" not to let their size define them. One says that he has to accept the fact that he has his mother's thighs and another asks if his jeans made his "butt look big." While this was a culture-laden, purposeful attempt to reach out to American women, one could not help but wonder what a non-English speaker would think of it. Is this an example of how American men talk to each other? Is this what they think is important? In the end, the targeted viewers, women, are asked why they obsess over these things when men do not. Sensible eating, of Special K cereal, is offered as a solution.

This type of multi-layered message is common in television advertising. This particular example was a joke on men and on advertising itself. It also pointed out common obsession of American women and did it a way that made it all seem laughable. The inside joke, as evident here, is a way to bond with the audience. The idea is that, if the sender and receiver of the message see the same irony, the receiver must think the same way on other things. In the marketing communication profession, this translates to: I get the joke, I see the point, I understand the irony; therefore, I am part of an elite group; I am on your side. The intent being for the consumer to ultimately ask, “Where do I buy your product?”

While messages like this are rich in examples of American culture and could be very useful as teaching tools for adult ESL students, the review of literature reveals that they have been largely overlooked. It seems that this is more than just a missed opportunity to provide a low-cost teaching tool; it could also mean that the language learners must figure much of this out for themselves. It would be difficult to argue that these neophytes to American English and American culture are immune or even oblivious to commercial messages. They are literally bombarded with commercials. Advertising pays for many of the costs of mass media and almost all of the expense for broadcast media. That means that ads are a regular part of their lives. Using them as a teaching tool would not only help in language acquisition. It could also make these students more cautious consumers and astute audience members.

This study showed that television commercials do contain elements of American culture. While some elements were more prevalent than others, most commercials had several. The literature on language acquisition indicated that the culture associated with any language is an important part of learning and most respondents in this study agreed. It was also shown that television commercials could be successfully used to help adult ESL students learn about language and culture. Finally, the study showed that teachers and students alike believed that learning had taken place in the process.

Anecdotally, when ESL teachers were told about the concept of using television commercials for instruction, they indicated, almost to a person, that they thought it was a good idea. Later interviews with teachers indicated that they themselves might have done a better job with the treatment if they had had training in media literacy in advance. Still, the results were positive. Considering the low relative cost of teaching materials with these messages, the likelihood that cultural content will continue to be a evident, and the ubiquitous nature of

television commercials in America, this concept could be a boon to ESL educators. A low-cost, up-to-date source of cultural examples woven into everyday American English use, all with very high production values, might be too good to overlook.

REFERENCES

- Adalian, J. (2007). NBC Universal launches Didja.com ad friendly video site to combat YouTube. *Variety* (August 8). Retrieved August 10, 2007, from www.variety.com
- Adeodu, R. A. (1997). *Teachers' understandings of educating in culturally diverse contexts*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
- Adler, R. B., Proctor, R.F., & Towne, N. (2005). *Looking out looking in*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Alford, J. (2001). Learning language and critical literacy: Adolescent ESL students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45(3).
- American Immigration Law Foundation. (2002). *Immigration policy report*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Appel, J., & Appel, S. (1982). The huddled masses and the little red schoolhouse. In B. Weiss (Ed.), *American education and the European immigrant* (pp. 17–30). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Arendt, J. (1974). Capturing student interest with visuals. In F. Grittner (Ed.), *Careers, communication and culture in foreign language teaching*. Skokie, IL: National Textbook Company.
- Aristotle (1991). *The Art of Rhetoric*. London: Penguin Books.
- Assael, H., & Poltrack, D. F. (2006). Using viewer attitudes to evaluate TV program effectiveness. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 46(1), 93+.
- Bartlett, F. C. (1932). *Remembering: A study in experimental and social psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bartsch, R. (1987). *Norms of language: Theoretical and practical aspects*. New York and London: Longman.
- Bechtel, R. B., Achelpohl, C., & Akers, R. (1972). Correlates between observed behavior and questionnaire responses on television viewing. In E. A. Rubinstein, G. A. Comstock, & J. P. Murray (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Vol. 4. Television in Day-to-Day Life: Patterns of Use*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Benedict, R. (1934). *Patterns of culture*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

- Berger, A.A. (1998). *Media research techniques* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Biagi, S. (2003). *Media impact: An introduction to mass media* (3rd ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Brown, H. D. (1994). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Brooks, E. & Fox, L. (1995). *Making peace: A reading/writing/thinking text on global community*. New York: St. Martin's.
- Bucy, E. P. (2005). *Living in the information age* (2nd ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Campbell, R., Martin, C. R., & Fabos, B. (2006). *Media and culture* (5th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Capraro, F. (2002). *A journal study of the spoken English learning experiences of prospective international teaching assistants*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
- Cary, S. (2004). *Going graphic: Comics at work in the multilingual classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Chomsky, N. (1965). *Aspects of a theory of syntax*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Christensen, L. T. (2001). Popular culture and everyday life. *Journal of Communication*, 51(1), 225–227.
- Colbert, S. (2007). *I am America (and so can you!)*. New York: Grand Central Publishing.
- Collins, M. P. (2003). *Invisible adult educators: Public online discussion group moderators' perceptions of their roles, tasks and responsibilities*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.
- Cosgrave, J. F. (1999). *Identity, particularity, and value: Interpretive conflict and the collective representation of culture*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- Costa, T. (2001). What can we learn from a digital database of runaway slave advertisements? *International Social Science Review*, 76(1/2), 8.
- DeBord-Schulze, D. (1980). Revealing American culture through Time magazine advertising in teaching English as a foreign language. Dissertation Abstract International. The

University of Texas at Austin. Austin, TX. Dissertation Abstracts International, Vol. XV, 134. (UMI No. 8109153)

Dewey, J. (1938). *Experience and education*. New York: Macmillan.

Drucker, M. J. (2003). What reading teachers should know about ESL learners: Good teaching is teaching for all. In *The Reading Teacher*, 57(1).

Duff, P. (2001). Pop culture and ESL students: Intertextuality, identity, and participation in classroom discussions. In *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45.

ESL Magazine (2007). Chicago: Modern English Publishing.

Eun, J. O. (2003). *How idealized American English norms are created and reinforced in English lessons on television: A discourse analysis of two popular English language TV shows in Korea*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

Fishman, J. A. (1960). A systemization of the Whorfian hypothesis. *Behavioral Science*, 5, (May), 1–29.

Freire, P. (1985). *Politics of education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Frey, L.R., Botan, C.H., Friedman, P.G., & Kreps, G.L. (1992) *Interpreting communication research: A case study approach*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Furstenberg, G., Levet, S., English, K., & Maillet, K. (2001). Giving a virtual voice to the silent language of culture: The Cultura Project. *Language, Learning & Technology*, 5(1), 55. Retrieved July 10, 2007, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002392802>

Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, R. C., & Lambert, W. E. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Gardner Flores, L. (2007, April). The transition from adult literacy ESL programs to academic reading and writing: Next steps for English language learners. In *Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy & Learning Literacy Links*, 11(1).

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Gledhill, C. (1987). *Home is where the heart is: Studies in melodrama and the woman's film*. London: British Film Institute.

- Goodenough, W. H. (1964). Cultural anthropology and linguistics. In D. Hymes (Ed.), *Language and culture in society: A reader in linguistics and anthropology*. New York: Harper Row.
- Goodenough, W. H. (1981). *Culture, language, and society* (2nd ed.). Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings.
- Green, J. (2004). Dumb and Dumber: Why Are Campaign Commercials So Bad? *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 294, July-August
- Greenberg, J. (1971). *Language, culture, and communication*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Griffith, M., & Hancock, J. (2006). A Survey of State ELL/ESL Funding Systems. *ECS State Notes*, Retrieved November 21, 2008, from www.ecs.org
- Groom, W. (1986). *Forest Gump*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., Inc.
- Hafernik, J. J., Messerschmitt, D. S., & Vandrick, S. (1996). ESL in the academy today. In *Education*, 116.
- Hall, E.T. (1959). *The silent language*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Hall, E. T. (1969). *The hidden dimension*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Hall, E. T. (1976). *Beyond culture*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press.
- Hampp, A. (2007, August 9). A website where ads are the draw: USA Network launches Didja.com with eye toward marketers. *Madison +Vine*. Retrieved August 11, 2007, from www.AdAge.com
- Harrington, S. (1972). Enticers, 1970; on TV, Who do they think they are? In F. Voelker & L. Voelker (Eds.), *Mass media: Focus on our society*. New York: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich.
- Henninger, D. (1974). Worriers, swingers, shoppers: Psychographics can tell who'll buy Crest, who'll buy Ultra Brite. In W.D. Lutz (Ed.), *The age of communication*. Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company.
- Herr, N. (2001). Television & health. Compiled by TV-Free America. *The sourcebook for teaching science*. Retrieved April 21, 2007, from www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health
- Herron, C. A., & Seay, I. (1991). The effect of authentic oral texts on student listening comprehension in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 24, 487–495.

- Herzog, G. (1949). Linguistic approaches to culture and personality. In S. S. Sargent & M. W. Smith (Eds.), *Culture and personality*. Proceedings of an interdisciplinary conference held under auspices of the Viking Fund (November 7 and 8).
- Hilles, S. & Lynch, D. (1997). Culture as content. In M.A. Snow & D. M. Brinton (Eds.), *The content-based classroom: Perspectives on integrating language and content* (pp. 371–376). New York: Longman.
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences, international differences in work-related values (Cross cultural research and methodology)*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hubbard, B., & Mitchell, N. (2002, March 4). Many tongues, few dollars. *Rocky Mountain News*, 10.
- Huerta-Macias, A. (2003). Meeting the Challenge of Adult Education: A Bilingual Approach to Literacy and Career Development Educators Who Struggle with the Practice of Teaching Adults a Second Language Should Find This Model Helpful. In *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 47.
- Hughes, L. (2003). *The role of pop culture in the self-development of midlife women*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, Athens.
- Hymes, D. (1974). *Foundations in sociolinguistics: An ethnographic approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Iheanacho, C. (1997). *Effects of two multimedia computer-assisted language learning programs on vocabulary acquisition of intermediate level ESL students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. (etd-11397-193839)
- Jacobs, G., & Farrel, T., (2001). Paradigm shift: Understanding and implementing change in second language education. *TESL-EJ*, A-1.
- James, C. E. (1995). *Seeing ourselves: Exploring race, ethnicity and culture*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.
- Kaplan, R. B. (1972). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. In H. B. Allen & R. N. Campbell (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second language: A book of readings*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kasper, L.F. (2000). *Content-based college ESL instruction*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Kelling, G. W. (1975). *Language: Mirror, tool, and weapon*. Chicago: Nelson-Hall.
- Kendall, D. (2001). *Sociology in our times: The essentials* (3rd ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

- Kilbourne, J. (2000). *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*. New York: Simon and Schuster
- Klopf, D. W. (2001). *Intercultural encounters: The fundamentals of intercultural communication*. 5th ed. Englewood, CO: Morton.
- Korn, C. (2002). *Introduction to human communication*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Koskinen, P. S., Markham, P. L., Knable, J. E., Jennesma, C. J., & Kane, W. K. (1996). Captioned television and the vocabulary acquisition of adult second language correctional facility residents. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 24(4), 359–373.
- Kramsch, C. (1997). *The privilege of the non-native speaker*. PMLA 112, 359–369.
- Kramsch, C. (1998). The privilege of the intercultural speaker. In M. Byran & M. Fleming (Eds.), *Language learning in intercultural perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography* (pp. 16–31). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Kurtz, J. (1997, January 1). Dream girls: Women in advertising. *USA Today Magazine*, 10.
- Lado, R. (1986). How to compare two cultures. In J. M. Valdes (Ed.), *Culture bound: Bridging the cultural gap in language teaching*. Cambridge, U K: Cambridge University Press.
- Lander, H. (1966). *Language and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Larroy, E. A. (2005). Latino\’a ethnic identity in the new diaspora: Perspectives of a select group of Latino\’a undergraduates at a predominantly white land grant university. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, VA.
- Leiss, W., Kline, S., Jhally, S., & Botterill, J. (2005). *Social communication in advertising: Consumption in the mediated marketplace* (3rd ed). New York: Routledge.
- Leontiev, A.N. (1977). *Activity and consciousness*. Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Littlejohn, S.W. (2002). *Theories of human communication* (7th ed). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Littlewood, W. (1982). *Foreign and second language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Lutz, W.D. (Ed.). (1974). *The age of communication*. Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing Company.
- Manning, J. B. (2005). *Development of a prototype multimedia environment to support Hispanic English language learners' academic learning through embedded cognitive strategy instruction*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. (etd-02152005-143523)
- Marchand, J. W. (1975, Fall). Culture components in second Language teaching. *Studies in Language Learning, 1*, 1–20.
- Martin, J., & Nakayama, T. (2007). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication* (3rd ed). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Martin, K. (2003). Family-Friendly Programming: Providing More Tools for Parents. *Federal Communications Law Journal*, Vol. 55, 2003, Retrieved November 20, 2008, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002392802>
- Mastro, D.E., & Behm-Morawitz, E. (2005, Spring). Latino Representation on Primetime Television. In *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 82(1).
- McLead, B. (1976, June). The relevance of anthropology to language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly, 10*, 1–20.
- McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: Mentor.
- McMorrow, M. (2005). English language teaching in the movies. In *Essential Teacher*, 2(2).
- Mead, M. (1961). Culture in foreign language teaching: The anthropologist's point of view. Report on a *Conference on the Meaning and Role of Culture in Foreign Language Teaching*. Georgetown: Institute of Language and Linguistics, Georgetown University, March 10–11.
- Moriarty, S., & Everett, S. (1994). Commercial breaks: A viewing behavior study. *Journalism Quarterly* 71: 346-355.
- Multimedia Source Guide (1995). *T H E Journal (Technological Horizons In Education)*, 22(10).
- Mumford, S. (2005, February). Using creative thinking to find new uses for realia. *The Internet TESL Journal, XI*(2). Retrieved June 3, 2007, from <http://iteslj.org/>
- Munoz, C., & Murguia, J. (2005, November). From immigrant to citizen: Most still want to become Americans. Unlike in past eras, though, our government is doing far too little to integrate them into U.S. society. *The American Prospect*, 16.
- Nielsen, The A.C., Company, (2007). Nielsen Media Research. Retrieved August 17, from <http://www.nielsenmedia.com/nc/portal/site/public>

- Neuman, S. B. (2005). Television as a learning environment: A theory of synergy. In *Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy through the Communicative and Visual Arts* (pp. 15–21). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Nieto, S. (1996). *Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education* (2nd ed). New York: Longman Publishers.
- Nostrand, H. L. (1974). Empathy for a second culture: Motivations and techniques. In G. A. Jarvis (Ed.), *Responding to New Realities*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook.
- Ovando, C. J., & Collier, V. P. (1985). *Bilingual and ESL Classrooms: Teaching in multicultural contexts*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.
- Oxford, R. L., Lavine, R. Z., & Crookall, D. (1989). Language learning strategies, the communicative approach, and their classroom implication. *Foreign Language Annals*, 22, 29–39.
- Oxford, R. L., Park-Oh, Y., Ito, S., & Sumrall, M. (1993). Learning a language by satellite television: What influences student achievement? *System* 21, 31–48.
- Panferov, S. K. (2002). *Exploring the literacy development of Russian and Somali ESL learners a collaborative ethnography*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- Parrish, T. B., Linquanti, R., Merickel, A., Quick, H. E., Laird, J., & Esra, P. (2001). *Effects of the Implementation of Proposition 227 on the Education of English Learners, K - 12. Year One Report*. Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research
- Pear, R. (2007, July 15). Little-known group claims a win on immigration. *The New York Times*, Retrieved July 15, 2007, from <http://www.nytimes.com>
- Petersen, E., (1997). Tips on Communicating with Adolescents and Teens. *ParentTalk*, Retrieved November 21, 2008, from www.parentsplace.com
- Philipsen, G. (1989). An ethnographic approach to communication studies. In B. Dervin, D. Grossberg, B. J. O’Keefe, & E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication*, (vol. 2, pp. 258–68). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Philipsen, G. (1992). *Speaking culturally: Explorations in social communication*. Albany, NY: State University of New York at Albany Press.
- Phillips, D. (2001). *How humour in television commercials reflects and determines contemporary societal issues*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon. (etd-10212004-002546)

- Pica, T. (1994). Questions from the language classroom: Research perspectives. *TESOL Quarterly*, 28(1), 49–79.
- Porter, D., & Roberts, J. (1981). Authentic listening activities. *ELT Journal*, 36, 37–47.
- ProLiteracy America Online Information Center (2004, November). *Information Grids: ESL Teaching Tools*. Retrieved March 18, 2007, from www.proliteracy.org
- ProLiteracy America Online Information Center (2004, November). *Use music in ESL instruction*. Retrieved March 20, 2007, from www.proliteracy.org
- Rash, J. (2007, August 17). Cable's breakthrough season owes a lot to tweens. *Ad Age Mediaworks*. Retrieved August 17, 2007, from http://adage.com/mediaworks/article?article_id=119931
- Reid, L. N. & King, K. W. (2003). Agency creatives like TV advertising best. *Newspaper Research Journal*, 24(3), 6+. Retrieved August 17, 2006, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5002556724>
- Reinard, J. C. (2001). *Introduction to communication research*. Boston: McGraw Hill.
- Reinard, W. (1982). *Foreign and second language learning*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Rogers, C. V., & Medley, Jr., F. W. (1988). Language with a purpose: Using authentic materials in the foreign language classroom. *Foreign Language Annals*, 21, 467–478.
- Roman, K. & Mass, J. (1992). *How to advertise: A professional guide for the advertiser. What works. What doesn't. And why*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Russell, C. G. (2000). Culture, language and behavior: Perception. *ETC.: A Review of General Semantics*, 57(2), 189.
- Sapir, E. (1949). *Selected Writings of Edward Sapir*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sapir, E. (2001). *Le Langage* (1st edition in English). Paris: Payot.
- Saville-Troike, M. (1976). *Foundations for teaching English as a second language: Theory and method for multicultural education*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Scarcella, R. C. (1994). *Tapestry: Power through the written word*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Scarcella, R. C., & Oxford, R. L. (1992). *The tapestry of language learning: The individual in the communicative classroom*. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Signorielli, N. & Morgan, M. (Eds.). (1990). *Cultivation analysis: New directions in media effects research*. Newbury Park: Sage.

- Singer, M. R., (1998). *Perception and identity in intercultural communication*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- Smelser, N. (1991). *Social paralysis and social change: British working-class education in the nineteenth century*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Smith, B. (1997, July). Virtual realia. *The Internet TESL Journal*, III(7). Retrieved June 7, 2007, from <http://iteslj.org/>
- Stagich, T. (1998). Cultural context and meaning in foreign language learning. *General Linguistics*, 36, 71–79.
- Steinberg, B. (2007, August 13). Formula for TiVo-proof ads remains elusive. *Ad Age Mediaworks*. Retrieved August 13, 2007, from http://adage.com/mediaworks/article?article_id=119931
- Sterling, B. (1992). *The hacker crackdown: Law and disorder on the electronic frontier*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Straubhaar, J., & LaRose, R. (2004). *Media now: Understanding media, culture, and technology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Tang, R. (1999). *The Internet TESL Journal*, V(8).
- Thanajaro, M. (2000). *Using authentic materials to develop listening comprehension in the English as a second language classroom*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg. (etd-03012000-00590032)
- Torrey, J.W. (1971). Second language learning. In C.E. Reed (Ed.), *The Learning of Language*. New York: Appleton Century Crofts.
- Trivedi, H.C. (1974, January). Culture in language learning. *English Language Teaching Journal*, 33, 92–97.
- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, Ethnic and Hispanic Statistics Branch. (2002). *Current population survey*. Washington, DC: Author.
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, Center for Adult English Language Acquisition. (2007, August). *CAELA Currents*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Vivian, J. (2005). *The media of mass communication* (7th ed). Boston: Pearson.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

- Watson-Gegeo, K. A. (1988). Ethnography in ESL: Defining the essentials. *TESOL Quarterly*, 22(4), 575–592.
- Wells, G. (1999). *Dialogic inquiry: Toward a sociocultural practice and theory of education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wells, W., Burnett, J., & Moriarty, S. (2000). *Advertising principles and practice* (5th ed). Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Weschler, R. (2007). *The English learner movie guides*. Retrieved July 18, 2007, from www.ESLnotes.com
- Whorf, B. L. (1956). The relation of habitual thought and behavior to language. In J.B. Carroll (Ed.), *Language, thought and reality: Selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wiburg, K., & Butler-Pascoe, M.E. (2002). *Technology and teaching English language learners*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1979). *Explorations in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1987). The roles of teacher and learner. In *ELT Journal*, 41(2), 83–88.
- Widdowson, H. G. (1990). *Aspects of language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Widhalm, S. (2006, November 27). Immigrants tackle English; called ‘the key’ to achieving success in the U.S. *The Washington Times*, B1.
- Winthrop, R. H. (1991). *Dictionary of concepts in cultural anthropology*. New York: Greenwood.
- Woltman Elpers, J. L. C. M. (2003). *Consumers’ moment-to-moment processing of television commercials*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Groningen, Groningen, The Netherlands.
- Wood, J. T. (2003). *Communication in our lives* (3rd ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Young, C. E. (2004). Capturing the flow of emotion in television commercials: A new approach. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(2), 202+.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Letter for Prospective Participants

Dear _____,

I am a communication professor at Chaminade University of Honolulu, completing a dissertation in Adult, Occupational, and Continuing Education at Kansas State University. I received your name from Shannon Stuckert, ESL Director for USD 308 in Hutchinson, Kansas. This letter is to ask for your assistance in gathering some data for my research.

I have created some ESL classroom materials that attempt to use television commercials to demonstrate elements of American culture. Television advertising was selected because of its accessibility, low cost, and visual as well as auditory content. The study will investigate the commercials' usefulness in teaching American Standard English.

You will receive a video of selected TV commercials, a discussion model, a Q&A format follow-up discussion guide, and a post-test measurement instrument. Depending on how many students you have and how talkative they are, each of the two lessons should take about 30 minutes. I will also survey ESL teachers like you on the feasibility of the lesson and interest-level of your students. I am hoping your class will find it interesting and fun.

This study will investigate the following research questions:

1. What, if any, elements of American culture do television commercial messages contain?
2. If television commercials do contain culture, can they be used to teach English to adults who are learning it as a second language?
3. Finally, do participants report commercial messages used as a teaching tool to be an effective addition to their program?

The “slice-of-life” style used in many commercials may have the potential to provide cultural content in a meaningful way. If television commercials are determined to be useful in ESL education and in-class testing shows positive outcomes, the study results could offer ESL classes low cost, up-to-date teaching materials to augment classes.

Thank you for considering my request. If you would like to participate, simply fill out the enclosed response card and I will send you the materials.

Sincerely,

Cliff Bieberly

Appendix B – Reply Cards for Potential Participants

Cliff Bieberly
Communication Department
Chaminade University of Honolulu
3140 Waialae Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96816

Yes, I would like to help with your ESL lesson that uses television commercials to teach elements of American culture. I understand that I will receive a video with 20 to 25 commercials, a Q&A discussion guide and a survey for students. I will return the appropriate release forms before starting.

Please send the materials to me at this address:

Appendix C – Cover Letter to Participants

Dear _____,

I want to thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. I think you will find it simple and hopefully, fun. Just use the ESL classroom materials with the video of selected TV commercials, complete the Q&A format follow-up discussion guide, and answer the survey questions.

By participating in the study, you may also help other students like yourself by providing interesting, low-cost learning tools. If you have any questions or would like more information, please use the contact address below, or simply e-mail me at: cbieberl@chaminade.edu

Thank you again for helping.

Sincerely,

Cliff Bieberly
Chaminade University of Honolulu
3140 Waialae Avenue
Honolulu, HI 96816

(808) 735-4727

Appendix D – KSU Informed Consent Form

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

PROJECT TITLE: Television Commercials as a Window on American Culture for Teaching English as a Second Language to Adults

APPROVAL DATE OF PROJECT: Oct. 1, 2007

EXPIRATION DATE OF PROJECT: Dec. 31, 2007

PRINCIPLE INVESTIGATOR: W. Franklin Spikes, Ph.D.

CO-INVESTIGATOR: Clifford J. Bieberly, MAC

CONTACT AND PHONE FOR ANY PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS:

W. Franklin Spikes, Ed.D., Professor, Educational Leadership, 351 Bluemont Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-5873
wfs3@ksu.edu

IRB CHAIR CONTACT/PHONE INFORMATION:

Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, 785-532-5873.

OR

Jerry Jaax, Associate Vice Provost for Research Compliance and University Veterinarian, 1 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

SPONSOR OF PROJECT: College of Education

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH: This research will expand the knowledge base for teaching methods suitable for use in adult English as a second language classes. It will also add to the literature on adult education. It is hoped that the knowledge created from this research will contribute to the improvement in the ESL classroom by suggesting a low-cost effective way to communicate aspects of American culture to students.

PROCEDURE OR METHODS TO BE USED: Adult students and teachers will view and discuss a selected set of television commercials. Data will be collected via a semi-structured private survey/interview with each participant. Each participant will be asked to review his or her

survey to ensure that the transcription is accurate, and that the intended perspective of the participant was interpreted correctly by the researcher.

LENGTH OF STUDY: Approximately three thirty-minute classes will be conducted prior to the survey, which will take approximately one hour. There could also be possible follow-up questions to ESL teachers via telephone or e-mail during the final data analysis stage.

RISKS ANTICIPATED: None

EXTENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY: Confidentiality related to all aspects of the data collected from each participant will be strictly maintained. The researcher will conduct any interviews in a private location. Respondents' names will never be attached to surveys. The respondent will be asked to select a pseudonym to be used in labeling the data collection materials as well as in the final version of the dissertation. All data collection materials will be stored in a secured location. There is the potential that this research will be submitted for publication following the successful defense of the dissertation. In this case, the identity of the participants will continue to remain confidential.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION: I understand this project is research, and that my participation is completely voluntary. I also understand that if I decide to participate in this study, I may withdraw my consent at any time, and stop participating at any time without explanation or penalty.

I verify that my signature below indicates that I have read and understand this consent form, and willingly agree to participate in this study under the terms described, and that my signature acknowledges that I have received a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

Participant Name: _____
(please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness to Signature: _____
(project staff)

Date: _____

Appendix E – Demographics Questionnaire

Television Commercials as Window on American Culture

Gender: Female Male

How long have you been taking ESL classes? _____

How many times a week do you attend an ESL class? _____

What do you consider to be your first language? _____

What do you consider to be your “native” country? _____

How long have you lived in the USA? _____

How many televisions are in your house? 0 1 2 3 4 more

How many hours a day do you spend watching television? 0 1 2 3 4 more

Do you usually watch television with the captions turned on? Yes No

Do you pay attention to television commercials? Yes No Sometimes

Did you find the TV commercial lesson interesting? Yes No Sort of

Was the TV commercial lesson fun? Yes No Sort of

Did the TV commercial lesson help you understand any English?

Yes No Don't know

Can you describe something you learned from the TV commercial lesson?

Your approximate age (please select a range):

18 – 23 24 – 29 30 - 34 35 – 39 40 – 44

45 – 49 50 – 54 55 – 59 60 – 64 65 +

Do you have family members who speak English well? Yes No

Do you have a child or family member who interprets English for you? Yes No

Do you speak English at home? Yes No

How would you describe your English ability?

None Some Good Very Good

Appendix F –

National Commercials Aired During Prime-Time in November 2001

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
FORD	CARS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	26
VERIZON WIRELESS	FAMILY TALKS ON CELL PHONES	24
SUBWAY	JARROD TALKS ABOUT SOME NEW SANDWICHES	23
CHRYSLER	FAMILIES TRAVEL FOR THE HOLIDAYS	22
JEEP	SUV DRIVES TO A CABIN	17
K-MART	BLUE LIGHTS RUN AROUND THE STORE	17
BURGER KING	LORD OF THE RINGS GLASSES SHOWN	16
KAY JEWELERS	WOMAN FINDS A GIFT UNDER THE X-MAS TREE	15
SPRINT PCS	MAN GETS A PANDA SUIT INSTEAD OF A SANTA SUIT	14
MCDONALDS	GUY ORDERS FROM THE NEW VALUE MENU	12
NISSAN	CAR DRIVES THROUGH THE CITY; ALTIMA	12
WENDY'S	DAVE FLIPS A COIN TO EAT BURGER OR CHICKEN SAND.	12
DR. PEPPER	GARTH BROOKS SINGS HIS NEW SONG	10
KFC	JASON ALEXANDER PASSES OUT POPCORN CHICKEN	10
KODAK	GIRLS TAKE PICTURES WHILE RIDING IN A CAR	10
LONG JOHN SILVER'S	SHRIMP TALKS ABOUT THEIR FOOD	10
MCDONALDS	WOMEN EXCHANGE SWEATERS FOR THEIR HUSBANDS	10
SONIC	EXECUTIVE DELIVERS FOOD WEARING SKATES	10
SPRINT PCS	FAMILY VACATIONS IN PALM SPRINGS BY MISTAKE	10
APPLEBEE'S	FOOD WITH HONEY BBQ SAUCE SHOWN	9
BANK OF AMERICA	HOCKEY GOALIE GETS SCORED ON REPEATEDLY	9
BURLINGTON COAT	GUYS MODEL THE LATEST CLOTHING FASHIONS	9
HYUNDAI	CAR DRIVES THROUGH A VILLAGE; SONATA	9
LOWE'S	FAMILY GETS STUFF FOR THE HOLIDAYS	9
MERCURY	SUV DRIVES THROUGH A CITY; 0% FINANCING	9
SONICARE	TOOTHBRUSH VIBRATES IN WATER	9
SPRINT PCS	FOOTBALL PLAYERS PLAY WITH CAPT. AND TENILLE	9
WAL-MART	KIDS SHOP WITH COPS	9
AT&T	CARTOON DAD AND DAUGHTER TALK ON PHONE	8
CHEVY	CARS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	8
COVERGIRL	BRANDY SINGS AND WEARS LIPSTICK	8
DODGE	LOUD FAMILY GETS TOGETHER FOR HOLIDAYS; 0% FINAN.	8
ENERGIZER	BUNNY DANCES IN A BATTERY	8
HOME DEPOT	BIG "0" CRUSHES WORDS ON THE SCREEN	8
HOME DEPOT	EMPLOYEES SHOW OFF PRODUCTS	8
KAY JEWELERS	COUPLE DECORATES THE X-MAS TREE	8
OFFICE DEPOT	MACHINES IN STORE PLAY X-MAS CAROL	8
SIMON MALLS	PEOPLE HELP EACH OTHER FOR THE HOLIDAYS	8
TACO BELL	MEN IN A GARAGE TALK ABOUT A BURRITO	8
TOYS R US	MAN TALKS TO A GIRAFFE ABOUT TOYS	8
WAL-MART	PRODUCTS FOR A SALE ARE SHOWN	8
WENDY'S	FOOTBALL TEAM FLIPS A COIN BEFORE A GAME	8
WOODBIDGE WINE	MAN SITS AND TALKS ABOUT QUALITY WINE	8
DODGE	CARS SHOWN WITH X-MAS LIGHTS	7

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
FORD	BAJA TRUCK DRIVES THROUGH THE DESERT	7
KOHL'S	PEOPLE GO TO A BIG SALE	7
KOHL'S	PEOPLE GO TO EARLY BIRD SALE	7
OLIVE GARDEN	WOMAN SHARES HER SECRET RECIPES	7
PIER 1 IMPORTS	KIRSTIE ALLEY GOES SHOPPING WITH A FRIEND	7
1800 MEDICARE	LESLIE NIELSEN WRECKS A CALL CENTER	6
APPLE COMPUTER	MAN DANCES AROUND WITH AN IPOD	6
ARBY'S	CAROLLERS SING ABOUT 5 SANDWICHES	6
CAPITAL ONE	GHOSTS APPEAR WITH CREDIT CARD BILLS	6
COOL WHIP	FAMILIES EAT FOOD WITH COOL WHIP	6
FORD	GUY IN T-BIRD PICKS UP A GIRL INSTEAD OF RACING	6
MICROSOFT	PEOPLE FLY AROUND FOR NEW WINDOWS XP	6
NFL GAME DAY 2002	FOOTBALL PLAYERS CHASE AFTER A BALL	6
OLD NAVY	ORNAMENT DISPLAYS SALES AND SAVINGS	6
PENTIUM 4	ALIEN IS A DJ ON THE SPACESHIP	6
SONIC	COUPLE LOOKS AT NECKLACE COVERED IN CHILI	6
TJ MAXX	WOMEN GO SHOPPING, THEN GO OUT TO EAT	6
ZALES	BRACELET ROTATES ON SCREEN	6
7UP	MAN PAINTS FLOOR DURING THE GAME	5
ADVIL	ARTHRITIC WOMAN PLAYS JAZZ ON THE PIANO	5
CAMPBELLS	MAN HAS TO COOK DINNER	5
CANON	ANDRE AGASSI PLAYS TENNIS AS SCENE CHANGES	5
CINGULAR WIRELESS	CARTOON FAMILY TALKS ON CELL PHONES	5
CITIZEN WATCH	WATCH BATTERY IS USED AS A HOCKEY PUCK	5
CITIZEN WATCH	WOMAN HAS A BATTERY IN HER BELLY BUTTON	5
DODGE	TRUCK UNLOADS AT THE AIRPORT	5
FORD	FAMILY TALKS ABOUT THEIR SUV	5
GENERAL FOODS	COUPLE DRINKS COFFEE IN A WRECKED APARTMENT	5
HALLMARK	MEN BRING BEARS TO A WOMAN'S CABIN	5
KFC	MONSTER MEAL IS EATEN BY A FAMILY	5
KLEENEX	MAN WIPES KID'S NOSE LAYING IN THE CRIB	5
M&M'S	CANDY MEETS SANTA	5
MARSHALL'S	PEOPLE ENJOY PRODUCTS FROM STORE	5
MASTERCARD	KID FINDS TALKING PRESENT IN THE CLOSET	5
NEXIUM DRUG	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT ACID REFLUX	5
NIKE	PEOPLE RUN IN THE RAIN	5
NORELCO	GUYS AT ASK JEEVES USE SHAVER	5
NORELCO	MAN HOLDS A PURSE IN A STORE	5
OCEAN SPRAY	WOMAN JUICES CRANBERRIES	5
OFFICE DEPOT	WOMAN SHOPS AT STORE FOR HOLIDAYS	5
OLD NAVY	PEOPLE DANCE AROUND IN PAJAMA PANTS	5
PROGRESSO	BETTER CHICKEN SOUP SHOWN	5
RENT A CENTER	JOHN MADDEN TALKS ABOUT RENTING	5
RUBBERMAID	BUTLERS USE LADDER TO SCREW IN LIGHTBULBS	5
SC JOHNSON	MAN TALKS ABOUT SC JOHNSON PRODUCTS	5
SEARS	MEN WATCH A BIG SCREEN TV	5
SEARS	WOMAN SETS HER CLOCK FOR A SALE	5
TARGET	PEOPLE DANCE WITH TARGET PRODUCTS	5
TOYOTA	CARS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	5
VERIZON WIRELESS	FREE-UP PLAN DESCRIBED WITH TECHNO MUSIC	5
VISA	PEOPLE GO SNOWBOARDING	5
VOICESTREAM	GUY THROWS A PHONE INTO A LAKE FOR A DOG	5

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
VOICESTREAM	WOMAN USES KITCHEN PHONE FOR HER CHORES	5
ZALES	RING ROTATES ON SCREEN	5
1800 MEDICARE	LESLIE NIELSEN WRECKS A HOSPITAL ROOM	4
A.O.L	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT NEW VERSION 7.0	4
ALKA SELTZER PLUS	WOMAN WITH A COLD FREEZES LIKE ICE	4
AUDI	MAN PICKS UP PIZZA IN FANCY CAR	4
BANK OF AMERICA	MAN FALLS TRYING TO SKI	4
BEST BUY	BABY THINKS A BIKER IS SANTA	4
BRAUN	SHAVER CLEANS ITSELF	4
BRAUN ORAL B	COUPLE ADORES EACH OTHER'S MOUTHS	4
CHEX	WOMAN REMEMBERS PARTIES WITH CHEX MIX	4
CHRYSLER	WOMAN STEALS MAN'S PT CRUISER	4
DIAMOND IS FOREVER	YOUNG AND OLD COUPLE WALK IN THE PARK	4
DILLARDS	MANNEQUINS COME TO LIFE IN STORE'S WINDOWS	4
DR. PEPPER	DR. PEPPER GUY PLAYS SANTA	4
DURACELL	DUCK COMPETES IN BATTLEBOTS	4
ENTERPRISE	CARS MORPH INTO NEW CARS ON SCREEN	4
FED-EX	GUYS TALK ABOUT DESIGNER BOWLING BAG	4
GAP	VARIOUS MALE ARTISTS SING AND PLAY GUITAR	4
HOMEDICS	PROFESSIONAL MASSAGER USES A MACHINE ON HIMSELF	4
HOMETOWN BUFFET	FAMILY IN CAR ALL WANT DIFFERENT FOOD	4
HONDA	MAN FALLS WHILE RAFTING AS PEOPLE WATCH	4
JC PENNY	DAD TAKES CARE OF KID IN HIGH CHAIR	4
JC PENNY	FAMILY WRAPS PRESENTS IN THE CAR	4
JC PENNY	MAN CUTS LIMBS OFF TREE TO MAKE ROOM FOR GIFTS	4
KODAK	MAN TAKES A PICTURE FOR HIS GIRLFRIEND	4
KODAK	WHITE FACE GIRL MAKES A PICTURE MURAL FOR CLASS	4
MCDONALDS	KID TALKS BETWEEN ARGUING PARENTS	4
NORELCO	MAN GETS AN EARRING FROM THE TOILET	4
ORBIT GUM	DOG MAKES A MESS; WOMAN STILL HAS WHITE TEETH	4
PACIFIC LIFE	KIDS SWIM WITH WHALES	4
PALM	PALM PILOT CAN DO LOTS OF THINGS	4
PIZZA HUT	MEAT LOVER'S LINE IS DISPLAYED	4
PIZZA HUT	TOPPINGS ARE LOADED ONTO A PIZZA	4
PLEDGE	MOM CLEANS THE HOUSE WITH NEW WIPES	4
PURINA	MAN GIVES A PUPPY HEALTHY DOGFOOD	4
REDDI-WHIP	COW INSPECTS CANS OF WHIPPED CREAM	4
SCOTT PAPER TOWELS	GUYS THROW FISH WITH A PAPER TOWEL	4
SUDAFED	WOMAN WITH A COLD TURNS INTO A ROCK IN BED	4
SUNNY D	LITTLE PERSON TRIES TO GET JUICE BOTTLE	4
SWIFFER WET JET	WOMAN CLEANS HER KITCHEN FLOOR	4
TARGET	COUPLE GETS GIFTS FROM THE FIREPLACE	4
TARGET	SANTA PACES AROUND THE ROOM NERVOUSLY	4
TIC TACS	PEOPLE WATCH A BOX FLY THROUGH THE AIR	4
TOYOTA	CAMRY DRIVES AROUND THE STREETS	4
VOLKSWAGON	PEOPLE PICK UP HITCH HIKERS IN THEIR MINI-VAN	4
WAL-MART	FAMILY TALKS ABOUT DEVELOPING THEIR PICTURES	4
WAL-MART	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT SHOPPING AT WAL-MART	4
WENDY'S	VARIOUS FAST FOOD STORES DESCRIBE THEIR FOOD	4
WHITE DIAMONDS	LIZ TAYLOR GIVES A MAN HER EARRING	4
XBOX	CAR VIDEO GAME SHOWN	4
XBOX	GUYS TALK ABOUT A GIRL FIGHT GAME	4

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
ZALES	BOTH A BRACELET AND A NECKLACE ROTATE	4
APPLEBEE'S	GIFT CERTIFICATES BOUNCE IN A BOX	3
ARBY'S	HOLIDAY GLASSES DISPLAYED	3
ARM & HAMMER	PEOPLE IN OFFICE TALK ABOUT NEW MOUTHWASH	3
AUDI	WOMAN IS FOLLOWED BY A COP	3
BANK OF AMERICA	BLIND WOMAN DOES KARATE	3
BANK OF AMERICA	SKATERS FALL TRYING TO SKATE	3
BEST BUY	COUPLE COOKS TV DINNERS FOR THE HOLIDAYS	3
BEST BUY	COUPLE LOOKS FOR GIFTS IN STORE	3
BEST BUY	TEACHER HAS THE CLASS DO HER X-MAS CARDS	3
BIOTECHNOLOGIES	KIDS TALK ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF GARDENING	3
BLISTEX	WOMAN PUTS ON FANCY CHAPSTICK	3
BODY FRAGRANCES	CARTOON WOMAN PUTS ON PERFUME	3
BUD LIGHT	CEDRIC KNOCKS OVER THE PORTO POTTY	3
BURGER KING	SCHRECK AND CO. SING FOR HAMBURGER	3
CAPITAL ONE	PIRATES STORM THE NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE	3
CARNATION	MOM AND BABY LAY IN BED WHILE THE BABY EATS	3
CHARLES SCHWAB	AIKMAN AND JOHNSON TALK ABOUT FUNDS	3
CHARLES SCHWAB	GUYS CHASE CROOK AND TALK ABOUT THEIR 401K	3
CHEX	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT NEW MORNING MIX	3
CHICK FILET	COWS GO BUNGEE JUMPING	3
CINGULAR WIRELESS	SONOGRAM SHOWS A LOT OF KIDS	3
CIRCUIT CITY	GUY FORGETS TO SHOP FOR HIS FAMILY	3
DAIRY QUEEN	PEOPLE ENJOY THE SUMMERTIME	3
DELL	SUPERCOMPUTER SHOWN IN ROOM	3
DIET DR. PEPPER	FAT GUYS DANCE THE RIVER DANCE IN BOOTS	3
EARTHLINK	MAN GIVES OUT WOMAN'S NUMBER AT A BAR	3
EARTHLINK	PEOPLE TALK TO MAN ON THE STREET	3
FED-EX	GUYS TALK ABOUT A GIRL'S SHIPPING DILLEMA	3
FED-EX	KID RUNS FATHER-IN-LAW'S SHIPPING DEPT.	3
FISHER PRICE	KIDS PLAY WITH A LITTLE "BIG" CITY	3
FORD	ZX2 CAR SHOWN	3
FRUIT OF THE LOOM	FRUIT IS RUNNING THROUGH THE SNOW	3
FTD FLORIST	PEOPLE SMILE AND SMELL FLOWERS	3
GENERAL ELECTRIC	BABIES ARE SHOWN WITH A LIGHTBULB	3
GLAD CLING WRAP	JERRY STILLER USES NEW WRAP FOR FOOD	3
GOT CHOCOLATE MILK	KID SMASHES FANCY CHOCOLATE ON THE COUNTER	3
HASBORO	GUYS HUM SONG WHILE ONE PLAYS WITH HIS STOMACH	3
HOOVER	GREEN BRUSHES ROLL OVER THE SCREEN	3
HP	GUY TAKES PICTURE OF HIS COFFEE TABLE	3
INFECT TRUTH	PEOPLE READ INFORMATION ON TOBACCO	3
JIMMY DEAN SAUSAGE	MAN TALKS ABOUT QUICK COOKING SAUSAGE	3
JOHNSON&JOHNSON	WOMAN PLAYS GUITAR AND SINGS	3
KIA	MAN READS OWNER'S MANUAL AT THE GRAND CANYON	3
KODAK	COUPLE TAKES THE SAME PICTURE AS THEIR PARENTS	3
LEVI'S	GUY RIDES MECHANICAL BULL IN A BAR	3
LEXUS	PEOPLE GET NEW CARS FOR X-MAS	3
MAIL BOXES ETC	PEOPLE SHIP GIFTS FOR HOLIDAYS	3
MASTERCARD	GUY SETS OUT PRESENT FOR THE FAMILY	3
MASTERCARD	WOMAN GETS ITEMS FOR \$12.00	3
MAXWELL HOUSE	MAN BUILDS A SNOWMAN WITH KIDS	3
MAXWELL HOUSE	WOMAN PLAYS WITH HER DAUGHTER	3

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
MCDONALDS	KID LEAVES A HAPPY MEAL FOR SANTA	3
MEOW MIX	BAXTER CALLS HIS FISHING OWNER	3
MERCEDES	CAR DRIVES AROUND IN BAD WEATHER	3
MICHELOB LITE	GUY GETS INTO FIANCES' PARENTS' BED BY MISTAKE	3
MICROSOFT	WOMAN CONNECTS TO INTERNET IN FIELD; WINDOWS XP	3
NATIONAL GUARD	PEOPLE HELP THE COMMUNITY AND THE NATION	3
NEUTROGENA	WOMAN RUBS LOTION ON HER BODY	3
NINTENDO	KID IS MOWING GRASS NEXT TO GLASS CUBE	3
NINTENDO	MAN IS FLOATING IN A GLASS CUBE	3
NIVEA	WOMEN USE A NEW WRINKLE CREAM	3
NORELCO	INTERNATIONAL BIKERS USE SHAVER WITH GOO	3
OLD NAVY	PEOPLE DANCE AROUND IN SWEATERS	3
PANTENE	WOMAN USES SHAMPOO WHILE WALKING IN WATER	3
PEPSI	SHAKIRA SINGS AND DANCES FOR A CROWD	3
PROCRIIT DRUG	MAN GETS A NEW BED FOR HIS GRANDSON	3
PROGRESSO	BETTER CLAM CHOWDER SHOWN	3
PROGRESSO	BETTER TOMATO SOUP SHOWN	3
PS2	JAX AND DAXTER GAME SHOWN	3
PS2	TONY HAWK SKATES AROUND A CITY	3
RADIO SHACK	KIDS DRIVE AROUND REMOTE CONTROL CARS	3
RADIO SHACK	TERRI AND HOWIE TALK ABOUT CELL PHONES	3
RAGU	KIDS TALK ABOUT CHANGE	3
REMINGTON	MAN WITH A LARGE BEARD RIDES A MOTORCYCLE	3
RIESEN	MEN EAT CHOCOLATE AT AN AIRPORT	3
RITZ	CRACKERS JUMP INTO A BOWL OF SOUP	3
ROLAIDS	FRUIT FLAVORS SPELL RELIEF	3
SBC	KID WAITS FOR DOWNLOAD WITH A BLACK EYE	3
SEARS	KID FIXES BREAKFAST FOR DAD	3
SEARS	WOMAN EATS CHOCOLATE, THEN SHOPS	3
SEARS	WOMAN TALKS ABOUT UNDERPANTS WITH DAUGHTER	3
SONY VAIO	KID SENDS A VIDEO TO COACH K AT DUKE	3
STATE FARM INS.	FAMILY PLAYS IN THE SNOW	3
SUNNY D	BOTTLE OF JUICE IS IN A STRAIGHTJACKET	3
TEMPO DRY WIPES	WOMAN CLEANS MESS IN CAR WITH WIPES	3
TIDE	KID GOES OFF TO KINDERGARTEN IN HIS FAVORITE SHIRT	3
TOTAL	MEN COMPARE HEALTH CEREALS IN A CAFÉ	3
TRESSEME	HAIR PRODUCTS MAKE HAIR HEALTHY	3
U.S. POSTAL SERVICE	PEOPLE PROMISE TO KEEP UP GOOD WORK	3
VERIZON WIRELESS	GUY ORDERS MORE PIZZA WITH VOICE CELL PHONE	3
WAL-MART	COUPLE TALKS ABOUT THE JEWELREY SELECTION	3
WAL-MART	KIDS TALK ABOUT THE COOL TOYS	3
WAL-MART	WOMAN PLAYS MRS. CLAU	3
XBOX	ALIEN GAME IS SHOWN	3
XBOX	SPACE COMBAT GAME SHOWN	3
1800 COLLECT	CARROT TOP TALKS ON A TOUR BUS IN NY	2
7UP	MAN DOES A BLIND TASTE TEST	2
ABREVA	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT COLD SORES	2
ACURA	MAN TALKS TO CABLE GUY ON CAR PHONE	2
ADVAIR DRUG	WOMAN TALKS ABOUT HAVING ASTHMA	2
ALLEGRA DRUG	WOMAN WITH ALLERGIES JUMPS IN A LAKE	2
AMERICAN CANCER SOC.	ARNOLD PALMER TALKS ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING	2
AT&T	CARTOONS RIDE AROUND ON BIKES	2

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
BLOCKBUSTER	ELVES SING ELVIS PRESLEY SONG	2
BOD	GIRLS WATCH GUYS WITH NICE BODIES AT A CONCERT	2
BOD	GIRLS WATCH GUYS WITH NICE BODIES PLAY B-BALL	2
BOD	GIRLS WATCH GUYS WITH NICE BODISS PLAY FOOTBALL	2
BOLLA WINES	PEOPLE KISS IN ITALY	2
BOUNTY	NEW PAPER TOWELS SHOWS TOUGH QUILTS	2
BRAUMS	SUNDAES AND BURGERS ARE MADE ON THE SCREEN	2
BREATHE RITE STRIPS	MEN CUTTING A LOG HEAR ANOTHER MAN SNORE	2
BUD LIGHT	GUYS TAKE BEER FROM NEIGHBOR'S FRIDGE	2
BUD LIGHT	MEN HAVE DRY, THIRSTY THROATS; THEY DRINK A BEER	2
BUDWEISER	BUSCH MEN TALK ABOUT THEIR BEER COMPANY	2
BUICK	CARS GO INTO A CASTLE; T. WOODS COMES OUT IN SUV	2
BURLINGTON COATS	PEOPLE SHOW OFF LATEST COATS	2
CAMPBELLS	DONOVANN MCNABB EATS CHUNKY SOUP WITH MOM	2
CAMPBELLS	KIDS LIKE THE NEW VEGGIE SOUP	2
CAMPBELLS	KURT WARNER'S MOM SENDS SOUP TO CAMP	2
CAMPBELLS	PEOPLE EAT TOMATO SOUP IN FRONT OF PICTURE	2
CANON	WOMAN TAKES PICTURES OF HERSELF WITH DIG. CAMERA	2
CARNIVAL CRUISE	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT A CRUISE	2
CHARLES SCHWAB	MOM AND SON TALK ABOUT FUNDS	2
CHEVY	LIONS FLOCK TO A SUV	2
CHEVY	OLD AND NEW CARS SHOWN	2
CHEVY	OLYMPIC HISTORY LESSON IN HOCKEY	2
CHEVY	TRUCKS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	2
CHRYSLER	KID DRIVES GOLF CART TRAIN THROUGH PARKING LOT	2
COCA COLA	KID RIDES A TRAIN; ENDS UP IN WORLD OF HARRY POTTER	2
COMP USA	MAN IN TUX TALKS ABOUT HIS COMPUTER	2
COMP USA	JENNY MCCARTHY TRIES TO ACT SMART	2
COMP USA	MAN SHOWS WOMEN HIS COMPUTER	2
COMP USA	XBOX IS ADVERTISED BY NORM FROM CHEERS	2
COORS ORIGINAL	BARRY SANDERS TALKS ABOUT BEER	2
COTTON	PEOPLE DANCE IN THEIR OFFICE	2
CRICKET	CARS DRIVE AROUND WITH GREEN COUCHES	2
DAIRY QUEEN	PEOPLE SING AND DANCE FOR CHEESEBURGERS	2
DENTYNE ICE	COUPLE KISSES ON A HOT NIGHT	2
DIAMOND IS FOREVER	COUPLE RUNS THROUGH THE WOODS TO A LIT TREE	2
DISNEY WORLD	COUPLE FEARS THEY ARE DRIFTING APART	2
DISNEY WORLD	DISNEY CHARACTERS RUN AROUND THE PARK	2
DOCKERS	WOMAN LOOKS AT PAINTS WITH X-RAY GLASSES	2
DODGE	MAN TURNS POWER ON FOR TRUCKVILLE	2
DODGE	TRUCK DRIVES INTO TRUCKVILLE	2
DODGE	MEN DRIVE DODGE SYMBOL IN THE MUD	2
ESTEE LAUDER	LIZ HURLEY IS IN A GARDEN WITH A PUPPY; PERFUME	2
EXXON/MOBIL	PEOPLE USE THE NEW SPEEDPASS	2
FARMLAND	PEOPLE WORK ON A FARM DURING HOLIDAYS	2
FED-EX	GUYS TALK ABOUT SHIPPING ON-LINE	2
FORD	GUY PICKS UP FOUR GIRLS IN ONE CAR	2
FORD	PEOPLE DO OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES	2
FORD	PERSONAL TRAINER TALKS ABOUT HIS SUV	2
FORD	HEAVY DUTY TRUCK DRIVES THROUGH CONSTRUCTION	2
FRUIT OF THE LOOM	KIDS POSE IN FRONT OF MIRRORS	2
FUJI FILM	MAN TAKES MANY PICTURES OF A ROSE FOR HIS WIFE	2

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
GAP	VARIOUS WOMEN ARTISTS SING	2
GLAD CLING WRAP	WOMAN COVERS A LOT OF FOOD WITH WRAP	2
GLADE PLUG-INS	COOKIES APPEAR WITH GINGER BREAD SCENT	2
GUNDUM	KIDS LOG HOURS BUILDING ROBOTS	2
HALLMARK	DAD TRIES TO TELL X-MAS STORY	2
HAMBURGER HELPER	WOMAN COOKS A BIG MEAL	2
HANES	MICHAEL JORDAN SITS IN LOCKER ROOM WITH GUYS	2
HERSHEYS	COUPLE KEEPS POT OF GOLD CANDY; GIVES FLOWERS	2
HILLSHIRE FARMS	LITTLE WEINERS GOOD FOR PARTY FOOD	2
HOMETOWN BUFFET	MAN ARGUES WITH A WAITRESS	2
HOMETOWN BUFFET	MAN TALKS ABOUT HEALTH FOOD	2
HONDA	MAN FALLS DOWN A MOUNTAIN SKATEBOARDING	2
HONEY NUT CHEERIOS	BEE GIVES SCROOGE CEREAL	2
IAMS	DOG WITH SHINY FUR EATS FOOD	2
IMMODIUM ADVANCE	CARTOON FIGURE HAS BAD CRAMPS	2
JC PENNY	FAMILY SURPRISES WOMAN AT HER DOOR	2
KIA	GUYS STOPS CAR ON ROAD TO YELL FOR JOY	2
KLEENEX	MAN IN A TOLL BOOTH HAS A COLD	2
KODAK	WOMAN HELPS KID MAKE PICTURE FOR GRANDMA	2
LEAP FROG	KIDS PLAY WITH EDUCATIONAL TOY	2
LEXUS	KID LOOKS AT FANCY CAR	2
LEXUS	MAN LIKES TO LOOK AT THE NICE CAR	2
LOREAL	ANDIE MACDOWELL USES EYE WRINKLE CREAM	2
LOREAL	HEATHER LOCKLEAR TALKS HAIR COLOR	2
LUBRIDERM	ALLIGATOR WALKS OVER A LADY	2
MAIL BOXES ETC.	MAN SHIPS A DOLL HOUSE FOR GRANDDAUGHTER	2
MASTERCARD	KIDS TALK ABOUT CRAPPY JOBS	2
MAZDA	BRIGHT YELLOW CAR DRIVES AROUND	2
MAZDA	SUV DRIVES AROUND WITH SPORTS CARS	2
MCDONALDS	NEW BREAKFAST RANCHERO SANDWICH SHOWN	2
MCDONALDS	PEOPLE GO TO WORK AT THE OLYMPICS	2
MIDAS	MAN EXPLAINS THE SERVICES THEY DO	2
MITSUBISHI	PEOPLE SING IN THEIR CARS	2
MONISTAT 1	PILL TAKES CARE OF PROBLEMS FOR WOMEN	2
NEUTROGENA	T-GEL HELPS FIGHT DANDRUFF	2
NIKE	LANCE ARMSTRONG LOSES OTHER BIKERS IN FORREST	2
NIKE	PEOPLE JOG BEHIND A SNOW TRUCK	2
NISSAN	TRUCKS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	2
NORELCO	MAN IN SUBWAY HAS A HUGE BEAR WITH HIM	2
OLAY	WOMAN USES AGING LOTION	2
PAMPERS	KIDS ARE COMPARED TO BABY ANIMALS	2
PANASONIC	BALD GUY RUNS AROUND A CITY USING A SHAVER	2
PANTENE	WOMEN PLAY WITH THEIR HAIR AND SHAMPOO	2
PAYLESS	WOMAN SHOWS OFF HER NEW SHOES	2
PENTIUM 4	ALIENS IMPROVE THEIR SPACESHIP	2
PENTIUM 4	ALIENS CHANGE A GIRL'S PICTURE	2
PEPPERIDGE FARMS	WOMAN HIDES HER COOKIES IN A BOOK	2
PEPSI	KID HAS A PARTY IN HIS ROOM	2
PEPSI TWIST	PEOPLE UNZIP INTO NEW PEOPLE	2
PFIZER DRUG	PEOPLE RIDE EXERCYCLES	2
PILLSBURY	KIDS EAT PRE-CUT COOKIES	2
PILLSBURY	PEOPLE EAT BIG CINNAMON ROLLS	2

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
PIZZA HUT	GUY TALKS ABOUT LOVER'S LINE IN PALM SPRINGS	2
POLO	PEOPLE WEARING POLO CLOTHES ON THE SCREEN	2
PONTIAC	GIRLS GO ON AN ADVENTURE WITH CAR FOR A DAY	2
PONTIAC	GUYS TAKE CAR FOR A DAY; GO TO SAN FRANCISCO	2
PREGO	FAMILY EATS SPAGHETTI	2
PREGO	PASTA TALKS ABOUT NEW SAUCE	2
PROGRESSIVE	COUPLE BREAKS UP OVER A WEB-SITE	2
PS2	RACE CAR GAME SHOWN	2
PS2	GUY CLEANS BUILDING; MOTORCYCLE GAME	2
PUFFS PLUS	CLAY FIGURE SKATING WIPES HIS NOSE	2
RADIO SHACK	HOWIE GIVES TERRI HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS	2
RADIO SHACK	TERRI AND HOWIE TALK ABOUT A SALE	2
RED LOBSTER	PEOPLE USE THEIR LEGS TO GET TO CRAB LEGS	2
REVLON	WOMAN USES LOTION FOR A BRIGHT FACE	2
RITZ	CRACKERS PLAY FOOTBALL	2
ROBITUSSIN	DR. MOM HEALS A SICK FAMILY	2
ROCHER CHOCOLATES	PEOPLE EAT FANCY CHOCOLATES	2
RUBBERMAID	LADY BREAKS A RUBBERMAID PINATA	2
SATURN	PEOPLE WANT TO KEEP THE ECONOMY ROLLING	2
SBC	WOMAN LEARNS SIGN LANGUAGE ON-LINE	2
SCOTCH	SCISSORS FLY AROUND THE WORLD	2
SEARS	COUPLE KICKS EVERYONE OUT OF THEIR PARTY	2
SEARS	GUYS WATCH BIG SCREEN TV OF MAN THAT PROPOSED	2
SEARS	KID BUGS GRANDMA FOR THE CAMERA	2
SEARS	MAN IS THE MAINTENANCE MAN OF THE HOUSE	2
SEARS	MAN PROPOSES TO WOMAN ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD	2
SEARS	PARENTS DANCE TO KID'S MUSIC	2
SEARS	PEOPLE GET A BABYSITTER SO THEY CAN GO TO BED	2
SEARS	WOMAN MAKES A DENTIST APPT. FOR HUSBAND	2
SEARS	WOMAN STARES AT GUYS BUTT FIXING HER CAR	2
SEARS	WOMAN WANTS TO SELL DIAMONDS	2
SEARS	WOMEN COOK AND TALK IN THE KITCHEN	2
SIERRA MIST	MAN PUTS ON FROZEN UNDERWEAR	2
SONY	WOMAN GETS A DVD SYSTEM FOR HER HUSBAND	2
SONY VAIO	COMPUTER WITH PENTIUM 4 DOES MANY THINGS	2
STAPLES	ROBOT IS IN LOVE WITH A FAX MACHINE	2
STATE FARM INS.	FAMILY HAS INSURANCE THROUGH HISTORY	2
STOUFFER'S	COUPLE TALKS ABOUT BEEF STEW	2
SUAVE	TWIN GIRLS USE THE SAME SHAMPOO	2
SUBWAY	MAN TALKS ABOUT FRESH BREAD	2
SUBWAY	MAN TALKS TO CHICKEN ABOUT FRESHNESS	2
SUNNY D	BOTTLE OF JUICE IS ON A LEASH	2
TARGET	RED HEAD COMEDIAN SINGS IN FRONT OF DOG	2
THE ANTI-DRUG	MOM TALKS ABOUT HER DAUGHTER AND DRUGS	2
TOLL HOUSE	KIDS EAT PRE-CUT COOKIES	2
TOYOTA	GUYS GO TIP OVER A RHINO	2
TOYOTA	PICTURES OF A CAR FLASH IN FRONT OF PEOPLE	2
TOYS R US	FAMILY EATS IN FRONT OF STORE	2
TYLENOL FLU	WOMAN BRINGS MEDICINE FOR MAN	2
VANISH	BATHROOM STINKS AFTER DAD LEAVES	2
VIOXX	DOROTHY HAMILL GOES SKATING	2
VISA	PETS SING TO THEIR OWNER FOR PETSMART	2

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
VISA	SOFT MUSIC PLAYS AT A STEELER'S GAME	2
VOLKSWAGON	CAR SLIDES AROUND AND AROUND ON ICE	2
VOLKSWAGON	COUPLE SLEEPS ON THE BEACH IN THEIR WAGON	2
VOLKSWAGON	MAN CLAIMS TO HAVE CAR DAMAGE	2
VOLKSWAGON	MAN HAS A CAR GROWING ON HIS HEAD	2
WAL-MART	SISTERS SHOP FOR CLOTHES	2
WELCHS	GIRL TALKS ABOUT GRAPE JUICE	2
WELCHS	GIRL TALKS ABOUT JUICE	2
WIND SONG	GUY THINKS OF GIRL; LEAVES WORK TO GO FIND HER	2
WRANGLERS	CCR SONG PLAYS WITH PEOPLE WEARING JEANS	2
ZALES	NECKLACE ROTATES ON SCREEN	2
?	KID TALKS ABOUT HIS FRIEND THAT SMOKES	1
1800 COLLECT	CARROT TOP TALKS FROM A CLOTHES DRYER	1
1800 COLLECT	CARROT TOP WALKS SOME DOGS	1
409 CLEANER	SPRAY CLEANS A MESSY KITCHEN	1
7UP	KID CAN'T HOLD HEAVY BACK PACK	1
ACE HARDWARE	PEOPLE ENJOY THEIR NICE HOUSE	1
ADVIL	BIKER TAKES HARDER PATH AFTER USING ADVIL	1
AFLAC	GUYS ON A BENCH TALK NEXT TO DUCK	1
ALDORA DRUG	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT STD'S	1
ALIEVE	PEOPLE TAKE MEDICINE TEST	1
ALKA SELTZER	PEOPLE WITH HEARTBURN TAKE MEDICINE	1
ALWAYS	WOMAN HAS FEMININE PROBLEMS WHILE SLEEPING	1
ANTI-DRUG	KIDS TALK ABOUT NOT TAKING DRUGS	1
AQUA FRESH	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT HAVING CLEAN TEETH	1
AQUAFRESH	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT WHITENING THEIR TEETH	1
ARMY	PICTURES OF YOUNG AND OLD MEMBERS SHOWN	1
AT&T	THUMBTACKS HIT A GLOBE	1
AVEENO	WOMAN HAS A BRIGHT FACE WITH LOTION	1
BANK OF AMERICA	KID GOES CLIFF DIVING FOR THE 1ST TIME	1
BANK OF AMERICA	PEOPLE FALL TRYING TO PUSH BOBSLED	1
BE KOOL	CHILD USES COOL STRIP FOR A FEVER	1
BEST BUY	DAD AND SON CUT DOWN X-MAS TREE FROM THEIR YARD	1
BISEL STEAM VAC	BIKERS MAKE A MESS IN THE LIVING ROOM	1
BLACK AND DECKER	DENTIST USES A DRILL IN HIS OFFICE	1
BOUNCE	PEOPLE LIKE THE NEW SMELL	1
BUD LIGHT	GUYS TALK ABOUT THEIR ORGANIST ROOMMATE	1
BUD LIGHT	GUYS WRECK LOUGING DOWN THE STREET	1
BUDWEISER	BOTTLE OF BEER SHOWN WITH CAP AS A CROWN	1
BUDWEISER	CLYDESDALES RUN THROUGH THE SNOW	1
BUDWEISER	GUYS LEAVE A BIG TIP FOR A WAITRESS	1
BUDWEISER	GUYS TALK ABOUT FINDING A DOG WITH RABIES	1
BUDWEISER	ITALIAN GUYS CHEER IN A BAR	1
BUDWEISER	NEW JERSEY GUYS TAKE CARE OF "THAT THING"	1
BUDWEISER	N'SYNC LOOKS FOR GIRL; DAD TURNS THEM AWAY	1
BUDWEISER	PEOPLE CHOOSE TO USE A DESIGNATED DRIVER	1
BUICK	CARS CAUGHT IN TORNADO; SUV WITH T. WOOD FALLS	1
BUTTERFINGER	HOMER AND BART GO SEE DR. HIEBERT	1
CADILLAC	ESCALADE DRIVES THROUGH A DESERT	1
CADILLAC	SUV DRIVES THROUGH THE DESERT	1
CAMPBELLS	FAMILY EATS A NICE CASEROLE	1
CAMPBELLS	FANCY SELECT SOUP EATEN	1

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
CAMPBELLS	KURT WARNER'S MOM STOPS GAME FOR CHUNKY SOUP	1
CARAPPELLI'S OLIVE OIL	WOMAN COOKS A LOT OF FOOD	1
CARESS	WOMAN PUTS LOTION ON HER BODY	1
CASCADE	GRANDMA MAKES A MESS WITH HER GRANDKIDS	1
CASCADE	NEW SCENT ATTRACTS PEOPLE TO THE KITCHEN	1
CASCADE	WOMAN PUTS A CAKE IN THE DISHWASHER	1
CELEBREX DRUG	OLD PEOPLE PLAY SOFTBALL WITH KIDS	1
CHARLES SCHWAB	WOMAN TALKS TO HER DOCTOR ABOUT FUNDS	1
CHEER	KID WASHES JEANS OVER AND OVER TO FADE THEM OUT	1
CHEERIOS	GRANDMA DESCRIBES THE FAMILY WITH CEREAL	1
CHEESE	JACK AND THE BEANSTALK STORY RELATE TO CHEESE	1
CHEVY	OLD AND NEW TRUCKS SHOWN	1
CHEVY	OLYMPIC SNOWBOARDER SHOWN	1
CHEVY	SUV SWITCHES TO A TRUCK	1
CHILI'S	RED PEPPER GOES TO ASIA	1
CHILI'S	SURF AND SIRLOIN COOKED	1
CHLOROSEPTIC	MAN TRIES TO AVOID SEEING A CHICK FLICK	1
CHRYSLER	MAN DESIGNS CARS ON A NAPKIN	1
CINGULAR WIRELESS	GUY DANCES AROUND WITHOUT ANY SHOES ON	1
CIRCUIT CITY	GUY LEAVES HIS WIFE AT THE DOOR AND RUNS IN STORE	1
CLAIROL	WOMEN IN WHITE ROOM HAVE COLORED HAIR	1
CLOROX	WOMAN CLEANS THE KITCHEN WITH NEW WIPES	1
COCA COLA	CARTOON SANTA AND KIDS HAVE A COKE	1
COCA COLA	KID DELIVERS NEWSPAPER; ENTERS WORLD OF HARRY P.	1
COLGATE	TOOTH PASTE HAS MOUTHWASH TOO	1
COMP USA	ALEX TREBEK TALKS WITH KID ABOUT COMP USA	1
COMP USA	GREGORY HINES TALKS ABOUT COMPUTERS	1
COMP USA	VARIOUS PEOPLE SAY THANKS TO COMP USA	1
COORS LIGHT	PEOPLE PARTY AT A BAR	1
COVER GIRL	WOMAN PUTS ON MASCARA	1
CREST	NEW SPIN BRUSH FOR KIDS	1
CREST	WOMAN ART RESTORER TALKS ABOUT WHITE TEETH	1
CRICKET	GUY TALKS ON A GREEN COUCH	1
DELL	MAN TALKS ABOUT COMPUTER IN THE MALL	1
DIAMOND IS FOREVER	WEBSITE WITH RING IS SHOWN	1
DIAMOND IS FOREVER	WOMAN'S EYE DILATES ON SCREEN	1
DIET DR. PEPPER	BAYWATCH PEOPLE RUN IN THE SNOW	1
DIMETAPP	COUPLE ASKS PHARMACIST ABOUT MEDICINE FOR KID	1
DIMETAPP	MOM HELPS A KID WITH A FLU	1
DODGE	BURLEY MAN HOLDING A GLOBE GETS A RIDE	1
DODGE	MAN PICKS UP TEAM OF GIRLS IN A MINI-VAN	1
DODGE	MAN ROLLS AROUND IN BACKSEAT OF CAR FOR A DOG	1
DODGE	VENTRILQUIST GETS A TICKET	1
DODGE	WOMAN RUNS ERRANDS IN HER MINI-VAN	1
DOVE	WOMAN CLEANS HERSELF WITH SOAP	1
DOVE	WOMAN USES SOAP TO CLEAN HERSELF	1
DREMEL	PEOPLE FIGHT OVER USING THE TOOLS	1
DREMEL	WOOD SAWS GO DRAGRACING	1
EDGE	MAN GETS A SHAVE THROUGH THE CAR WASH	1
ESTE LAUDER	LIZ HURLEY GETS MARRIED	1
FANNIE MAE	DAD GETS A DOG FOR KIDS; GOT THE HOUSE	1
FANNIE MAE	MOM SENDS KID OFF TO SCHOOL	1

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION	COUPLE TURNS DOWN CREDIT CARD FOR A HOUSE	1
FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION	COUPLE WAITS FOR THEIR CREDIT HISTORY IN A BANK	1
FANNIE MAE FOUNDATION	MAN CAN'T GET HOUSE BECAUSE OF CREDIT HISTORY	1
FARMER'S INS.	FAMOUS ART THINGS ARE SHOWN FIXED	1
FARMER'S INS.	MAN THINKS OF POSSIBLE DISASTERS	1
FAZOLLIS	DOG SITS AFTER BEING TOLD IN ITALIAN	1
FED-EX	GUYS TALK ABOUT SHIPPING ON-LINE	1
FED-EX	GUYS TALK ABOUT SMALL BUSINESS GUY SHIPPING	1
FIDELITY INVESTMENTS	GUYS TALK ABOUT THEIR FUNDS	1
FIDELITY INVESTMENTS	WOMAN TALKS ABOUT HER FUNDS	1
FISHER PRICE	MOM AND DAUGHTER LEARN HOW TO SPELL	1
FORD	MAN TEARS DOWN A WATER TOWER WITH TRUCK	1
FRENCH'S	PEOPLE EAT A CASEROLE WITH NEW TOPPING	1
FUJI FILM	MAN PUTS PICTURES OF A LEAF ON A DEAD TREE	1
GAP	BLACK WOMAN SINGS A SONG	1
GAP	MAN SINGS AND DANCES TO REGGAE MUSIC	1
GATEWAY COMPUTERS	GREAT HOLIDAY OFFERS ON COMPUTERS	1
GATOR GRIP	MAGNETIC WRATCHET ADVERTISED	1
GEICO	MAN TALKS TO PARENTS COLLECT QUICKLY	1
GLAD CLING WRAP	IRON CHEF USES NEW WRAP	1
GLAD WARE	BEN STEIN TALKS ABOUT TUPPAWARE	1
GLADE PLUG-INS	WOMAN PLUGS IN FRESH SCENTS	1
GOLD BOND LOTION	GIRL IN CHICAGO USES LOTION FOR DRY SKIN	1
GOT CHOCOLATE MILK	KID GARGLE SYRUP AND MILK	1
GREYHOUND	DOG COOKS AND TALKS ABOUT TAKING THE BUS	1
HASBORO	GUYS PLAY WITH PARTY FAVORS	1
HEINEKEN	GUY LEAVES SHOPPING GIRL FRIEND FOR THE BAR	1
HEINEKEN	MAN GIVES GIRL DIRTY LOOK FOR A BEER	1
HERSHEYS	KISSES ACT LIKE CHURCH BELLS	1
HONDA	MAN PUTS HOT SAUCE ON A CAR	1
HONDA	MEN SWIM IN ICE COLD WATER	1
HONDA	PARENTS PACK UP KID'S ROOM IN MINI-VAN	1
HOOVER	ILLUSTRATIONS SHOWS VACUUM POWER	1
HOOVER	VACUUM IS SELF-PROPELLED	1
HOOVER	WIND TUNNEL VACUUM SHOWN	1
HRT	LOREN HUTTON TALKS ABOUT MENOPAUSE	1
IBM	GUY THINKS SOMEONE STOLE THE HUGE SERVERS	1
IHOP	FOOD SHOWN IN STORE	1
IMITREX DRUG	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT MIGRAINE HEADACHES	1
IMMODIUM ADVANCE	SUMO WRESTLER TAKES ON A SMALL KID	1
INFECT TRUTH	GUYS PASS OUT AMONIADE	1
ING FINANCES	PEOPLE SIT ON A BUS STOP BENCH	1
IVE	WOMAN IN BLACK AND WHITE USES LOTION	1
JC PENNY	KIDS HOPE FOR IT TO SNOW	1
JC PENNY	MAN GETS KIDS CLOTHES ON FOR WINTER	1
JIF	KID MAKES HIS MOM A PENUT BUTTER SANDWICH	1
KEEBLER	ELVES SEE A FILM ON FUDGE COOKIES	1
KIX	KID'S EAT CEREAL AND THEN CHECK THEIR HEIGHT	1
KLEENEX	KID SNEEZES IN CLASS, GIRL GIVES HIM A TISSUE	1
KLEENEX	KID WRECKS HOUSE WHILE HOME SICK	1
KOHL'S	FAMILIES ENJOY HOLIDAY SAVINGS	1
LENS CRAFTERS	PEOPLE MODEL DURA LENS FRAMES	1

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
LEXUS	FAMILY TALKS ABOUT CRAZY THINGS IN SUV	1
LEXUS	GUY LOSES HIS BREATH WHILE DRIVING	1
LEXUS	MAN RUBS HIS HANDS ON FANCY CAR	1
LEXUS	SPANISH LADY DANCES FOR MEN	1
LIPITOR DRUG	WOMAN FALLS ON THE RED CARPET	1
LIQUID PLUMBER	ONE SINK DRAINS, THE OTHER DOESN'T	1
LISTERINE	MAN RINSES HIS MOUTH FOR 30 SECONDS	1
LISTERINE	MAN TAKES NEW BREATH STRIPS	1
LOWE'S	X-MAS LIGHTS SHOW OFF SAVINGS	1
MAG LITE	KID LIGHTS UP GLOW IN THE DARK CEILING	1
MAG LITE	MAN CHECKS HIS SEMI-TRUCK WITH A FLASHLIGHT	1
MARINES	HISTORY OF MARINES CELEBRATED	1
MASTERCARD	GUY SHAKES PRESENT UNDER TREE	1
MAX FACTOR MAKE-UP	GIRL EATS FOOD WITH LIPSTICK ON	1
MCDONALDS	KOBE BRYANT HELPS KIDS WIN THE GAME	1
MCDONALDS	RONALD AND KID MAKE A SNOWMAN	1
MENSWEARHOUSE	OLD MAN BUYS CLOTHES ON-LINE	1
MERCEDES	STATION WAGON DRIVES THROUGH THE COUNTRY	1
MICROSOFT	PEOPLE CREATE VIDEOS WITH WINDOWS XP	1
MITSUBISHI	PEOPLE SING IN THEIR SUV'S	1
MOTRIN	MOM AND KIDS GET MEDICINE	1
NASDAQ	SHOWS SOME COMPANIES ON THE EXCHANGE	1
NEUTROGENA	JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT WASHES HER FACE	1
NFL 2K2	MEN ARE PLAYING A VIDEO FOOTBALL GAME	1
NICODERM CQ	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING	1
NICORETTE ORANGE	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT QUITTING SMOKING	1
NINTENDO	GAME CUBE GAMES ARE SHOWN	1
NINTENDO	GIRL SMASHES THE LIGHTS AT AN OPERA	1
NINTENDO	GLASS CUBE IS IN A TRAIN STATION	1
NINTENDO	GAMEBOY IS ADVERTISED IN A MALL	1
NINTENDO	GUY ROLLS AROUND THE OFFICE IN HIS CHAIR	1
NISSAN	MAXIMA DRIVES THROUGH THE DESSERT	1
NISSAN	CARS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	1
NISSAN	SUV DRIVES AROUND WITH JOCKEYS	1
NISSAN	SUV OVERLOOKS THE OCEAN	1
NISSAN	TRUCK DOOR KNOCKS OVER A GARBAGE TRUCK	1
NORELCO	MAN CHANGES A TIRE IN THE RAIN	1
NORELCO	MAN RUNS THROUGH TRAFFIC TO GET KID'S TOY	1
NYC VISIT	WOODY ALLEN SKATES IN NY	1
NYQUIL COUGH	WOMAN HAS COUGH IN BED	1
NYSE	STRENGTH DISPLAYED IN PEOPLE ON THE SCREEN	1
OLAY	COUPLE CHATS IN A CAFÉ	1
OLD NAVY	PEOPLE DANCE AROUND IN SCARVES AND HATS	1
OLDSMOBILE	CARS DRIVING AROUND; 0% FINANCING	1
OLYMPUS	CAMERAS MOVE BY THEMSELVES	1
OLYMPUS	GIRL TAKES PICTURES OF HERSELF ON A PLAYGROUND	1
ORTH TRYCYCLEN	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL	1
OXI CLEAN	GUY CLEANS STAINS ON RUG	1
PAMPRIN	WOMAN TAKES MEDICINE FOR RELIEF	1
PAPA JOHNS	SAYS PIZZA IS ALL ABOUT QUALITY	1
PAXIL DRUG	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT HAVING ANXIETY PROBLEMS	1
PEDIA CARE	MOM TALKS ABOUT KID'S FIRST COLD	1

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
PEDICARE	MOM TALKS ABOUT COLDS	1
PEPSI	KID WATCHES SHAKIRA ON TV	1
PHILLIP MORRIS	KIDS TALK ABOUT HAVING CLEAN BODIES	1
PHILLIP MORRIS	MAN OPENS STORE AND KEEPS KIDS FROM SMOKING	1
PHYSIQUE	PEOPLE USE VARIOUS HAIR PRODUCTS	1
PILLSBURY	DOUGH BOY SELLS BREAD IN STORE	1
PILLSBURY	FAMILY EATS CRESCENT ROLLS WITH DINNER	1
PLAVIX DRUG	MAN SWIMS IN CREEK WITH KIDS	1
PLAYSTATION	SANTAS PLAY GAMES IN A LOCKER ROOM	1
PONTIAC	GUYS AND GIRLS GO SURFING WITH CAR FOR A DAY	1
PROGRESSIVE	GUY ASKS FOR A CAR REPAIR EST. IN DESERT	1
PRUDENTIAL	MAN TALKS ABOUT STABILITY	1
PS2	CRASH BANDICOOT GAME DISPLAYED	1
PS2	PEOPLE GO OVER FOOTBALL PLAYS IN THEIR HOMES	1
PS2	SKATERS CHECK OUT NEW GAME	1
PS2	SNOWBOARDING GAME SHOWN	1
PS2	GAME WITH A DEVIL SHOWN	1
PS2	JET FIGHTER GAME SHOWN	1
QUAKER OATS	GUYS USE CINNAMON ROLLS TO MAKE OATMEAL	1
RADIO SHACK	COMPAQ PRODUCTS SHOWN	1
RADIO SHACK	ELECTRONIC THERMOMETER SHOWN	1
RADIO SHACK	GUYS LIFTING WEIGHTS	1
RADIO SHACK	RCA PRODUCTS DESCRIBED	1
RADIO SHACK	SALE FOR A LOT OF TOYS	1
REACH	WOMAN TALKS ABOUT HER TOOTHBRUSH	1
RED LOBSTER	WAITERS BALANCE 30 SHRIMP ON A TRAY	1
REESES	ALEIN EATS PENUT BUTTER CUPS	1
REMINGTON	MAN USES A TCT SHAVER; HAS A CLOSE SHAVE	1
REMINGTON	MAN AT A WEDDING SHAVES	1
RESOLVE	STAIN DISAPPEARS FROM THE CARPET	1
RICE A RONI	KIDS DON'T TRUST NEW FOOD	1
RITZ	KIDS EAT CRACKERS	1
ROGAINE	WOMEN TALK ABOUT HAIR LOSS	1
RUBBERMAID	WRAPPING PAPER IS STORED IN RUBBERMAID	1
SATURN	KIDS WATCH TV IN A VAN	1
SCOTCH	NEW PRE-CUT TAPE DISPENSER SHOWN	1
SCRUBBING BUBBLES	WOMEN CLEAN THEIR BATH TUBS	1
SCUM BUSTER	BLACK AND DECKER TOOL CLEANS MANY THINGS	1
SEARS	3 DUMBS SONS EXCHANGE GIFTS WITH MOM	1
SEARS	COUPLE TALKS ON THE KITCHEN PHONE FOR SALE	1
SEARS	DAD AND SON TALK ABOUT BILLS	1
SEARS	DAD AND SON WORK ON CAR AND GET DIRTY	1
SEARS	DAUGHTER TELLS DAD HOW TO FIX THE SINK	1
SEARS	DOG CHEWS UP COATS AT A PARTY	1
SEARS	GUYS TALK IN AN OFFICE BREAK ROOM	1
SEARS	MAN ASKS WIFE FOR NEW TIRES	1
SEARS	MAN CHECKS OUT OTHER GIRL, GETS DRINK ON SHIRT	1
SEARS	MAN GETS DIRTY CUTTING DOWN A TREE	1
SEARS	MAN RUINS HIS WIFE'S ROBE	1
SEARS	MAN WANTS A BIGSCREEN TV, WOMAN WANTS A FRIDGE	1
SEARS	TIRE BLOWS OUT IN THE GARAGE	1
SEARS	WOMAN DRESSES FOR A HOLIDAY PARTY	1

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
SIERRA MIST	SEXY WOMAN SUCKS ON A LIME AND ICE	1
SINGULAIR	WOMAN TALKS ABOUT ASTHMA	1
SLIM FAST	GUY TALKS ABOUT LOSING WEIGHT	1
SMIRNOFF ICE	PEOPLE HAVE A PARTY IN THE SUBWAY	1
SNICKERS	COACH WANTS TO QUIT GAME AND GO HOME	1
SNICKERS	COUNSELOR ADVISES AGAINST GOING TO COLLEGE	1
SONIC	MAN ORDERS FOOD WITH HUGE FOAM FINGER	1
SONIC	TATOR TOT IS SHOWN ON SCREEN	1
SPRINT PCS	PEOPLE HAVE WRITING ON THEIR FOREHEADS	1
ST.IVES	LADIES USE A NEW LOTION	1
STANLEY STEEMER	CAT WATCHES THE STEAM CLEANER CLEAN	1
STANLEY STEEMER	KID SQUIRTS CHOCOLATE SYRUP IN WHITE ROOM	1
STATE FARM INS.	MAN CHANGES LIGHTS ON HIGH TOWERS	1
STATE FARM INS.	MAN TALKS ABOUT CAR INSURANCE IN BAD WEATHER	1
STATE FARM INS.	TREE DAMAGE TO NEW HOUSE IS FIXED BY INS.	1
STETSON	COUPLE GOES HORSE BACK RIDING	1
STETSON	PERFUME FOR WOMEN SHOWN IN A GREEN YARD	1
SUNAMERICA	MAN WITH A RETIREMENT T-SHIRT FIGHTS A DOG	1
SUNNY D	KIDS DRINK JUICE	1
TACO BELL	KID TALKS ON THE STEPS EATING A TACO	1
TELEZAPPER	TELEMARKETERS STOPPED WITH NEW DEVICE	1
THE ANTI-DRUG	KIDS TALK ABOUT THEIR PARENTS	1
THERMASILK	GREEK GODS HAVE A PARTY	1
TIDY CATS	CATS TALK ABOUT THEIR NEW LITTER	1
TOTINOS PIZZA ROLLS	KIDS FIX SNACKS WHILE SITTING IN A CHAIR	1
TOYOTA	CARS BOX IN DRIVER TO LOOK AT HIS CAR	1
TOYOTA	COMMERCIAL FOR TOYOTATHON	1
TOYOTA	MAGNETS FOLLOW A CAR AROUND	1
TOYOTA	TRUCK GOES THROUGH A CRASH TEST	1
TRANSFORMERS	KIDS TRANSFORM ROBOTS	1
TUMS	TOUGH GUY WANTS A NEW COOL ANTACID	1
VALTRES DRUG	GIRL ON A RAFT TALKS ABOUT HERPES	1
VIAGRA	STOCK CARS RACES AROUND THE TRACK	1
VICKS VAPO RUB	MOM MAKES KID FEEL BETTER	1
VICKS VAPO STRIPS	VAPO RUB AND STRIPS MIX FOR A NEW PRODUCT	1
VISA	BABY WALKS FOR MOM; DAD MISSES IT	1
VISA	MEN DRESS AS WOMEN FOR REDSKINS GAME	1
VISA	WOMEN'S BOBSLED TEAM SHOWN	1
VITAFREE.COM	PILL IMPROVES SEXUAL PERFORMANCE	1
VOLKSWAGON	KIDS GO TO SELL CANDY TO GUY IN HIS CAR	1
VOLKSWAGON	MAN STOPS A WEDDING	1
WAL-MART	EMPLOYEES TALK ABOUT WORK AND THEIR CUSTOMERS	1
WAL-MART	KIDS TALK ABOUT COOL ELECTRONICS	1
WAL-MART	MAN TALKS ABOUT PEARL HARBOR	1
WAL-MART	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE DVD SELECTION	1
WELLBUTRIN DRUG	PEOPLE TALK ABOUT DEPRESSION	1
WINDEX	CROWS TALK ABOUT A NEW CLEANER	1
WIZARD	AIR FRESHNER ADDS COLOR TO THE ROOM	1
WRANGLERS	PEOPLE ARE SHOWN WEARING JEANS	1
YAHOO	FAT SUPERHERO LETS CROOK GO; SELLS PURSES	1
ZALES	BRACELET ROTATES WITH GIFT BEAR	1
ZALES	EARRINGS ROTATE ON SCREEN	1

ADVERTISER	DESCRIPTION OF COMMERCIAL	NO. OF AIRINGS
ZALES	MUSIC BOX SHOWN	1
ZEST	PEOPLE SMELL "BOB" ALL DAY	1
ZIMA	MAN GETS A HAIRCUT; THE HAIR GOES ONTO THE GIRLS	1
ZIMA	MAN STICKS TO A MANNEQUIN	1
ZIPLOC BAGS	CHICKEN FREEZES IN FREEZER	1
ZIPLOC BAGS	SKATER SPILLS HIS LUNCH IN HIS BAG	1
ZIPLOC BAGS	STEAK FREEZES IN FREEZER	1
TOTAL COMMERCIALS AIRED:		1,928

Appendix G – Composite Commercial Rater Grid

**Appendix H – Primary Message Systems Ratings
for 50 Commercials**

Appendix I – ESL Training Materials



what can we learn from tv ads?

by Clifford J. Bieberly

Television
Commercials as
a Window on
American Culture
for English as a
Second Language
(ESL) Students

Teacher's Guide

what can we learn from tv ads?

Television Commercials as a Window on American
Culture for English as a Second Language (ESL) Students

Clifford J. Bieberly

Doctoral research for
Kansas State University
August 2008

introduction

The ability of a 30-second television commercial to tell a culturally relevant story is one goal of advertisers. It's how they connect with their audiences. TV commercials, because of their length, must be even easier to understand than regular programs.

This could benefit students of English as a second language because they can see the action and hear the language being spoken. Since the “action” often includes cultural visual clues like facial expressions, use of personal space, gender roles, social status and age-related portrayals, there could be a lot to learn from a 30-second ad.

The speaking in TV commercials includes emphasis, pronunciation, and pauses common to American English. Also, commercials often include idioms, word play, irony and double meanings.

You and your students are being invited to participate in this research project for the doctoral dissertation of Clifford Bieberly, a student at Kansas State University. You will be asked to watch a set of commercials and discuss their cultural content. As you watch and listen to the commercials in this lesson, look for the following:

- Male/female interaction
- Age/generational relationships
- Power relationships (Who is in charge? How are they treated? How do they treat others?)
- Attitudes toward people who are different

- Are there people it is “okay” to make fun of?
- How do children relate to their parents or other adults?
- Is there an “ideal” family depicted in commercials?
- How are different races characterized? Do they interact in these messages?
- How are teachers, clergy, athletes, bosses, women characterized?

Materials for classroom use

The video sample contains 25 different national TV spots. All you need to do is show the students the commercials, then engage them in discussion using the materials provided. Since these are 30-second spots, total viewing time will be less than 13 minutes, but you should allow for discussion between each.

What to do

First, ask your students to fill out the short survey in the front of their folder. Then, play a commercial and ask the class to watch for aspects of communication that they think are particularly American, or even things they just don’t understand. (Having them jot down a few notes as they listen will help. Their folders include a section with space for notes on each ad) Engage your students in discussion before you move on to the next commercial.

Ask them if they can remember any favorite commercials they have seen at home and discuss them in the same way.

Finally, ask them to fill out the survey in the back of their folder.

Now, sign here _____ (after you have read the directions and feel you are ready to start. the lesson for your students.)

Your discussion

Some examples of questions to ask your students after watching a TV commercial might be something like this:

- “How did the father know the daughter was sad?”
- “Does it appear to be okay to make fun of your employer?”
- “Would a Japanese employee ever say that to his boss?”
- “Do Americans think drivers in other country are dangerous?”
- As you probably realize, there are many aspects of culture.

Other questions will surely come to mind in your discussion with students.

The last step

After you have collected your students’ questionnaires, be sure to complete the teacher’s survey, then send it all back in the postage paid reply envelope. You only need to take one teacher’s survey, even if you are using this with multiple classes. If you would like to know the results of the survey, include your e-mail address below.

Your information

Instructor name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Telephone: _____

School: _____

City, State: _____

survey

Please tell us a little about yourself in this pre-lesson survey.

1. What is your first language? _____

2. How long have you been in the United States? _____

3. What other type of discussion aids have you used in classes?
(Circle all that apply)

Movies

Television

Magazines

Newspapers

Books

Other _____

4. How many hours of television do you watch each day? _____

5. Do you watch television with captions turned on? Yes No

6. If you watch TV programs, do you usually pay attention to the commercials? Yes No

7. How much do you think watching TV helps you with English?

Very Much

Some

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

8. How much do you think TV commercials could help you?

Very Much

Some

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

9. Can you remember a favorite American TV commercial?
(If so, what was it?) _____

10. How important do you think the link is between language and the culture of that language?

Very Much

Some

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

commercials

Students can use these spaces here to make some notes for discussion. Possible topics for your discussion are in red below.

1



Note that this commercial sells relationships, “the gift of a sister’s advice,” for example. The people are physically very close.

2



Note that clean and white is “healthy.”

3



Why is giving holiday gifts important to Americans? What’s the significance of the children being selfless? Why are the police & firemen helping them?

4



Why would advertisers choose to have the friends be of different races? What’s being implied about youth & independence? Any other stereotypes?

5



Why did the boys give their mom a hamburger cooker and beef? Were they being selfish? Is that “typical” of young American men?

6



Why was the KFC spokesperson KFC rude to Santa Claus? Why would having an “individual size” be important to Americans?

7



The Sonic chairman, a very important man, is delivering food clumsily on skates. Why is this okay? What’s a “big cheese?”

8



Is it always men who do this kind of work? What does “driving down prices” mean? Is it okay to give “gift cards” as presents?

9



Are the cowboys “manly?” Why is a “big, bad, bold” pickup truck a good thing? Why are they destroying a field with their “family crest?”

10



When faced with a “tough” decision, we are told we can have both sandwiches. Why? Why are toys given away in kids’ meals?

11



Note the racial diversity. Are there any stereotypes here? To what American values would the slogan “Be you” appeal?

12



2nd Home Depot commercial – this one includes women. Are there any gender differences apparent in the way the men & women pose with tools?

13



Various portrayals of family relationships. Note the joke about the father who apparently has hearing problem.

14



Is it funny that Kirstie Alley is acting selfish as she shops with her friend? What does this say about American gift giving customs? Friendships?

15



Is food more authentic when prepared by a person from its country of origin? Does the slogan, “When you’re here, you’re family” sell more than food?

16



Is this what a “typical” grandmother looks like? Are all grandmothers supposed to be good cooks? What is the significance of using a modern version of a traditional Thanksgiving song?

17



The father is comforting his daughter. Note the use of the word “okay.” Why was this animated instead of real life?

18



Would using the singers, “The Captain and Tennille” appeal to a specific age group? What is funny in this ad? Is it okay to joke about mistakes?

19



Is this ad saying that gifts bring love, or love brings gifts? Why is this woman sneaking around to see the gift from her husband before he gives it to her?

20



This ad is making a comparison with other ads for similar vehicles. It is largely descriptive of the product itself and doesn't say much about culture.

21



How does this ad try to create urgency for its sale? Lots of products are being shown very quickly with low prices. To what values does this appeal?

22



Where are all the people in town? Does the music create a mood? Is it okay to drive like this? What's the significance of the girl?

23



What's the difference between “behold” and “be held?” Why did they use a movie to promote fast food? Why would people want these cups?

24



Like the other Wendy's commercial in this set, actors in this ad use a coin toss to make a decision. What does this say about the importance of chance?

25



"Easy, breezy, beautiful Cover Girl," women work hard to look like this. Can lipstick be "revolutionary"? How does a singing pop star help to sell cosmetics?

notes _____

what do you think?

1. Did you find elements of American culture in the commercials? Yes No
2. Which commercial did you think had the most information about American culture? Why? _____

3. Do you think this would be a good discussion aid in future ESL classes?
Yes No
4. Do you think you will pay more attention to the TV commercials now?
Yes No
5. How much do you think watching TV helps you with English?
Very Much Some Neutral Not much Not at all
1 2 3 4 5
6. How much do you think TV commercials could help you?
Very Much Some Neutral Not much Not at all
1 2 3 4 5
7. If you mentioned a favorite American TV commercial on the first survey, can you describe how it relates to American culture?

8. How important do you think the link is between language and the culture of that language?
Very Much Some Neutral Not much Not at all
1 2 3 4 5
9. Did you learn anything new about American culture? Yes No
10. Did other people in the class seem to like the lesson? Yes No

teacher survey

1. How much did the language learner benefit from this lesson?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

2. How much did the visual cues enhance the auditory messages?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

3. Did the video bring up any new cultural discussion in your class?

Yes No

4. How engaged did your students appear to be in the discussion?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

5. Did students appear to enjoy the exercise?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

6. Did your students mention or ask about other commercials they have seen outside the video? Yes No

7. Do you think you will use television commercials as a discussion starter in class in the future? Yes No

8. Did the video support your ESL teaching efforts?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

9. What other type of discussion aids do you use in your classes?

10. Do you think the link between language and culture is important?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

Do you have thoughts on using TV commercials to teach ESL, or any suggestions for facilitating in-class discussion? _____



what can we learn from tv ads?

by Clifford J. Bieberly

Television
Commercials as
a Window on
American Culture
for English as a
Second Language
(ESL) Students

Student Workbook

what can we learn from tv ads?

Television Commercials as a Window on American
Culture for English as a Second Language (ESL) Students

Clifford J. Bieberly

Doctoral research for
Kansas State University
August 2008

introduction

The ability of a 30-second television commercial to tell a culturally relevant story is one goal of advertisers. It's how they connect with their audiences. TV commercials, because of their length, must be even easier to understand than regular programs.

This could benefit you, as students of English as a second language, because you can see the action and hear the language being spoken. Since the “action” sometimes includes cultural visual clues such as facial expressions, use of personal space, gender roles, social status and age-related portrayals, there could be a lot to learn from a 30-second ad.

The speaking in TV commercials includes emphasis, pronunciation, and pauses common to American English. Also, commercials often include idioms, word play, irony and double meanings.

You are being invited to participate in this research project for the doctoral dissertation of Clifford Bieberly, a student at Kansas State University. You will be asked to watch a set of commercials and discuss their cultural content. As you watch and listen to the commercials in this lesson, look for the following:

- Male/female interaction
- Age/generational relationships
- Power relationships (Who is in charge? How are they treated? How do they treat others?)

- Attitudes toward people who are different
- Are there people it is “okay” to make fun of?
- How do children relate to their parents or other adults?
- Is there an “ideal” family depicted in commercials?
- How are different races characterized? Do they interact in these messages?
- How are teachers, clergy, athletes, bosses, women characterized?

survey

Please tell us a little about yourself in this pre-lesson survey.

1. What is your first language? _____

2. How long have you been in the United States? _____

3. What other type of discussion aids have you used in classes?
(Circle all that apply)

Movies

Television

Magazines

Newspapers

Books

Other _____

4. How many hours of television do you watch each day? _____

5. Do you watch television with captions turned on? Yes No

6. If you watch TV programs, do you usually pay attention to the commercials? Yes No

7. How much do you think watching TV helps you with English?

Very Much

Some

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

8. How much do you think TV commercials could help you?

Very Much

Some

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

9. Can you remember a favorite American TV commercial?
(If so, what was it?) _____

10. How important do you think the link is between language and the culture of that language?

Very Much

Some

Neutral

Not much

Not at all

1

2

3

4

5

commercials

As you view the TV commercials, use the spaces here to make some notes for discussion with your class.

1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



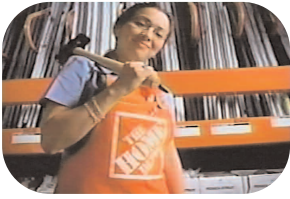
10



11



12



13



14



15



16



17



18



19



20



21



22



23



24



25



notes _____

what do you think?

1. Did you find elements of American culture in the commercials? Yes No

2. Which commercial did you think had the most information about American culture? Why? _____

3. Do you think this would be a good discussion aid in future ESL classes?
Yes No

4. Do you think you will pay more attention to the TV commercials now?
Yes No

5. How much do you think watching TV helps you with English?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

6. How much do you think TV commercials could help you?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

7. If you mentioned a favorite American TV commercial on the first survey, can you describe how it relates to American culture?

8. How important do you think the link is between language and the culture of that language?

Very Much	Some	Neutral	Not much	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

9. Did you learn anything new about American culture? Yes No

10. Did other people in the class seem to like the lesson? Yes No

Thank you
for participating,
and good luck with
your ESL program!