

ENGLISH LOANWORDS AND TRANSLITERATION IN THAI BEAUTY PRODUCT ADVERTISEMENTS

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Abstract

This study examined English loanwords and transliteration in Thai Lancôme product advertisements through a qualitative content analysis of 16 best-selling online product descriptions in December 2023, selected via purposive sampling from products with both English and Thai translations. This study employs Hoffer's (2005) framework to classify English loanwords and Trakulkasemsuk and Tontiwatkul's (2018) framework for English-Thai language adaptation to identify the patterns of transliteration usage in Thai beauty advertisements. The results revealed that transliteration was the primary type of English loanwords used across all sections, including descriptions and benefits (71.50%), ingredients (70.95%), and application instructions (80%). Furthermore, English written in English text was the most frequent pattern of English transliteration observed in all three sections, including descriptions and benefits (40.05%), ingredients (34.46%), and application instructions (48.89%). These findings suggested that Lancôme's advertising strategically used English loanwords to enhance product appeal while aligning with English transliteration into Thai forms for clarity of Thai people in the product's detail, primarily by preserving the English terms' original meanings and pronunciations.

Keywords: Loanwords, Transliteration, Advertising language, Linguistic borrowing, Lancôme

Introduction

It is undeniable that English serves as a primary language for advertising, particularly in the beauty and cosmetics industry in today's globalized market (Trakulkasemsuk & Tontiwatkul, 2018). Advertisements frequently use English to evoke a sense of luxury, international appeal, and increased sales volume, even in non-English-speaking countries. According to The Nation Online (2024), Thailand is one of the largest beauty markets for cosmetics in Southeast Asia, and the cosmetics industry in Thailand is valued at over 246 billion baht, with exports worth about 28 percent of domestic production in 2022. This highlights the significance of the beauty industry in Thailand and the strategic use of English to engage both local and global consumers (Trakulkasemsuk & Tontiwatkul, 2018).

Lamb (2019) highlighted that language styles in advertisements use various techniques to persuade consumers to purchase products, such as euphemism, emotive language, expert opinion, inclusive language, generalization, and jargon. Similarly, Al-Rousan and Haider (2022) noted that employing English loanwords is a popular advertising strategy, allowing brands to engage with a wider audience by blending local and international language elements.

English loanwords are words borrowed directly from one language into another, without interpreting the meaning, even though those words were written in their original language (Sangsarai, 2022). In Thailand, English loanwords are commonly found in various sectors such as clothing, fashion, and music (Phetkula, 2020). These borrowed words often retain elements of the foreign culture from which they originate, particularly in Southeast Asia (Endarto, 2022). The number of English-to-Thai loanwords has continuously increased, with the Thai borrowing more English words to expand its vocabulary (Mahakaew, 2016). Moreover, English loanwords have detailed structures, allowing advertisers to carefully select words suited to different contexts to persuade customers to purchase products (Hashim, 2010; Hornikx et al., 2010).

Previous studies have investigated English loanwords across various genres such as songs (Mahakaew, 2018), magazines (Bennui, 2019; Trakulkasemsuk & Tontiwatkul, 2018), television (Kuptanaroaj, 2021), and advertisements (Mahakaew, 2016; Sanprasert et al., 2017; Sudhinont, 2023; Tadee & Mahakaew, 2019). The framework used to analyze loanwords was from Hoffer (2005), who categorized English loanwords into four types: transliteration, loan blend, loan shift, and loan translation. In advertising, research has often focused on product names while overlooking detailed descriptions of the products. Specifically, studies on beauty product advertisements have primarily analyzed the product names of popular mass-market brands such as Nivea, Mistine, and Pond (Tadee & Mahakaew, 2019). These studies consistently indicate that transliterations are the most commonly used English loanwords across different sources.

Although the results from most previous studies have found transliteration to be the most common, research on the patterns of English transliteration in advertisements has been minimal. Trakulkasemsuk and Tontiwatkul (2018) identified four patterns of English-Thai language adaptation in advertising based on their study of English transliteration in product names, headlines, and body text: (1) English written in English text, (2) English written in Thai text, (3) English written in both Thai and English text, and (4) mixing of English and Thai. Related research on these translation patterns includes books (Chiengchaovai, 2024; Tongkaw & Shaoxian, 2024) and novels (Khuangmai et al., 2019; Narata & Rakpa, 2021). Therefore, studying the patterns and subtypes of English transliteration in written texts is necessary.

While previous studies (Mahakaew, 2016; Sanprasert et al., 2017) have examined English loanword usage and transliteration in advertisements, there remains a gap in understanding how different English loanword types and transliteration patterns strategy within luxury beauty brands like Lancôme. This research aims to fill these gaps by focusing on Lancôme, a luxury French cosmetics brand owned by the L'Oréal Group, which led in sales in 2023 (Ad Addict TH, 2023). Lancôme's Thailand website strategically blends Thai and English in its advertising. Incorporating English loanwords enhances brand value and positions products as international and high-quality (Perzyna, 2017; Trakulkasemsuk & Tontiwatkul, 2018). This study explores the use of English loanwords in luxury beauty brand advertisements and examines the patterns of English transliteration employed.

By examining how English language strategies contribute to brand positioning and consumer perceptions in the luxury market, this research offers valuable insights into the role of English in beauty product advertising, particularly in non-English-speaking countries. The findings enhance understanding of English loanwords in media and guide marketers and advertisers in developing effective communication strategies. This study also highlights the interplay between language and context in advertising, demonstrating how language choices shape the image and appeal of luxury beauty brands.

Objectives

1. To explore the types of English loanwords found in Thai Lancôme advertisements.
2. To identify the patterns of English transliteration found in Thai Lancôme advertisements.

Methodology

This research's methodology consisted of four parts: data collection, data analysis, analytical frameworks, and research procedures.

Data Collection

This study employed qualitative content analysis to examine the use of English loanwords on the official Lancôme Thailand website. The data collection date was completed in December 2023. Through purposive sampling, 16 advertisements written in Thai were selected from the 30 best-selling products to ensure relevance to the study's objectives. The selection of 16 advertisements was based on their high engagement metrics and bilingual presentation, ensuring a representative sample for linguistic analysis. The remaining 14 advertisements were disregarded, as they were entirely written in English. The product details were extracted and organized into separate Microsoft Word documents.

Data Analysis

This research analyzed the collected data from the official Lancôme Thailand website, which includes product descriptions and benefits, ingredients, and application

instructions. The data were organized into three separate sheets in Microsoft Excel, each corresponding to these sections. Each sheet was further divided into six categories to identify instances of English loanwords: (1) number of advertisements, (2) product names, (3) units of analysis, (4) types of English loanwords, (5) patterns of English transliteration, and (6) number of occurrences for each type of English loanword. Finally, words, phrases, and sentences from the product details in Microsoft Word documents were copied and pasted into corresponding categories in Microsoft Excel. This approach allowed for a systematic analysis of the English loanwords used in the advertisements.

Analytical Frameworks

Hoffer's (2005) framework and Trakulkasemsuk and Tontiwatkul's (2018) framework were deemed suitable for this study because their conceptual frameworks were relevant to the content that needed to be studied and aligned with this research interest. Relevant theories related to English loanwords were examined based on their types. This analysis followed a framework of Hoffer (2005), which categorizes loanword types as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Types of English loanwords in advertisements

Types	Descriptions & Examples
Transliteration	This involves converting text from one writing system into another, maintaining the original pronunciation as closely as possible, such as vitamin and serum (Tadee & Mahakaew, 2019).
Loan blend	This combines elements from two languages, blending a foreign word with a native linguistic element to create a new term, such as เนื้อแมตต์ (Matte texture), เซลล์ผิว (Skin cell).
Loan shift	This refers to adopting a foreign word with a change in its meaning, often based on cultural or contextual factors such as foundation (รองพื้น), highlight (ไฮไลต์).
Loan translation	This involves translating the components of a foreign word or phrase directly into the native language, such as telephone – “โทรศัพท์”. It can be divided into “tele” is “โทร”, and “phone” is “ศัพท์” (Sangsarai, 2022).

In addition, the framework for English-Thai language adaptation in advertisements, based on Trakulkasemsuk and Tontiwatkul (2018), was used to identify patterns in English transliteration. Their framework helps adapt these transliterations for the Thai market, maintaining the brand's international appeal while making the content more relatable to

Thai consumers. This study adapted the framework to analyze English transliteration in three areas: descriptions and benefits, ingredients, and application instructions, ensuring the analysis aligns with the study's scope and enhances its relevance in cosmetic advertisements. The adapted framework was categorized into four patterns as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Patterns of English transliteration in Thai cosmetics advertisements

Patterns of English transliteration	Descriptions & Examples
English written in Thai text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาไทย)	English words are written in Thai script while retaining their original pronunciation, with only the Thai transliterated words presented. Examples: โทเนอร์, มอยส์เจอไรเซอร์.
Patterns of English transliteration	Descriptions & Examples
English written in English text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ)	Writing words in their original form in English, without changing their spelling or pronunciation. Examples: Advanced Génifique, setting spray.
English written in both Thai and English text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ)	Writing English words in Thai script while retaining their original pronunciation. The original English words are provided in brackets for clarity. Examples: ไฮยาลูรอนิกแอซิด (Hyaluronic Acid), ไนอะซินาไมด์ (Niacinamide).
Mixing of English and Thai (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทย โดยการผสมคำภาษาไทย)	Writing English words in both English and Thai script to create a phrase, retaining their original pronunciation, combined with Thai words to create a blend. Examples: สถาบันวิจัย Laboratoire COSderma, กลุ่ม Brightening treatment, พลั่งเปปไทด์, ระดับลักซ์ซัวร์,

These patterns illustrate how English transliterations are adapted in Thai cosmetics advertisements to balance global branding with local relevance. Therefore, this study used these patterns to further categorize the transliterations found in the advertisements. It appears that Hoffer's (2005) framework and Trakulkasemsuk and Tontiwatkul's (2018) framework have some overlap in this study. As a result, this study will classify loan blends as a type of transliteration as they incorporate transliteration within Thai words.

Research Procedures

English loanwords were classified into four types, as outlined in the analytical framework based on Hoffer (2005), and further categorized into four patterns based on the English-Thai language adaptation in advertisements outlined by Trakulkasemsuk and Tontiwatkul (2018). Each instance of English loanwords was automatically counted and recorded for frequency analysis.

To ensure that the selected words are English loanwords and transliteration, the meanings of the English loanwords were assessed using the Oxford Advanced Learner's and Merriam-Webster dictionaries, and the corresponding Thai translations were verified against the Royal Institute Dictionary or official cosmetic brand websites to ensure accuracy in beauty-related terminology.

To ensure the reliability of the analysis, intercoder reliability was assessed through an independent reviewer analyzing 30% of the data, yielding an 85% agreement rate. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion and refined coding criteria. The results are presented in tables, using both numbers and percentages.

Results

This section presents the findings on the types and most frequent patterns of English loanwords in Thai Lancôme product advertisements. Table 3 illustrates the various types of English loanwords identified across three sections of the advertisements.

Table 3 Types of English loanwords in the Thai Lancôme product advertisements

Types of English loanwords	Sections of the advertisements		
	Descriptions and benefits	Ingredients	Application instructions
	Total 407 words	Total 148 words	Total 90 words
Transliteration	291 (71.50%)	105 (70.95%)	72 (80.00%)
Loan blend	116 (28.50%)	43 (29.05%)	18 (20.00%)
Loan shift	0	0	0
Loan translation	0	0	0

According to Table 3, an analysis of Thai Lancôme product advertisements reveals that transliteration is the most common type of English loanword used across different sections. It accounts for 291 words (71.50%) in descriptions and benefits, 105 words (70.95%) in ingredients, and 72 words (80%) in application instructions. Loan blends, which combine English and Thai elements, make up 116 words (28.50%) in descriptions and benefits, 43

words (29.05%) in ingredients, and 18 words (20%) in application instructions. No instances of loan shift or loan translation, where an English meaning is applied to a Thai word or an English word is fully translated into Thai, were found. In total, 645 English loanwords were analyzed, with transliteration being the dominant type across all sections. Table 4 further illustrates the frequency of English transliteration patterns in Thai Lancôme’s advertising strategy across various sections.

Table 4 Frequency of English transliteration patterns in Thai Lancôme product descriptions and benefits, ingredients, and application instructions

Patterns of English transliteration	Sections		
	Descriptions and benefits Total 407 words	Ingredients Total 148 words	Application instructions Total 90 words
English written in Thai text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาไทย)	116 (28.50%)	42 (28.38%)	22 (24.44%)
English written in English text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ)	163 (40.05%)	51 (34.46%)	44 (48.89%)
English written in both Thai and English text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ)	12 (2.95%)	12 (8.11%)	0
Mixing of English and Thai (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทย โดยการผสมคำภาษาไทย)	116 (28.50%)	43 (29.05%)	24 (26.67%)

Regarding the patterns of English transliterations in Lancôme product advertisements, the most frequent transliteration pattern in the “Descriptions and Benefits” section was “English written in English text” (163 words, 40.05%), followed by “English written in Thai text” and “Mixing of English and Thai,” each with 116 words (28.50%). In contrast, “English written in both Thai and English text” was the least frequent, accounting for only 12 words (2.95%).

In the “Ingredients” section, “English written in English text” (51 words, 34.46%) was the most common transliteration pattern, followed by “Mixing of English and Thai” (43 words, 29.05%), “English written in Thai text” (42 words, 28.38%), and “English written in both Thai and English text” (12 words, 8.11%).

For the “Application Instructions” section, “English written in English text” (44 words, 48.89%) was the most frequently used pattern, followed by “Mixing of English and Thai” (24

words, 26.67%) and "English written in Thai text" (22 words, 24.44%). No instances of "English written in both Thai and English text" were found in this category.

To summarize, "English written in English text" was the most frequently used transliteration pattern across all sections of the Lancôme product descriptions. In the following section, examples and analyses of English transliteration found in Lancôme product advertisements are given.

Table 5 Examples and analyses of various English loanwords in Thai Lancôme product advertisements

Patterns	Examples	Explanations
English written in Thai text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาไทย)	จากนั้นกดด้านบนเพื่อหยด <u>เซรั่ม</u> ลงที่ฝ่ามือ	“เซรั่ม” is borrowed from “serum”. The English pronunciation matches how it is spoken by native Thai speakers.
English written in English text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาอังกฤษ)	การเปิดตัว <u>Rénergie H.C.F. Triple serum</u> ในยุคถัดมา	The English pronunciation of “Rénergie H.C.F. Triple Serum” is pronounced by Thai native speakers with the original sounds.
English written in both Thai and English text (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาไทยและภาษาอังกฤษ)	เพื่อมอบความชุ่มชื้น นุ่มแดงอัม ฟู และ <u>ไนอะซินาไมด์</u> (<u>Niacinamide</u>)	“ไนอะซินาไมด์ (Niacinamide)” is the English pronunciation. Thai native speakers pronounce this word with the original sounds, even though it is written in different patterns.
Mixing of English and Thai (ทับศัพท์ภาษาอังกฤษด้วยภาษาอังกฤษและภาษาไทย โดยการผสมคำภาษาไทย)	เพื่อกระจาย <u>เนื้อครีม</u> อย่าง สม่ำเสมอ ผลิตภัณฑ์ในกลุ่ม <u>Skincare</u>	“เนื้อครีม” is borrowed from ‘cream,’ combining the Thai word ‘เนื้อ’ and the English word ‘ครีม.’ This borrowed term is written in the Thai pattern. “กลุ่ม Skincare” is a combination of the Thai word ‘กลุ่ม’ and the English word ‘Skincare.’ The term ‘Skincare’ is written in the English pattern.

From the examples above, the first section, “เซรั่ม” is a commonly used word in Thailand, most people can understand this word in English written in Thai text. In the second section, the phrase “Rénergie H.C.F. Triple serum” is a proper noun that cannot be directly translated into Thai; the English word must be written in English text to avoid a

wrong meaning. The third section, “ไนอะซินาไมด์ (Niacinamide)” is the technical term for the ingredient; this should be written in both Thai and English text for clearer understanding. The last section, “เนื้อครีม” and “กลุ่ม Skincare” are mixing of English and Thai, which blends the two languages to easily understand the message. This illustrates how Lancôme incorporates various English loanwords into its product advertisements. Through transliteration, the brand retains its original English names while making them accessible to Thai speakers. The examples show how these terms are adapted to fit Thai phonetics and script for easier understanding and use.

Discussion

This study highlights that transliteration is the most common type of English loanwords in Thai Lancôme advertisements. The dominance of transliteration reflects an effort to maintain brand identity while ensuring consumer accessibility. This finding is consistent with Mahakaew (2016) but contrasts with Bennui (2019), who found a higher prevalence of loan blends in tourism advertisements. The use of transliteration in Thai product advertisements may help the audience's clear comprehension of descriptions and benefits, ingredients, and application instructions because English loanwords are easier to understand than Thai words (Tadee & Mahakaew, 2019).

The study also shows that English written in English text has the most frequent patterns of English transliteration found in Thai Lancôme advertisements. The finding supports Chiengchaovai's (2024) stated that some English words cannot be directly translated into Thai because of proper nouns such as *Rénergie H.C.F. Triple serum*, *Idôle*, and *Advanced Génifique*. The findings suggest that Lancôme strategically employs English transliteration to enhance its luxury positioning, aligning with global branding practices while catering to Thai consumers.

Interestingly, the mixing of English and Thai is the second most frequently found. This is consistent with Al-Rousan and Haider (2022), who clarified that combining English and local language enables brands to connect with a broader audience by incorporating local and international language elements. This approach creates a modern image while ensuring that Thai consumers can easily understand the message. For example, in "เผยผิวโกลว์เป็นธรรมชาติด้วย Glow Booster เซรั่ม" (Reveal naturally glowing skin with Glow Booster serum), "Glow Booster" remains in English to emphasize its global appeal, while "เซรั่ม" (serum) is in Thai for local familiarity. Similarly, in "New! ลิปสติคเนื้อแมตต์ที่ให้ Velvet Finish ติดทน 12 ชม." (New! A matte lipstick with a long-lasting velvet finish for 12 hours), "Velvet Finish" is kept in English to highlight product quality, while "ลิปสติคเนื้อแมตต์" (matte lipstick) is transliterated in

Thai for clarity. This strategy helps Lancôme deliver a clear, relatable, and effective message to its audience while maintaining its brand identity.

To conclude, this study contributes to the understanding of loanwords in advertising by demonstrating how transliteration choices reinforce brand identity in the context of Thai market. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of language choices in advertising, particularly how Lancôme operates in beauty product through its franchises around the world by English-Thai language adaptation on the official Lancôme Thailand website for accurate understanding of Lancôme products among Thai people, and illustrates English loanwords can enhance communication and elevate a brand's appeal. The use of transliteration helps Lancôme appeal to both local and international consumers, reinforcing its modern and global image while keeping its messaging clear for Thai audiences. Furthermore, the study of English loanwords and English transliteration patterns will help advertisers to create marketing strategies with Thai-English languages in their brands' details for increasing sales and incomes in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research can further explore the large quantity of products in advertising and the language used in other products, such as cosmetics and supplementary food. Such a study could identify the most effective ways to tailor language for global engagement. Expanding the scope of this research would enhance understanding of how language influences consumer perceptions and persuasion in advertising strategies.

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