

Using Advertisements in ESL Classroom as Authentic Material

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Abstract

In this paper we discuss ways and usefulness of using authentic advertisement materials inside the classroom. Media and technology play a major role in our life. Students are usually aware of the value of using these in a proper way. But using media and technologies for their educational practice in a graded manner requires some discretion and skill. Advertisements (Ads) can relate to more than one branch of knowledge. Advertisement can provide plenty of ideas/concepts to write about and suggest many interrelated words. Thus, ads are a good source to develop all language skills, in particular writing skills. This paper will present some ways as to how we can incorporate advertisements in a proper way inside the ESL classroom. Through appropriate activities, both group as well as individual activities, given to students they were able to develop their language skills and also develop communication among themselves using English. These activities led to positive inclination to learn English more effectively.

Keywords: Authentic material, Advertisement, ESL Classroom, Technologies.

English is used in India for specific purposes. We all come across oral English advertisements, songs, printed advertisements, newspaper advertisements, magazines, banners, etc. in our surroundings. These materials can be used in teaching as teaching materials. Even students from the remote areas find advertisements in English in water packets, clothes, snacks and so on. These days we can hear English advertisements in public places also.

In the project the first author has undertaken under the guidance and supervision of the second author, she selected students from rural areas and wanted to help such students to learn with the help of materials (Ads) readily available free of charge always around them.

Advertisement is generally defined as “a notice or announcement in a public medium promoting a product, service, or event or publicizing a job vacancy” (https://www.google.com/search?q=advertisement&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS794US795&oq=advertisement&aqs=chrome..69i57j69i60j0l4.7999j1j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8). Advertisement may be defined also as a non-personal communication transmitted through a mass medium, such as newspaper, television, radio, magazine, etc. Dictionary.com describes advertisement as “a paid announcement, as of goods for sale, in newspapers or magazines, on radio or television, etc. a public notice, especially in print; the action of making generally known”.

In this project, students were instructed to collect some advertisements and talk about them. Working with commercials in the classroom helped the students, apart from developing creative thinking, to develop critical thinking. It is not only self-control but making an effort to understand the world in which we live and be sensitive to the issues we face. It also helps our rethinking habits and personal and collective behaviors. Students were motivated for each and every task.

Materials used by the students in the classroom activities were as follows:

Newspapers (*The Hindu, Daily Mirror, The Telegraph*)

Newspaper advertising gives us information as well as sells goods to us! Advertisements are placed throughout the papers, with classified listings under subject headlines in a specific section. Visuals are an integral part of the large-sized advertisements. Language used often employs short sentences and sometimes only the major part of a sentence.

Magazines

Most of us tend to read magazines. Popular magazines are read by millions of people, and these always carry attractive and colourful advertisements. Many of these advertisements in popular magazines attract women giving information about cosmetics, clothes, etc. Ads are colorfully displayed. Some of the magazines used in the class were *Women's Health, Reader's Digest, and Vogue*.

Television

Television advertisement attracts viewers of all ages. TV Ads are created with sound effects, songs, attractive models, so the products will be prominently shown. Example: Samsung Galaxy Mobile, Myntra, Close-up, Dairy Milk.

Outdoor and Transit

Outdoor billboards can be seen in the highways, road side or in the sports stadium. Transit Ads are generally posters, wall posters, and posters on the bus, taxies, etc.

Online

Advertisement on online may move viral. They include apps like Amazon, Flipkart, Jabong, etc. Social media sites or websites are used by customers. Advertising has become a part of our life. However, advertising is a very complex field to study. The field of advertising involves innovative and in creative methods. However, the printed form, namely magazines and newspapers continue to be more common in India. With the expansion of online/internet facility, print media may have to take a backseat as in materially developed nations.

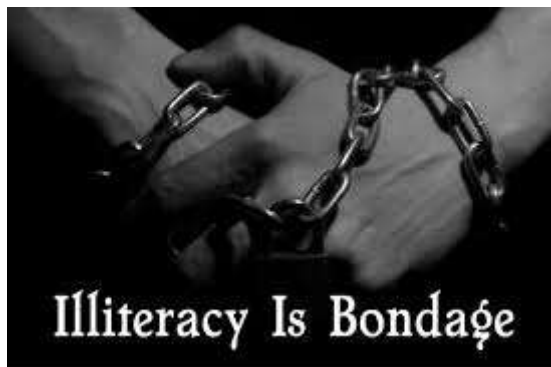
Some Student Activities

Students were divided into groups and were asked to create some advertisements on their own. Some of the students did extremely well, with advertisements focusing on booksellers, organizing a special event, advertising job opportunities, etc. Home assessments were given to them to develop computer-based graphics. Students with interest used info net and learned how to create ads. Next day they described and explained what they did as homework in class. Through this process their speaking and writing skills were developed. They were encouraged to prepare “authentic materials”. According to Adams, “materials are authentic if the language data are unaltered and produced originally for non-teaching purpose conveying a real message” (18).

Public service advertising is a tool which conveys a message to public. Useful messages about deforestation, AIDS, justice for women, etc., attract students and they were interested in advertisements which helped focus on social values.



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The above were some of the images collected by the students and they pasted these on a A4 size sheet and wrote their views on the message communicated through visuals. A few students made oral presentation showing the visuals collected and brought to the class.

To conclude, students found the exercise a novel attempt even as it gave them scope to think about the content, identify relevant words and construct suitable sentences to communicate their views. It may be pointed out that we did focus more on productive and receptive skills rather than on the correctness of utterances/sentences used by the students.

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