

Advertisement as a Language Learning Tool: An Experiment

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Usefulness of Advertisement in Learning a Language

In recent times one comes across a lot of advertisements. From selecting an article from a shop to going on a tour, we sit back in our home and evaluate the available advertisements before we start buying articles. Why not then use the advertisements and billboards to teach and learn English as a second or foreign language in our environment?

In some advertisements, certain details can be directly drawn; in others, students have to infer or draw conclusions. This activity helps the learner to understand the advertisement and infer details if necessary.

So, advertisement can help both the instructor and students to get involved in language learning even as they sharpen their logical reasoning.

Our Simple Project Using Advertisement

In this item, there is an advertisement followed by 5 questions. Students have to read the questions and find out the answers from the advertisement. Of course, it is expected of the students to produce grammatically correct sentences and sentences with accurate information. If this is not done, understanding the advertisement may be considered incomplete.

In the advertisement, the researcher needs to understand the students' ability to grasp the advertisement and draw conclusions. The researcher, focused not upon students' understanding of grammar or even correct grammatical usage but on the understanding or comprehension of the content details in the advertisement and answer the questions raised.

Different Language Use or Techniques of Advertisements

In advertisements, the advertisers use different techniques to pass on the message – broken sentences, one word sentences, deliberate grammatically incongruous sentences, etc. Thus a layman with minimum common vocabulary could exercise a grip over the advertisement.

Understanding the advertisement, asking questions to select the answers from the advertisement, evaluating the performance on the basis of understanding the message rather than producing grammatically accurate sentences are what is expected of this task.

Advertisement must be recognized as a communicative activity. Advertisements communicate message/content. Students need to identify and comprehend the intended message or intent/content, and answer the questions raised. Here communication is done through a written medium. In this exercise, the sentences produced to communicate are not evaluated on the basis of grammar; rather it is evaluated on the basis of content.

Different tasks are given to the students in order to make them to generate sentences on their own. These tasks are taken from everyday activities.

Task: 1

Name of the Task: Street Advertisement (Own)

Aim: To collect relevant advertisement, prepare questions and relevant answers

Materials: Advertisement collected from the street by students themselves

Relevance to the Test: Advertisement

Time: 50 minutes

Skill: Speaking, Reading, Writing

Preparation: Each student should collect at least two advertisements they come across. The class is divided into groups of three. This is an individual activity. Each student must prepare a set of five questions for the advertisement they have received from other students. These questions are given to another student who prepares answers for them. Thus three students are involved in the whole process. These three students should discuss the relevance of the questions and the answers.

Activity: L25 prepared the following street advertisement

Tuition for +1 and +2 Students Score Good Marks Admission to MBBS, BDS, and BE Contact: The principal Vijaya Tutorials Marthandam, Ph. 260325.

L50 Prepared the following questions:

- 1 Where are classes held?
- 2 What is the advertisement about?
- 3 What can the student become?
- 4 What is the telephone number of the tutorial?
- 5 Whom should the student contact?

These questions are answered by L37.

- 1 Classes are held at Marthandam.
- 2 The advertisement is about tuitions.
- 3 The student can become a doctor or an Engineer.
- 4 The telephone number of the tutorial is 260325.
- 5 The student should contact the principal.

Discussion

L37 is of the view that the first question need not be asked as everybody knows that this tutorial is situated at Marthandam. L 25 does not like the way the third question is framed as becoming a doctor is only a remote possibility. What would happen if one joins the tutorial is that he might expect to score more marks.

Task: 2**Name of the Task:** Daily Advertisement (Own)**Aim:** To prepare questions and answers**Materials:** Advertisement in English from daily papers which the researcher has asked the students to bring.**Relevance to the Test:** Advertisement**Time:** 25 minutes**Skill:** Reading, Writing**Preparation:** Students formed groups of two. Each student has at least one advertisement to work on. Members of each group must go through the advertisement one at a time. They must discuss and prepare a set of a minimum of five questions. These questions, along with the relevant advertisement, must be handed over to another pair, and this pair must find out the answers for these questions and then hand it back to the parent pair who checks the answers.**Activity:**

Pair 1: (with the following advertisement)

Experience “Great Living”

Flats for sale at
Thelaspeth, Pondicherry.
Two bedroom (with attached bath).
Ceramic parking space
Promoter: Mookiah Construction
66, Pettaiyan Chatram
Pondicherry – 9
Ph: 2272103, 2272128

Questions prepared by pair L47 and L36

- 1 What is the advertisement about?
- 2 How many bed rooms does the flat have?
- 3 Whom should the interested party contact?
- 4 What is the telephone number of the advertiser?
- 5 Is there any parking space available?

The pair L8 and L12, has come out with the following answers.

- 1 The advertisement is about the sale of a flat.
- 2 The flat has two bedrooms.
- 3 The interested party should contact Mookiah Constructions, 66, Pettaiyan, Chatram, Pondicherry.

- 4 The telephone number of the advertiser is 2272103.
- 5 Yes, ceramic parking space is available.

Then the researcher has asked L47 and L36 to read the questions and the corresponding answers.

Task: 3

Name of the task: Imaginative Advertisement (Own)

Aim: To prepare imaginative advertisements, questions to these advertisements, and relevant answers

Materials: Advertisement prepared

Relevance to the Test: Advertisement

Time: 40 minutes

Skill: Listening, speaking

Preparation: Students form groups of three. They must think and come out with an imaginary advertisement about their own imagined establishment, a job they seek etc. They prepare questions and answers after discussing with other members of the group.

Activity: The advertisement is prepared by the group formed by L8, L6, L14.

Wanted Teachers

St. Joseph's Higher Secondary School, Thiruthopuram.

Subject: Physics, Chemistry and Maths.

Qualification: M.Sc., B.Ed.

Salary: Rs. 4000 per month.

Contact: The Correspondent.

Questions:

- 1 What is the advertisement about?
- 2 What is the salary of the teacher?
- 3 What are the qualifications of the teacher?
- 4 Who is to be contacted?
- 5 What is the address of the school?

All the members of the group, after discussing, came out with the following answers.

- 1 The advertisement is about the teachers required.
- 2 The salary of the teacher per month is Rs.4000.
- 3 The teacher must be M.Sc., B.Ed.
- 4 The Correspondent of the school should be contacted.
- 5 St. Joseph's HSSC, Thiruthopuram is the address of the school.

Task: 4

Name of the Task: Mixed Advertisement (Own)

Aim: To make the students familiarize with the advertisement by answering questions

Materials: Fifty covers, with each cover containing an advertisement and a set of questions not relevant to the same advertisement.

Relevance to the Test: Advertisement

Time: 40 minutes

Skill: Speaking, reading

Preparation: The researcher prepares 10 sets of advertisement and its corresponding 5 questions for each advertisement. There are fifty such advertisements with the corresponding questions. An advertisement and a set of questions that needn't be the one relevant to the advertisement, is put in a cover. So there are 50 covers.

Activity: Each student is given a cover and is asked to move around the class to find who is keeping the set of questions relevant to their advertisement. After finding his questions, he must answer them. If he has doubts, he can always consult his friends. At last the researcher asks a few students to read out the answers. L 78 has got the following advertisement and questions.

<p>5 Day Tour to Bangalore Money needed per head - Rs. 1000 If family with four - Rs. 3500 Contact : Raj Travels, 178, College Road, Marthandam.</p>

Questions:

- 1 Where is the destination of the tour?
- 2 How many days tour is it?
- 3 What is the amount one has to spend to participate in this tour?
- 4 Whom should an interested party contact to know more about the tour?
- 5 Are you interested to participate in this tour?

In all these tasks we find that students have carried out the work with participation. It is all because these tasks are familiar to them in many ways. Thus it is important to introduce the students to familiar objects in order to achieve productive results in language learning activities.

Works Cited

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