

WHAT'S IN THE ADVERTISEMENT? TOWARD LANGUAGE LEARNING AND BEYOND

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Abstract

Advertisements are valuable tools for ESL/EFL classrooms. Many instructors, however, tend to focus on enhancing language learning per se. With an experimental way, they are tools for discussions and analyses of contemporary cultural issues. To utilize the mass media in the classrooms, CLL and project work are suggested to be effective tools for this. The main purpose of the study was therefore to explore whether CLL and project work were effective for enhancing the discussions and analyses of cultural issues in Thai advertisements. The results of the study revealed that, cognitively and culturally, some advertisements provided a stimulating approach to discussions and analyses of the cultural issues since their contents contained highly cultural insights of the issues which provided topics for discussions and analyses. Communicatively, the discussions enhanced more active roles among the group communication, group interaction and dynamics, and communication skills. Linguistically, the discussions improved their speaking and writing skills. Pedagogically, the increased skills enhanced their L2 learning. This study, however, limits to a Thai EFL classroom and mono-cultural society. The replication with other EFL classrooms and in plural and intercultural societies is needed.

Keywords: *advertisements, cultural discussion, CLL, project work teaching*

Rationale for the Study

Advertisements are valuable tools for ESL/EFL classrooms. They make language learning more interesting, challenging, and therefore motivate L2 learning more efficiently. Almost all L2 instructors, however, tend to utilize them with a focus on the English language learning aspect per se. In fact, advertisements are more useful for language learning. It is true that some viewers look at advertisements for information and/or for entertainment but, if they are interested in the idea of advertisement, they usually think about it more deeply and discuss it with others. Therefore, the instructors can use them for promoting discussions and analyses of global, local, socio-cultural and other important issues in L2 classrooms as well as a useful tool for promoting L2 learning.

Advertisements are commercial products as well as cultural products so they can be useful for promoting critical thinking, interpretation, analyses, and discussions of cultural issues since every advertisement is culturally based and bounded (Tanaka, 1994) and some of them provided highly cultural insights of contemporary socio-cultural issues in their contents. To illustrate this, a single advertisement has situational

and linguistic contexts in which it was created and the contexts are embedded one way or another in the contents of the advertisement. Therefore, the advertisement contents usually provide highly topical and culturally focused insights which can definitely lead the viewers to reflections on socio-cultural comparisons and contrasts between their own culture and other cultures.

Since advertising has its own system which is independent of language system but shares some aspects to the language system, a pragmatic approach to use it in L2 discussions and analyses of cultural issues needs to take this into account for successful L2 promotion. The ways to study and analyze advertising language therefore include both semiotic and linguistic approaches. Both approaches rely on the systems of signs which contain cultural knowledge of the society in which the advertisement was produced or the receivers whom the advertisement targeted at.

The ways the semiotic and linguistic approaches send the messages through the advertisements are different. The semiotic approach is complex. The signs in advertising language consist of language and image. Both language and image form the message which the advertisement

aims to send to the receivers. The purposes of the advertising message are to inform and/or to persuade.

For semiotic approach, according to Barthes (1984), all advertising messages fall into one of these forms: the linguistic message, the coded iconic message, and the non-coded iconic message. Each form has its way to process the message. The linguistic message is processed through language which consists of the caption and the labels. The coded iconic message and the non-coded iconic message are non-linguistic message in which the information is processed through image. These two non-linguistic messages have their own ways to be perceived. The coded iconic message is perceived as symbolic, literal, and cultural one while the non-coded iconic message is categorized as perceptual, clear, straightforward, and non-literal one.

On the other hand, the linguistic approach has two devices: semantic and pragmatic. According to Blakemore (1987, 1992), the two devices are not devoid of cultural knowledge. The semantic device deals with elements of meaning obtained directly from the linguistic content by decoding linguistic expressions. Semantic meaning can be independent of context. The pragmatic device deals with elements dependent on extra-linguistic contextual information and the hearer's inferential abilities to decode the meaning.

This present study would take both semiotic and linguistic approaches into the advertising language analysis, focusing on the advertising language. The analysis falls into two levels: denotation and connotation. Denotation focuses on non-literal meaning while connotation puts emphasis on literal meaning. However, the distinction between denotation and connotation is not absolutely clear-cut since perceptual information in an advertisement (i.e. linguistic form or language and non-linguistic form or image) is not devoid of cultural contexts. The interpretation of advertising language is not ambiguity-free and all advertisements are always affected by and never independent of cultural knowledge in one way or another. The analysis of advertising language needs to take the contemporary cultural knowledge or prior knowledge of the advertisement into consideration. Therefore, this present study would not overlook either of these approaches in advertising language analysis.

In the process of analysis, the perceptual information either in the form of linguistic or non-linguistic message is processed through cultural senses. The senses are derived from signs which are significant but do not exist as fixed and complete. Therefore, advertising language always 'invites' us to make the connection between the

signs and significances. This connection-making process of this transference of significance is a condition necessary for the analysis process which consists of interpreting the messages, creating meanings, and giving values to the advertisement.

To do these jobs in a language classroom is not easy. The instructor needs language learning strategies for enhancing language learning, communication practice, and analysis skills. Prior study (e.g., Williams and Burden, 1997; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Bialystok, 1991; Oxford, 1990; Littlewood, 1981; Stern, 1992; Nunan, 1987, 1989) suggests that CLL provide effective strategies for enhancing individual language learning, promoting group communication and discussion, and facilitating independence learning by allowing the learners opportunity to take control of their own communication as well as their own learning.

On the effectiveness of language learning strategies for developing communicative competence, Oxford (1990) suggests that language learning strategies are tools for active, self-directed movement which is necessary for developing communicative competence. The language learning activities as suggested by Oxford include communicative strategies since the main purpose of all languages is for communication and the learners need to engage in communication actively.

Similarly, Lessard-Clouston (1997) states that language learning strategies help develop the communicative competence. More specifically, communication strategies as part of language learning strategies greatly contribute to the development of the communicative competence of the learners and their ability to take control of their learning which helps improve their independence learning through a wide variety of communication strategies.

Although prior study revealed that CLL is effective for enhancing communication, those studies investigated the effectiveness of CLL for general communicative purposes. The use of CLL for other practical and realistic purposes for discussions of contemporary cultural issues in EFL contexts is scanty. The study on this issue is therefore needed. However, CLL enhancement needs a productive outcome. One way to promote language communication productivity through CLL is through the support of project work teaching which is suggested as an effective tool to create the product of learning.

Several researchers and theorists (e.g., Thomas, 1986; Legutke, M. and Thomas, H., 1991) suggested project work teaching as a tool to create the end product of learning since such teach-

ing allows the students opportunity to formulate responses relevant to the learning or knowledge which they get from texts. To formulate their responses, the students need to be aware of their learning and able to transfer their knowledge from one language to another and from knowledge-getting to knowledge-using or transferring consciously. To enhance the knowledge transfer in this study, CLL is a means to create the end product of project work teaching. This study therefore integrated the teaching as a way to support CLL practice in a Thai context.

There are studies which were conducted to verify the effectiveness of CLL and project work teaching in enhancing the English language learning particularly in the Thai context where English is rarely used for communication outside the classrooms. For example, Sa-ngiamwibool conducted three studies for the purpose. Study 1 (2011a) determined whether CLL incorporating in the Internet and consciousness-raising (C-R) were effective for initiating research project proposal. The results of study revealed that CLL affectively stimulated the students' willingness to communicate while working on their project. The results led to the conclusion that CLL incorporating in the Internet and C-R could enhance learner autonomy in initiating and producing research project work successfully.

Similarly, Study 2 (2011b) investigated how CLL enhanced language learner autonomy for sustainable development in a project group work. The development focused on the students' language proficiency, their confidence in appropriating the English language, and their responsibility in managing their own learning. The results of study revealed that CLL enhanced the students' proficiency by *TOEIC* Test (Test of English for International Communication). The students gained more self-confidence in appropriating the target language for expressing, implying, and creating meanings. While the students were negotiating in project work, they developed their sense of responsibility and accountability in managing their own learning in planning, leading, and evaluating their own projects. The study concluded that the CLL tasks in this study are needed for enhancing learner autonomy for sustainable development in a project group work in Thai contexts.

Finally, Study 3 (2011c) determined the effectiveness of each of the communicative learning tasks selected for each stage of a project work teaching. The tasks consisted of the following nine tasks: trust-building activities and relaxation exercises, awareness and sensibility training, information-sharing activities, thinking strategies and problem-solving, information gap and crea-

tive expression, role-playing and creative dramatics, interpersonality and interaction, process evaluation, and language skill training. Each stage of a project work teaching consisted of the following six stages: opening, topic orientation, research and data collection, preparing data presentation, presentation, and evaluation. The data revealed that communicative learning tasks in this study could enhance project learning effectively and the students liked the tasks at different levels.

However, all CLL incorporating in project work teaching in these studies limited to basic and intermediate communicative levels. This present study therefore expanded to a more advanced level, focusing on the discussion of media and culture with the following research questions:

- *To what extent does CLL incorporating in project work teaching promote the discussions and analyses of cultural issues in advertisements?*
- *To what extent does CLL incorporating in project work teaching enhance individual and group communication?*

Based on the research questions, the purposes of this study were presented below.

Purposes of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to explore the effectiveness of CLL incorporating in project work teaching on the discussions of cultural issues presented in advertisements, with two specific purposes:

1. To explore to what extent CLL incorporating in project work teaching promote discussions and analysis of cultural issues in advertisements
2. To explore to what extent CLL incorporating in project work teaching enhance individual communication and group communication

Research Methods

This was a qualitative study. Since this study aimed to explore the students' ability to analyze advertisements as source for cultural discussion, all subjects had learnt some background knowledge of advertising language in the course *English in Mass Media* in 2010 which provided background knowledge of English used in newspaper, radio, TV, magazine, film, advertisement, and electronic media. This was to ensure that all subjects had prior knowledge of advertisements.

Of all the media, advertising analysis was specifically chosen for this study since it is one of the most common mass media in their everyday

life. The subjects perceive it every day and are more or less influenced by it, either consciously or unconsciously. This study focused on semiotic and linguistic approaches. The scope of analysis fell into two levels: denotation and connotation. The choices for advertisements which were chosen based on the subjects' interests consisted of metaphors, puns, and images of women.

The subjects were 24 English majors who were divided into 6 groups, each of which consisted of 4 students with the comparable language proficiency, classified based on their grades of the former background course, *English in Mass Media*, which ranked from C and B. Therefore, their language competence and analysis ability of all groups were relatively competitive to ensure that all groups were of equal language proficiency.

The instruments for eliciting the data collection consisted of a project group work instruction which incorporated CLL into all project stages, a questionnaire, an interview, and an observation note.

The data collection lasted ten weeks from February to March 2011. All subjects were assigned to complete the procedures of each week in three hours. The data collection followed these steps. First, the subjects working in group were assigned the four CLL activities which consisted of relaxation activity, evoking individual memories, sharing experiences, and public sharing. These CLL activities were assigned into the following project stages:

Stage 1: Relaxation activity

The relaxation activity enhanced the students' sensory awareness by asking them to talk about the advertisement that most aroused their sensory awareness. Then the teacher showed them advertisements and asked them to say or write down what they saw, heard, smelled, and felt from the advertisements.

Stage 2: Evoking individual memories

After arousing the students' sensory awareness with the relaxation activity, the researcher directed their attention inwardly to their memories by asking them to remember the senses they experienced in the previous stage.

Stage 3: Note-making

Next, the students wrote down key words, images, and associations of what they remembered in the evoking individual memories in the first stage. They might extend their notes by comparing to other advertisements that they had seen before.

Stage 4: Sharing experiences

Then, the members of each group shared their memories with one other. They compared their notes among their groups and wrote the senses on the broad or read them to the class. After this sharing, they extended their notes. Each member offered a few particular memories as working material to the group. The group discussed and selected one particular memory of these choices as their working material: metaphors, puns, and images of women.

Stage 5: Public sharing

Each group presented the one particular memory as their group's working material to the class. The class shared ideas on the particular memory, suggested advertisements on the working material, and discussed on the material and its cultural context. The group would extend their working material from this public sharing.

Stage 6: Project work

Each group selected advertisements from various media on their group's working material. After selecting the advertisements on the theme of their choice, the group presented their findings to their class. The presentation included the advertisements' reception/analysis. One of their analyses would be presented in the results of the study.

During this working period, the researcher observed and took notes of their learning behaviors (e.g., their development of communicative competence and group communication, interaction, and negotiation). After each group presented their project, all subjects filled in the questionnaire which was designed to elicit the subjects' attitudes toward the use of advertisements for discussions of cultural issues, CLL activities, and the project work teaching. They were asked these questions:

How much do you think advertisements can enhance your discussions of cultural issues?

Very much Much A little Very little Not at all

How much do you think the CLL activities in this study can enhance your communicative competence?

Very much Much A little Very little Not at all

How much do you think the CLL activities in this study can enhance the project work?

Very much Much A little Very little Not at all

Finally, the research interviewed individ-

ual students. The interview asked the students to express their opinions toward the strengths and threats of CLL activities and project teaching in this study. The guideline questions were:

What, if any, were the strengths of CLL activities and project teaching in this study?

What, if any, were the threats of CLL activities and project teaching in this study?

After the data collection, the researcher drew a conclusion of the study from all the instruments mentioned above.

Results of the Study

The results of the study were presented based on the research questions.

Research question 1: To what extent does CLL incorporating in project work teaching promote the discussions and analyses of cultural issues in advertisements?

Based on the project works they produced, it could be concluded that CLL incorporating in project work teaching promote the discussions and analyses of cultural issues in advertisements with intertextually cultural insights.

The learners were able to produce extensive documentation of their selected themes and provide intensive details of their learning experience. The results of the study revealed that all groups discussed and analyzed the assigned themes such as on metaphors (e.g., metaphors in perfume and travel advertisements), puns (e.g., puns and sexuality), and images of women (e.g., the changing images of women in advertisements). All these groups showed more or less ability to draw cultural analyses of advertisements they selected as 'The Quality of Tourism in Thailand.'

From this sample project work, it was obvious that the students could make insightful analyses of cultural issues in advertisements for several reasons. First, the theme of their choice was a major focus in advertisements concerning Thailand as a whole. They selected the topic "The Quality of Tourism in Thailand" as their working theme for project work. Tourism has been the major source of Thailand's income so there are thousands of advertisements on the theme. Second, the advertisements they selected as working materials were highly culturally thought-provoking, witty, and satirically amusing. They could make the viewers laugh like puns and provoked their thoughts simultaneously. Lastly, the students responded to the assignments perfectly. To illustrate this, they were assigned to discuss and analyze the cultural issues in their advertise-

ments focusing both on linguistic and cultural aspects at denotative and connotative levels. They could achieve all these requirements as revealed in the following analyses of advertisements on the topic 'The Quality of Tourism in Thailand' (Suksomstarn, 2012: 12-13).

Advertisement 1: I love Farang.



**I love Farang.
Welcome gullible foreigners!
We can tell you that the meter is broken in English.**

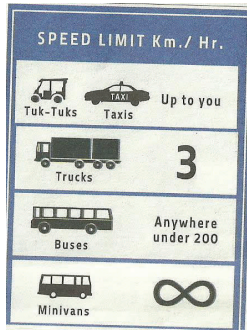
This is an example that advertising is based on cultural knowledge. 'Farang' is a Thai slang for foreigners and specifically means Americans and Europeans whom Thais believe to be rich. The cultural background of this advertisement reveals this shameful false belief through a shameful deception of Thai taxi drivers who sometimes overcharge tourists with the excuse that 'the meter is broken.'

Literally, the caption 'the meter is broken' means the meter is not working. In fact, it is working for Thai people but it is not working just for foreigners only. If you (foreigners) are 'gullible' to trust what the caption 'We tell you that the meter is broken in English!', then use my taxi. Non-literally, this means if foreigners are 'gullible' to use a taxi, the taxi driver might take or 'rob' them as mentioned in the introduction of this ads that '...the happy taxi driver from the airport who would kindly took B 6,000 off you' since the fare might be 10 times less than that. That is why Thai taxi drivers happily 'Welcome gullible foreigners!' Non-literally, the statement 'I love Farang' means the opposite. 'I (a taxi driver) love Farang (foreigners)' because 'I can take advantage of you' and 'I welcome or love all gullible foreigners.'

This is particularly consistent with another fact in everyday life in Bangkok. The fact is that many taxi drivers in shopping or business areas 'welcome' only foreigners and refuse Thai passengers. This is mainly because the drivers can overcharge the foreigners and they cannot do so to the Thai passengers. This problem becomes more serious since this is damaging the tourism of Thailand and this is adversely affecting the cheating drivers.

[Students A, B and C, Group 1]

Advertisement 2: SPEED LIMIT



	Tuk-Tuks (and) Taxis	
Up to you		
	Trucks	3
	Buses	
Anywhere under 200		
	Minivans	∞
∞		

Culturally, Thailand has more rules and laws than modern countries in the world but it still has extremely high accident rates. This is mainly because the government and the police rarely enforce the laws. The advertisement above is a satire this lack of law enforcement.

Denotatively, the caption ‘**SPEED LIMIT**’ means not driving beyond the speed the law allows. The government and the police have never taken the law seriously. Therefore, all public transports (tuk-tuks or three-wheeled vehicles, taxis, trucks, buses, and minivans) which supposedly to consciously take the policy ‘safety comes first for passengers’ usually drive extremely faster than speed limit.

Connotatively, the phrases and signs ‘**Up to you, 3, Anywhere under 200, and ∞**’ satirize the government and the police for not taking the law seriously. What’s more, the advertisement implies that the government and the police should be responsible for tragic accidents caused by speedy public vehicles since fast driving is the major cause of road accidents every year. If the government and the police had taken the law of speed limit seriously, speedy public vehicles would not have caused tragic accidents.

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

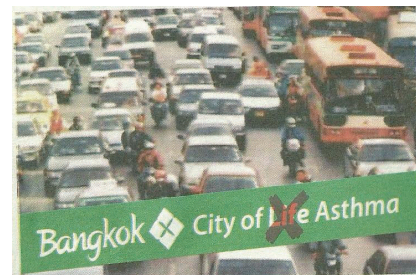
Advertisement 3: Suvarnabhumi



Denotatively, the arrows from Suvarnabhumi point to all directions, which mean they are connected. However, connotatively, the picture of spider man like spider nets at the background means that all these connected directions are confusing and can cause misleading directions which can lead the passengers back to the start, not the destination. There are signs to Suvarnabhumi Airport everywhere, not only in Bangkok where the airport is located but also in neighboring cities where are located from the opposite side of and far away from the airport. Ironically, these signs whose function is to give directions sometimes lead confusion to drivers whose destination is the airport and many of them got lost and missed their flights by following the signs. These signs therefore malfunction instead of facilitating passengers. Connotatively, the signs reflected the impracticality of the country, the government, and the Thais. Unfortunately, there are so many impractical, malfunctioning signs or policies in Thailand, even Suvarnabhumi Airport, the landmark of the country.

[Students A, B and C, Group 1]

Advertisement 4: Bangkok, City of Life



Bangkok, City of (Life) Asthma

Literally, Bangkok is the ‘City of Life’ as shown in the background of the picture. A thousand of cars are moving toward their destinations. At first sight, the picture leaves the sense of dynamics and livelihood to viewers. On the other hand, non-literally, the thousand of cars cause traf-

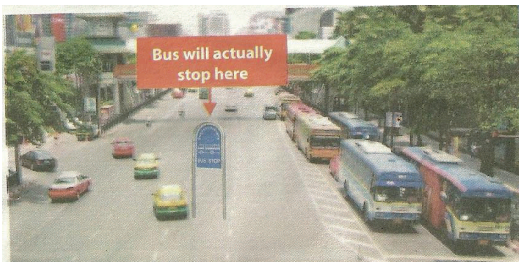
cause traffic jam and pollution which can turn 'Bangkok, City of Life' to 'Bangkok, City of Asthma.' Indeed, Bangkok is notorious for this.

Culturally, in the old days, Bangkok was famous for its romantic, beautiful scenery as it was named 'Venice of the East' in the past when people used boats and canals for transportation. It was like a paradise on earth but such a romantic, beautiful scene was just a glorious past.

Originally, Bangkok literally meant the 'City of Angels.' The city might be as beautiful as a paradise on earth just as it was named. The Emerald Buddha Temple which was built at the same time as the city is an evidence of the glorious past. Again, it is a lost paradise now. The name was the same but the city was changed and damaged. From then the 'City of Angels' to now the 'City of Life' which is actually the 'City of Asthma' as the ad is truthfully but ironically mocking. Bangkok has been deteriorating for decades and might eventually turn into the 'City of Hell' in the near future since it is full of pollution as connoted by the meaning of asthma in the ad.

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

Advertisement 5: Bus will actually stop here.



The concept of this ad is comparable to that of the sign of 'SPEED LIMIT.' The caption 'Bus will actually stop here' literally says what is happening to the buses in Bangkok and elsewhere. Non-literally and truthfully, the bus stop is standing at the middle of the road. The ad is telling the truth about what is actually in Bangkok. Many careless public buses do not stop at the bus stop but do so at the middle of the road instead. They are not concerned about what is going to happen to passengers who might be run over by other vehicles. Such a scene is common to passengers in Bangkok. Accidents occur every day and the accidents caused injury and deaths. But many public bus drivers are never consciously aware of their carelessness. Even worse, they pretended not to see traffic police at the right spot who was giving signs to order them to stop. Ironically, even the traffic police were victims of careless drivers. A year ago, an unlucky traffic policeman was hit to death by a public bus. Such a tragic story will repeat itself as long as the public

bus drivers are still careless and indifferent.

[Students A, B and C, Group 1]

Advertisement 6: No Hawking (Just kidding!)



The signs saying 'No Hawking' are standing among a hundred of street sellers and buyers. Denotatively, 'No Hawking' means you are not allowed to sell and buy things here in this restricted area. However, the background picture is ironically contradictory to the signs 'No Hawking.' In the picture, the purchases are at its high time and the place is full of people of all ages who are 'shopping' around just as it is the right place to shop.

Therefore, the caption 'Just kidding!' is connotatively mocking the sign 'No Hawking,' meaning that a sign is just a sign and it means nothing to the street sellers and buyers as long as the police and people take the law seriously. This implication includes other similar signs, too.

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

Advertisement 7: Strictly



No drugs or weapons unless you're hi-so, famous, and rich.

The concept of this ad is comparable to those of the sign of 'SPEED LIMIT' and 'No Hawking.' The sign 'Strictly' with a hundred of alcohol bottles as a background literally means that drugs or weapons are not allowed in a pub and bar. However, the caption 'No drugs or weapons unless

you're hi-so, famous, and rich' is ironically contradictory to the signs 'Strictly.' Therefore, the caption is connotatively mocking the sign 'Strictly,' its connotation implies hypocrisy of Thai cultures. Like the signs 'SPEED LIMIT' and 'No Hawking,' the sign 'Strictly' means that rules in Thailand are nothing as long as the police and people take the law seriously. Or even worse, the caption satirizes the upper-class people, the police, and the law of Thailand by saying the truth that you are allowed to carry drugs or weapons if you're hi-so (a shortened form for the people of high social and economic status), famous, and rich. In Thailand, every rule has some exceptions. Or worse yet, you will be allowed more exceptions if you are hi-so, famous, and rich.' On the other hand, as connoted by the word "unless," if you are low-so (a shortened form the people of low social and economic status), infamous, and poor, this rule will enforce strictly. In Thai society, this truth is generally known as true. Even truer is the mocking saying, when children of hi-so people like famous politicians who had committed crimes in a pub at night but were released to walk free next morning, that men are (born) equal but some hi-so people are more equal than others. For poor Thai citizens, fairness and justice exist elsewhere.

[Students A, B and C, Group 1]

Advertisement 8: Men at work



Men at work (till the end of the time)

The sign saying 'Men at work' literally mean the sky train is under construction and it seems that the workers are attempting to complete it as the sign says that 'men are at work.' This project was initiated more than twenty years ago but since then has not been completed yet. It will never been completed. The construction project of sky train in the picture had been officially entitled "Hope Well" then but it was now called "Hopeless Project" instead because the 'Hope' will never come true. The new name of the project was satirized by the caption "Men at work (till the end of

the time)." The project will be "at work" forever "till the end of the time." Time never ends so the project will never be completed. The "Hope Well Project" has been therefore renamed as "Hopeless Project." It has become the monument of shame for Thai transportation project. This 'Hope Well' project was an attempt to solve the traffic in Bangkok. Ironically, the project was never completed just as the traffic in Bangkok will never be solved.

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

Advertisement 9: Clean toilet



Literally, the toilet is completely clean as shown through the caption 'Clean toilet.' Visitors to Thailand might be very disappointed when the toilets are not clean as the sign announces 'Clean toilet.'

The advertisement satirizes the words that you can trust everything what people say by leaving the shoeprints which betray the sign shamefully. This advertisement also reminds the viewers that we cannot trust everything that an advertisement says as well.

The satirical meaning of this advertisement can also include other cultural and religious truths that sweet words sometimes kill you. The Lord Buddha said in one of his teachings that you should think thoroughly and consciously before you trust and do not trust anyone or anything even though the one who said that is your teacher. Thai people are Buddhists but are sometimes too innocent and gullible to trust what the people or the media say. This is why Thai society is full of rumors and the people manipulate one another with rumors about things and people. Despite there is a saying that you cannot judge people until you know them, the Thais are ready to judge other people whom they hardly talk to. We are not real Buddhists!

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

Advertisement 10: Please throw toilet paper in wastebasket



Please throw toilet paper in wastebasket (But feel free to forget to flush because we know you can only follow one rule at a time)

Literally, the caption 'Please throw toilet paper in wastebasket' asks the users to throw toilet paper in wastebasket. You see this sign in almost every toilet, especially in public ones and at gas stations. Non-literally, it also asks them not to make the toilet clean and always ready for the next users. Ironically, they make it worse by not flushing it. What's more, the advertisement even mocks that the toilet users, including Thai people in general, lack disciplines so they 'can only follow one rule at a time.'

[Students A, B and C, Group 1]

Advertisement 11: NO MSG but...



We don't use MSG. But we do use...

The two captions 'We don't use MSG' and 'But we do use insects' mean as revealed through their denotative meanings but the opposition between the pictures of MSG, which is a shortened form of monosodium glutamate, and many odd insects in the two signs connote something ironically contrastive. Many Thai people are anti-MSG

and do not put MSG into food since it is mal-nutritious. Ironically, we do not mind eating insects (e.g., dragon flies, ants, beetles, and worms) and other kinds of strange animals that people elsewhere must be disgusted and think those insects as even more mal-nutritious than MSG. Visitors to Thailand can see the Thais eat many odd insects for food, either alone or mixed with other ingredients and either raw or cooked with various styles. The insects are sold on every corner of the street in Bangkok, the capital and the most modern city of this nation. It cannot conclude that all Thai people eat the insects but the sales of insects are increasing every year. This ad reminds us of a traditional Thai saying that 'we do not eat the meat but we do not mind the soup.' Unfortunately, this saying and the cultural facts connote our hypocrisy to some extent. Thais do not take hypocrisy, corruption, adulteration, and other unfaithful conducts seriously. Even worse, these conducts are culturally accepted more and more by new generations in materialistic Thai society today.

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

Advertisement 12: No Thai girls allowed upstairs



No Thai girls allowed upstairs Supporting prostitution is illegal Please use our short-time hotel opposite

This advertisement shares some similarities with the previous ones (e.g., 'We don't use MSG but we do use insects,' 'Clean toilet,' and 'No drugs or weapons unless you're hi-so, famous, and rich'). The cultural scene behind this advertisement is that Thailand is notorious for prostitution. Many shallow tourists come to Thailand for 'sand, sea, and sex' and all of them dreamed of Pattaya and Patpong, famous places for prostitutions. Even worse, Longman Dictionary once defined Bangkok as 'the city of prostitution.' Although the Thai government protested against Longman publishing house, the attempt was in vain, not in a sense that the published definition is still in the dictionary

(since it had been distributed all over the world) but in as a sense that Thailand is still notorious, if not more, for prostitution. This sign is a shameful evidence of prostitution in Thailand since, in the caption 'No Thai girls allowed upstairs,' 'girls' here in this situational context mean 'prostitutes.'

This advertisement repeats the same irony as the previous advertisements mentioned earlier. Clearly, the caption 'No Thai girls allowed upstairs' prohibits prostitution with a additional caption 'Supporting prostitution is illegal.' Ironically, it appears that prostitution is prohibited and restricted only in this area or this hotel in particular since the additional caption 'Please use our short-time hotel opposite' connotes that prostitution is not prohibited elsewhere, even the opposite hotel. As connoted in the previous advertisements that every rule in Thailand has some exceptions, prostitution is prohibited here but allowed elsewhere just as revealed in the mocking caption 'Please use our short-time hotel opposite.'

This advertisement reminds us of the fact that many Thai police take bribe from prostitution and all illegal businesses despite of the fact that they are the one who enforce the law. Again, this advertisement satirizes the hypocrisy of Thai culture which can be found in all social dimensions.

[Students A, B and C, Group 1]

Advertisement 13: Please be courteous to your fellow passengers



Please be courteous to your fellow passengers.

The caption 'Please be courteous to your fellow passengers' literally asks bus passengers to give their seats to other passengers who need restricted spaces or help like monks, children, pregnant women, and old people. Thai culture was famous for generosity in the old days but the generosity has gone.

Ironically, the advertisement displays that the passengers today are not courteous at all as shown in the cartoons. In the left picture, a male passenger is sleeping or pretends to be sleeping, while a monk who needs a restricted space is standing next to him. In the middle picture, the same passenger is

playing games while a boy is standing beside him. He might not see the boy since he is too busy playing games. Despite of this, his obsession connotes his lack of social and cultural concerns since the sign 'Please be courteous to your fellow passengers' is on every bus which all passengers who can read are consciously aware of whenever they use a public bus. Maybe the advertisement connotes that Thai people become robots so they do not care about what happen around them. In the right picture, the situation is even worse. The male passenger pretends not to see other passengers who really need help. He mercilessly looks upwards through the empty ceiling instead of giving his seat either to a pregnant woman who is standing in front of him and a very old man who is standing in front of him. From this last picture, we can conclude that the advertisement connotes that passengers today become selfish, heartless robots.

Culturally, Thai people were famous for generosity. Things change when the time changes. Many good manners (like generosity) disappear. Traditionally, Thai men were the head of family and society. Being the head means being helpful and generous. In modern days, the sense of generosity disappears. Thai men change too. Connotatively, this advertisement intentionally attacked Thai men in particular since the same passenger in all situations was a strong man. The advertisement depicts the changing side of Thai culture. Unfortunately, it turned from good to bad.

[Students C, D and F, Group 1]

Considering the cultural, cognitive, and semantic details in their project works, this study could conclude that the students were able to draw the message of each advertisement sensibly. Moreover, they thought about it profoundly, developed their discussions of cultural issues denotatively and connotatively pertinent to the advertisements and provided cultural background knowledge relating to the issues with sufficient and sensible supports to make their discussions logically sound and convincing. Therefore, it could be concluded that CLL incorporating and project work teaching could enhance the discussions and analyses of cultural issues in advertisements effectively.

This achievement might be a result of CLL and project work teaching which helped raise their cognitive, linguistic, cultural awareness of the advertisements. In addition, the methods helped stimulate the students' interest and willingness to communicate while working on their project as presented in the result of the next research question.

Research question 2: To what extent does CLL incorporating in project work teaching enhance individual and group communication?

The project work as revealed in the result of research question 1 was part of evidence to show how much CLL incorporating in project

work teaching enhanced individual and group communication in this study. There were data from other instruments consisting of a questionnaire, an interview, and an observation note to support the project work.

Table 1: Percentages (and raw scores) of students' attitudes toward the uses of advertisements and CLL activities for enhancing their communicative competence and the project work

	Very much	Much	A little	Very little	Not at all
Advertisements	62.50 (15)	33.34 (8)	4.16 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
CLL Activities	75.00 (18)	25.00 (6)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Project Work	33.33 (8)	58.33 (14)	8.34 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)

Table 1 showed that the subjects in this study expressed their highly positive attitudes towards the tools. No subjects showed negative attitudes towards any tools at all. For the use of advertisements for enhancing the discussions and analyses of cultural issues, the results revealed as follows: very much (62.50%; $n = 24$), much (33.34%; $n = 8$), and a little (4.16%; $n = 1$) respectively. Similarly, for the use of CLL activities for enhancing individual and group communication, the results revealed as follows: very much (75.00%; $n = 18$) and much (25.00%; $n = 6$) respectively. Lastly, for the use of CLL activities for enhancing project work, the results revealed as follows: very much (33.33%; $n = 8$), much (58.33%; $n = 14$), and a little (8.34%; $n = 2$) respectively. This indicated that the subjects in this study inclined to show highly positive attitude towards the uses of advertisements for enhancing the discussions and analyses of cultural issues and CLL activities for enhancing the individual and group communication and project group work.

The result of the questionnaire was also supported by the interview which illustrated the details of how advertisements and CLL activities enhanced their discussions and analyses of cultural issues and the communicative competence as individuals and as a group. Below were some samples from the interviews which the students were asked to express their opinions toward the benefits of the advertisements for L2 learning and discussions of cultural issues and the strengths and, if there were any, threats of CLL activities assigned in this study.

The advertisements are authentic materials. We see and hear them every day. They allow for more meaningful comprehension, material for discussions and analyses, and use of linguistic form than what we see in our classrooms. They're realistic and practical. Besides, they bring together a number of elements such as eye-catching images and sensuous language as effective tools for increasing our motivation to learn English in the classrooms and making classes more motivating.

Teachers should often look for new and different ways to make use of media and everyday materials to allow for more meaningful comprehension and use of linguistic form in the classroom.

[Students B and C, Group 2]

The CLL lesson introduces a technique for utilizing advertisements to enhance our discussions and analyses of cultural issues relating to and around the society where the advertisements were initiated. We talked and shared about what we know about the advertisements. CLL enabled us to become more capable communicators of discussions in English about cultural issues, not only our cultures but also the cultures that are similar to and different from our own.

[Students A and C, Group 1]

Before the relaxation and individual memories-evoking activities, we were reluctant to share my ideas on the topic but, later after the activities, I felt relaxed and willing to talk about our memo

ries. Everybody felt free to talk, too. This created a good atmosphere which helped develop the relationships among us.

The positive atmosphere and relationships aroused the exchange of personal experiences of the topic. We became a more fluent communicator. For example, in the experience sharing stage, we participated in the working time actively. We exchanged memories and experiences, listened attentively, wrote down key words or phrases, asked questions, asked for clarification, made comments, received feedback, made use of what we received, and further worked on new ideas received from the sharing time by discussing on several possible advertisements on our selected theme, comparing them, weighting and selecting the advertisements for our project, and setting our target and planned our project step-by-step.

[Students A and D, Group 4]

The CLL lesson helped each of us focus on semantic, linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural aspects of the advertising language. We became more conscious of the importance of advertising language in context. Also, we became more aware of the linguistic features of language in presenting our ideas while we were communicating to avoid communication breakdown. Affectively, our feeling changed more positively from the very beginning to the end of the project.

[Students B and C, Group 1]

The CLL lesson encouraged individual construction of meaning and promotes analytical and critical thinking skills. It enabled us to consider the issues from a variety of angles more deeply. Also, we gain motivation through exploring the issues raised in the advertisements, relating them to our everyday lives, our past, and the societies and cultures around them. At the same time, we found contrasts with other societies and cultures. We made natural and meaningful expansions of the understanding of cultural issues, especially our cultures.

[Students C and D, Group 3]

In depth, the researcher's observation note supported the questionnaire and interview as revealed that the students developed their individual group communication while working and negotiating on the project.

In the first stage, the relaxation activity which aroused the students' sensory awareness of the senses of smelling, hearing, seeing, touching, and feeling from the advertisements provided a good

start for raising the students' cognitive and affective sensitivity and sensory awareness by drawing the individual students' attention specifically to their sensitivity and awareness and, therefore, effectively helping direct their attention inwardly into their personal experiences in the second stage which focused on individual memories effectively.

The activity in the second stage could evoke students' memories and helped them remember experiences similar to the senses in the advertisements appropriately. The pictures in their memories were so obvious and meaningful that the students were able to write down key words, images, and associations of what they remembered as soon as the memories came to their minds. When the memories appeared, they were very excited and kept sharing their excitement among their group.

Note-making from memories also helped each group draft the outline of the project proposal. Note that, at this stage, two groups were able to draft and initiate the outline of their project proposals while the others began to form their outlines. This indicated that the chosen CLL activities were effective for the purposes of the lesson. The evoking individual memories and experiences as materials for communication and discussion contributed to the group in the sharing stage intensively. Note that, in this stage, all members were not reluctant to articulate what were in their memories. They were willing to share and exchange existing knowledge and personal experiences of the theme.

In addition, this sharing stage broadened individual experiences, expanded notes impressively, and developed group dynamics positively. Their individual materials and extending experiences from sharing in their group not only contributed to the group but also to the class in the public sharing stage where the whole class learnt from all groups. Therefore, this sharing time provided working materials for each group successfully. This helped all students develop their cognitive, affective sensitivity and awareness intensively and extensively. These sensitivities and awareness became valuable for their project work later.

[The researcher's observation note]

All findings from the questionnaire, the interview, and the researcher's observation indicated that CLL incorporating in project work teaching enhanced the subjects' individual and group communicative competence effectively.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results revealed two major findings based on the research questions. CLL incorporating in project work teaching could promote the discussions and analyses of cultural

issues pertinent to the cultural insights revealed in the in advertisements intertextually. In addition, while engaging in various CLL activities in project work teaching, the students gained more self-confidence in communicating and appropriating the issues for expressing opinions and discussing the cultural issues in the advertisements. While negotiating in project work, the learners gradually developed their sense of responsibility in managing their own learning. The various CLL tasks developed their degree of self-directed learning in choosing, developing, and testing ways of working in order to optimize individual willingness to communicate and group dynamics and discussion.

Discussion

The results of this study lend support to theory and prior research study at least in four main points.

First, on advertisements, the results of this study were consistent with theoretical views (Barthes, 1984; Blakemore, 1987, 1992; Tanaka, 1994) that advertisements are highly cultural bounded so they are very useful for cultural discussion of one culture and comparison with other cultures.

Second, on CLL activities, the results of this present study revealed similar findings as those of prior study (Williams and Burden, 1997; Lessard-Clouston, 1997; Bialystok, 1991; Oxford, 1990; Littlewood, 1981; Stern, 1992; Nunan, 1987, 1989) that CLL is an effective motivational tool for enhancing individual language learning, promoting group communication and discussion, and facilitating communicative learning.

Third, on project work, the results of this present study shared similar results with prior study (Thomas, 1986; Legutke, M. and Thomas, H., 1991) that the project work teaching could enhance CLL activities more effectively and concretely. The students were able to produce learner-centered projects which were concrete evidences of their communicative competence.

Fourth and lastly, on project work teaching in EFL contexts, the results of this present study revealed similar findings as those of prior study (Sa-ngiamwibool, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c) that CLL enhanced project work teaching in Thai contexts successfully.

Implication

The results of study revealed that CLL incorporating in project work teaching could make progress of the students' mass media knowledge, improved their communicative com-

petence, group discussions, and application of background linguistic and media knowledge in analysis effectively. Their progress included all these aspects. Culturally and cognitively, the advertisements provided a stimulating approach to understanding of contemporary cultural issues since it gave highly cultural insights of the issues. CLL and advertisements were effective in several aspects. Linguistically, the understanding and insights of the issues, in turn, facilitated group communication fluently and smoothly. Communicatively, CLL promoted group participation and discussion, communicative interaction and project work negotiation among members successfully. They were willing to communicate. Psychologically, the students were satisfied with the CLL activities and the contents of the advertisements. Therefore, they gained more confidence in communication. Pedagogically, the increased confidence in discussion, analysis, language, and communication skills enhanced more active interaction among participants. This study limits to local Thai cultures. The replication of this study with intercultural advertising is needed.

Future Inquiry

This study was limited to a Thai EFL classroom and culture. The replication with other EFL classrooms and other cultures is needed.

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