

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE USE OF CARTOONS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO THE CHILDREN OF GRADE 5: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of cartoons in teaching English at elementary level in public sector schools. Two objectives were formulated for this study. Sixty four students were selected through simple random sampling technique. Thirty two students were taught parts of speech through traditional method whereas the same number of students was taught with the help of cartoons. A pre-test was taken from the children about their knowledge about parts of speech. Both groups scored almost the same. After teaching them the decided content, a post test was conducted and the scores were compared using paired sample t-test. Both groups varied significantly in scores this time. The study concludes that cartoons have been effective aids in teaching English. This study underpins the importance of the use of cartoons in teaching of vocabulary in English.

Keywords: audiovisual media; teaching aids; use of cartoons in vocabulary teaching; variety in teaching

Introduction

Different techniques are used in the field of foreign language teaching to make the learning effective. Teachers choose a technique according to the context and availability of resources in the class. One of the techniques is the use of audiovisual (AV) media in class to assist learning. Computer assisted animations, and cartoons can be used in the class (e.g. Kittidachanupap et al., 2012; Karakas & Saricoban, 2012). These are colourful and attractive. The motion of characters helps teachers save time as they do not need to teach things repeatedly, the children also get a clear image of the thing which helps them form the foundations (Phayomyaem, 1990; Somchai, 1995; Phoosuwan & Numprasertcha, 2003).

There are many advantages of using AV media in class (Arsyad, 2008). The first one is attentive function that helps improve interest and develop a learner's attentiveness in the lesson. By the use of AV media in learning procedure, learners' energy increases. They listen to the details and thus they involve themselves more in the lesson. Second one is the affective function. In affective function the learners enjoy the reading of picture texts. The third one is the cognitive function. It means that by using AV media aids in class we can make the material clear and help the learners easily understand it. The last function is the compensatory function. It helps the comparatively weak learners understand the material by presenting another text. According to Daryanto (2010) there are some other functions of media use in teaching i.e. it: helps the teacher transfer knowledge to the learners; can save the teacher's energy; motivates the learners to learn by seeing the pictures; make the learners focus more on the picture and they try to understand what the actor says; and increases the amount of teaching and learning as the learners are getting input both from the teachers and the AV media.

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Karakas and Saricoban (2012) studied the influence of watching cartoons on vocabulary learning. He selected 42 students from first grade English language teaching (ELT) section from the University of Mehmet Akif Ersoy, Burdur. The researchers used pre and post tests to determine the effects of cartoons. Before teaching the class, the pre test was taken from both groups. After teaching the class, the post test was conducted. The outcome of the pre test determined that there were same results of both groups. But there was a great difference in the post test results as compared to the results of the pre test. This difference was due to the use of cartoons in learning. The lesson was comprehended by learners because of the use of cartoons. Similarly, Kayaoglu and Akbas (2011) examined the impact of cartoons on vocabulary. This research used the pre- and post- tests after arranging the students in two groups i.e. control and experimental. The experimental group consisted of 17 participants and the control group comprised of 22 participants. Pre test was taken before teaching the class and post test was taken after teaching the class. Post test was used to determine the difference between the achievements of students before and after teaching syllabus with cartoons and without cartoons. Control group was taught through traditional method whereas the experimental group was taught with the help of cartoon movie in classrooms. A similar performance of the students was observed in pre-test. Whereas the students did not perform similar on post-test. The performance of the experimental group was far better than the other group. This betterment in post test results was due to the use of cartoons. It means that cartoons have positive effects on learning.

Another study investigated the impact of cartoons on English learning in Southern Hebron (Algilasi, 2010). 60 female and 64 male students of grade 5 were taught two chapters from their syllabus. The participants in experimental group were taught with the help of cartoons whereas the participant in the control group were taught through traditional method. The students in experimental group outperformed the students in control group in vocabulary learning. Arikan and Taraf (2010), Nosia Pranatha (2005), and Sun and Dong (2004) also used a similar pattern of study and reported similar outcomes. All of the aforementioned studies show the results in favour of the hypothesis of this study i.e. the use of cartoons has supporting effect for language learning. In the light of these results, the researcher recommended that the teacher must use some media aid in class. In Pakistan, there is lack of such studies and we hardly find studies with such objectives (Kausar, 2013). This study, therefore, uses a similar design of research (to the studies conducted in other countries) and applied in public sector schools in the south Punjab.

Methodology

A quantitative research design was chosen to investigate the efficiency of instructional methods in teaching English on primary level through action research. The population was selected from government primary school of Vehari for the research study. Sample for this study was the students of Dana Ibrahim Markaz. Class teacher of the students was told about the purpose of the study. A test was designed to collect the data from the students. This test was descriptive in nature. The design of this study design is appropriate and is set according to the objectives in order to investigate whether the use of cartoons is effective in teaching English or not.

The class was divided in two groups i.e. experimental and control. A pre-test was delivered to both groups before starting the use of cartoon movies. The test contained 15 MCQs, and each question carried two marks. The cartoon movie consisted of a lesson on parts of speech which was a part of the syllabus of class 5. The cartoon movie (in which a teacher was explaining parts of speech to his students) was used for the experimental group to teach a lesson and they also listened to their teacher describing the definitions of the parts of speech. And the other

group did not watch the cartoon movie in learning the same lesson. The research was completed in six meetings. At the end of the sixth meeting and after using cartoon movie, a post-test was delivered to both groups. The sample of the study consisted of 64 students distributed into two groups. One experimental group consisted of 32 students and another control group that was consisted of 32 students. The participants were selected in experimental and control groups randomly. The data was collected in the form of test scores and was analyzed through SPSS. The students attended classes from 9am to 12pm from Monday to Thursday. The cartoons were shown on L.E.D. TV.

Results

The data were analyzed through SPSS latest version to find out the outcomes of this study. Paired sample t-tests were used to compare the scores of the control and the experimental group on pre- and post-tests. Table 1 shows the results of a Paired T-test showing the difference between the scores of pre-test and post-test of experimental group.

Table 1 Paired Sample T-Test for Experimental Group

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test experimental	7.28	32	2.79	.49
	Post-test experimental	27.22	32	3.13	.55

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pre-test experimental Post-test experimental	-1.99	4.79	.85	-21.66	-18.21	-23.57	31	.000

Note: Values are adjusted to two decimal places.

To check how these cartoons affected the teaching English of students at primary level, the paired sample t-test was used to compare the scores of the experimental group before and after the exposure to cartoon movies. The results were, t -value = -23.57, df = 31, p < .001. The

students who were exposed to the cartoons on teaching English were significantly different before using cartoons and after using cartoons. The mean score before using cartoons was 7.28 and after using the cartoon movie was 27.22. The observed t-value is -23.57 and the level of significance is $p < .001$. Table 2 depicts the results of the paired sample t-test showing the difference between the scores of pre and post tests of the control group.

Table 2 Paired Sample T-test for Control Group

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre-test control	6.78	32	2.56	.45
	Post-test control	21.25	32	3.73	.66

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Pre-test control Post-test control	-1.45	4.69	.83	-16.16	-12.78	-17.45	31	.000

Note: Values are adjusted to two decimal places

Another paired sample t-test was run to compare the scores of the control group who were taught through the traditional way of teaching. The paired t-test results for the control group were $t\text{-value} = -17.45$, $df = 31$, $p < .001$. The results show a significant difference in scores. The mean score before teaching is 2.56 and after teaching is 3.73. From the observed t-value of -17.45 and the level of significance of $p < .001$, there is significant difference in pre-and post scores of the group. Table 3 further explains the comparison between the scores of post-tests of both groups, which explains that the difference of scores of both groups is significantly high, and the experimental group performed far higher than the control group.

Table 3 Paired T-test Showing the Difference between the Scores of Post Tests of Both Groups

One-Sample Test

Test Value = 0				
t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

					Lower	Upper
POSTTESTC	32.20	31	.00	21.25	19.90	22.60
POSTTESTEX	49.21	31	.00	27.22	26.10	28.35

Conclusion and Future Work

The objective of this study was to discover the effectiveness of cartoons in teaching English to teach the children at primary level. This objective was the core statements to lead this study and in response it was discovered that the teaching of English with the help of cartoons was useful and the learners who had been taught with the help of cartoons showed good results (cf: Karakas & Saricoban, 2012; Arıkan & Taraf, 2010; Nosia Pranatha, 2005; Sun & Dong, 2004). As far as the benefits that can be gained through cartoons are concerned, the role of these cartoons enhances students' comprehension level. The motion of the cartoons and the presentation of vocabulary in context make learning easier and attractive for the children. Similar findings with Pakistani students were also described by Kausar (2013). According to her Pakistani students efficiently replace boring education atmosphere with wonderful and feasible education classroom.

It is obvious that the AV media can support students to better remember the vocabulary items (Kittidachanupap et al., 2012). It may be because of the variety in content presentation, and particularly through the media which the children like in their daily life. The cartoon characters also arouse imagination of children and the closeness to reality from the motion of cartoons with colours and the complement sounds can make them more interesting than regular images for children. This study is beneficial for the language teachers to apply in the kindergarten and primary education. The use of such aids is not only restricted to anyone field, but can also be encouraged to apply to solve problems of the learners in other subjects like sciences, mathematics as efficiently as for foreign languages.

There is a limitation of the present study that the cognitive abilities of the children were not taken into account when distributing them into groups which could be given importance in any future research. The study could be conducted on a large scale to attest the results, and the AV media in public sector schools.

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