

THE IMPACT OF WATCHING ANIMATED CARTOONS ON WORD STOCK IMPROVEMENT

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Annotation. This article focuses mainly on vocabulary development process and on using animated cartoons as a language input. A suitable media is chosen for word stock teaching, in particular, cartoons are viewed in this study. Students feel easy to follow the story and understand the words. The familiarization of words is definitely strengthened by repetition. Consequently, vocabulary improvement occurs incidentally while watching animated cartoons.

The three stages that are generally taken during the teaching/learning process are very essential to follow, i.e. warm-up activities, brainstorming the material that has already been learnt and introducing the new material. These steps go in line with animated cartoons turning the educational process into a lively and enthusiastic class. Animated cartoons include live actions that are integrated with music, voice-overs and texts that all support language learners' vocabulary acquisition. Sound and music effects deepen students' understanding of meaning and content. Therefore, watching an animated cartoon allows the two hemispheres of the brain to work fully and they are embedded with facilitating tools such as music, sound, and color. In this respect, a cartoon as an audio-visual learning material can make a valuable contribution of immediate understanding in the educational system.

Key words: media, word stock, animated cartoons, incidental learning

Vocabulary is the core of the language and it is not acquired immediately. It requires a long process. Throughout this process, learners become familiarized with the encountered words. What makes them familiar with words for acquisition is the frequency of their usage and the number of encounters in different forms and contexts (Nation, 1990, Schmidt, 2001).

Fraser (1991) reported that some incidental L2 vocabulary learning occurs in the course of reading for comprehension through the process of inferring word meaning from the context. Learning context is really important for vocabulary teaching and learning since meanings of some vocabulary items are ambiguous when isolated (Sun & Dong, 2004). Even children when mastering their mother tongue learn new vocabulary items from different contexts (Day, Omura & Hiramatsu, 1991). The same is true for foreign language vocabulary learning.

It is assumed that incidental learning of the vocabulary items occurs due to the incorporation of target words into the cartoons that function as a context, obviously a fundamental notion within the process of incidental vocabulary learning (De Ridder, 1999). It is also preferred by teachers since teaching words in isolation does not produce the desired results. Vocabulary development needs to be supported by contextual clues. It is due to the fact that the possibility of guessing the meaning from the context is higher. Words, in isolation, overall, give no clues to the learner and thus they are hard to guess. Then, it is worth noting that the implication for the teachers is that the new vocabulary items should be presented in context rather than in isolation.

Animated cartoons attract students' attention. They seem to enjoy watching them. However, some of them might lose their interest while watching and it is related to the length of the cartoon. It is also related to the age and level of the students. Keeping track of all the details demands a complete attention. The actions, signals of hands and arms, body language, facial expressions as well as colors and music facilitate the understanding of the target words, though.

Cameron (2008) maintains that teaching young learners is considerably different from teaching adults. He states that young learners are more enthusiastic than adults. They want to please the teacher by any means. They do the activity even if they do not quite understand why and how and they also behave more naturally. Children learn best with concrete rather than abstract expressions. They learn well, through dramatic play, role-play and use of story form with a strong beginning, middle and end. Knowing the characteristics of young learners is essential for the successful teaching of English in primary schools. Understanding the young learners' characteristics and interests helps the teacher to decide how to build a lesson, how to make sure that

they are fully involved in the learning process, how to achieve the objectives of a lesson and how they respond. Elementary school is a school for students in their first school years, where they get primary education before they enter secondary education. According to McKay (2006) the characteristics of young learners (elementary school level) are as follows:

1) 5 years (Kindergarten)

At this level, children begin to combine simple ideas into more complex relationships. As a result, they need an environment rich in printed materials that stimulate the development of language and literacy skills. They also need a variety of direct experiences to be developed cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially.

6 years (1st grade students)

First-graders are active learners and demonstrate considerable verbal skills. They love games and rules, developing concepts and problem-solving skills from these experiences. Hands-on activity and experimentation are important.

7 years (2nd grade students)

Second-graders are increasingly able to reason, listen to others and show social give-and-take. They can display flexibility, open-mindedness and tolerance of unfamiliar ideas to a remarkable extent.

8 years (3rd grade students)

Third-graders combine great curiosity with increased social interest. They are able to learn about people who live elsewhere in the world, but their understanding of what they read is dependent upon relating ideas to their own experience.

9 years (4th grade students)

Fourth-graders are somewhat self-conscious and prefer group activities to working alone. They begin to understand abstractions as well as cause-and-effect relationships, but need real experiences in social settings. In this level the students still like to play with their friends when the teacher explains the material.

From the above description of characteristics of elementary school learners, it should be emphasized that the teacher must take it into account and make the classes more suitable for them, seriously entertain principles and techniques of each teaching method and then filter them due to their own beliefs, needs and experiences. Nowadays, learning is often seen as a serious and stressful activity. A good laugh, either in pictorial or verbal form promotes a positive learning and healthy environment. Thus, cartoons are often inserted for this purpose especially in lengthy training session. Other benefits include the enhanced relationship between teacher and learners as cartoons can create a light and playful mood and learners are basically prone to learn new ideas from their sources of entertainment rather than formal instruction. So far the positive effects of watching cartoons are illustrated. However animated cartoons also have a negative impact on young learners' language and behavior, their mind is quite receptive and it is natural that they are sometimes unable to differentiate between the positive and negative things. According to a Chinese proverb: "A child's life is like a piece of paper on which everyone who passes by leaves an impression". It has been observed that children who watch positive and non-violent cartoons are more sociable. Children not only observe everything but they imitate whatever they see in the cartoons. Psychologists (Mussen P., Rutherford E., Berkowitz L.) examined the effects of aggressive cartoons. Kids who watch violence in cartoons are more inclined to brutality, they are likely to show signs of anger early as compared to others who watch non-violent cartoons. In the result the language changes, their way of speaking changes. In this way, we can clearly state that cartoon programs play a significant role in children's healthy growth.



Unlike traditional methodology, modern methodology is much more learner-centered. As Scrivener (2005) notes the teacher's main role is to involve students in what is going on by enabling them to work at their own speed, by encouraging them to participate, talk and interact.

The following three stages are essential to implement while presenting the lesson. First teachers should start by warming up to activate the students, then begin to brainstorm the previous information, afterwards present the new vocabulary by animation and practice the new vocabulary in real life situations. These steps make the lesson clear, pragmatic, interesting and useful for the young learners, so that they do not lose attention and concentration.

Now it is notable to present a sample of an activity for word stock enrichment in elementary classes with the use of watching an animated cartoon. The purpose of the activity is to learn English colors and study some word combinations with them. The procedure is as follows:

1. Color words are written on the board. The teacher pronounces the words and shows the colors by the help of classroom objects or clothing.

2. Under the colors there is a small text with gaps. Children read and fill in the gaps: It's me. I have a

sweater  . It's . This is Mom. She has a vase  . It's . This is Dad. He has a nice

garage  . It's .

3. Then the teacher asks them questions so they can learn these colors, for instance, What color is your desk?, What color is her blouse? What color is the board?

4. Then the teacher introduces the cartoon Colors Song. Together with the color words students learn and practice different word combinations, for instance:

- Yellow bus, yellow duck, yellow sun
- Blue sea, blue boat, blue fish
- Red tractor, red heart, red butterfly
- Green leaf, green apple, green grass
- Orange table, orange chicken, orange pumpkin, etc.

5. The word combinations are repeated several times during the cartoon. The whole cartoon is very funny and has colorful characters, which makes students watch it with great pleasure.

6. After watching the cartoon, the teacher shows the students colorful pencils and asks them to recall the colors. Thus the colors are repeated several times with the support of many activities accompanied by the audio-visual material creating a great opportunity for students to acquire the new vocabulary in a context. Such activities are very practicable for the suitable age class. They are excellent for word stock improvement. Being creative and imaginative is a very essential trait for any teacher to have nowadays. Various activities in unison with animated cartoons make the lesson more effective, successful and fruitful.

Conclusion:

Nowadays media is an essential means to conduct learning/teaching process in class. The suitable one is audio-visual, since it contains picture and voice, such as animated cartoons, so students can see and hear directly. Students enjoy learning new words. The use of sound and music effects in animated cartoons increases students' ability to interpret the information. Animated cartoons make the word stock stick to young learners' minds. Teacher's role is to inspire students in their class by choosing motivating and interesting teaching strategies. After all they are the masters of their lessons with the students as well to make the connection to their own teaching situation. Animated cartoons double information storage in the brain. Information in an animated cartoon is coded verbally and visually which is more likely to be remembered than abstract information that students receive in a classical classroom. Furthermore, both image and motion are essential for information retention. In other words, cartoons have dual learning functions; they facilitate understanding of abstract concepts and they encourage learners to analyze meanings and messages from characters' behaviors.

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