

Chapter 54

Animated Cartoons to Develop Listening Skills & Vocabulary

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Abstract

English language is a second language to most pupils in Malaysia. The importance of each pupil mastering English language to a certain level of proficiency is highlighted in the National Education Blueprint (2013-2025). Many of the pupils have very strong mother tongue (L1) influence which hinders the acquisition of English language. Due to the influence of L1 and the lack of exposure to English language has resulted to very limited vocabulary among pupils from rural and semi-urban schools. This has led them to the category of being weak in English language. The use “Animated Cartoons” via YouTube is introduced to develop their listening skills and expand their vocabulary in order to be able to master English language. Using “Animated Cartoons” will not only help them gain vocabulary acquisition and listening skill but boost their confidence in learning English language too. Thus, the focus will be on 10 weak ability Form 1 pupils with strong influence of L1 background. Data was collected base on pre and post-test score. A questionnaire survey data was also collected and analysed using descriptive statistic. The findings found that the use of ‘animated cartoon’ had a positive impact on the pupils and increased their acquisition of vocabulary and listening skills.

Keywords : animated cartoons, low proficient, vocabulary, listening skills, L1(mother tongue)

Introduction

English Language has played an important role as a benchmark to our country’s progress as a nation. Many programmes’ and policies were implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) throughout the past decade to initiate and improve the quality of Malaysian students’ acquisition of English Language.

It is hoped that the mastery of English Language will contribute to the fulfilment of the nation’s vision as a developed country. The transition and development of KSSR (Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Rendah) in the year 2012 and KSSM in 2017 is one of the major transformation in the education system in preparing students to develop skills needed for the 21st century. This can clearly be seen in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013 – 2025), in shift two: “*to ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English Language.*”

Yet, the level of proficiency among Malaysian students is a concerning matter. The inability to communicate competently and the poor proficiency among Malaysian graduates is one of the major complaints among employers. One of the main concern is the lack of vocabulary in mastering the language. This contributes to the number of students who are poorly equipped in the language skills and are considered as low proficiency students.

According to Stahl (2015), using technology in the classroom can increase student engagement and motivation, but teachers must use it effectively as a tool and not simply as a means to engage students. The use of technology in today’s younger generation has made it part an parcel as a 21st century learning tool. According to Yunus *et.al* “information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a major role in creating a new and improved model of teaching and learning” (Yunus *et al.* 2013). To engage weak learners especially in using technology will help them not only in familiarizing themselves to the language but also keeping them focus and motivated in the lesson. The use of animated cartoons via You tube is introduced to encourage

students in developing their listening skills and enhancing their vocabulary. Thus, this research was done using animated cartoons via Youtube to develop the listening skills and vocabulary among low proficient students.

Review of Related Literature

Importance of Listening

Teaching English as a second language to students with low proficiency has always been a challenge. This is more so as they have very limited vocabulary count to start with and of being in an environment with no exposure to the language. Due to this students have been categorized as low proficient and unable to write nor speak well. Extensive listening is generally defined as learners “doing a lot of easy, comprehensible, and enjoyable listening practice” (Chang & Millett, 2013).

Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary knowledge is often seen as an important tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary in a second language impedes successful communication. Several variables can be identified on the difficulties faced by second language learners. All of them are somehow dependent on factors such as socioeconomic, ideological and cultural conditions beyond their own teaching /learning and the intellectual characteristics of learners. (Alves & Oliveira, 2014).

Animated Cartoons via ICT and Youtube

Another advantage was that ICT could help students improve their vocabulary and enable them to find out the meaning of the words in the texts they read. Many lexical items could also be learnt when they watch any movies with English subtitles. Interactions with multimedia environments -symbols, shapes, sounds, colors and even letters- are powerful in forming understanding. Creating phonological awareness through hearing and thinking about the language itself can help children learn to read.

When children are able to map the sounds of speech onto the letters they become aware that continuous speech is broken down into discrete sounds (Seker, Girgin, & Akamca, 2012) things about their daily life and world around them (Griva, Semoglou, & Geladari, 2010). According to research experts (S. W. Haugland, 2000; Stephen & Plowman, 2008; Plowman, Stevenson, Mcpake, Stephen, & Adey, 2011), claims are made to the effect that computers should be physically introduced in kindergarten and primary level classrooms in a coherently integrated fashion with the rest of the learning resources.

Methodology

The respondents were 10 low proficient students from Form 1 class. They were weak in English language proficiency. They were selected based on their Mac monthly test where all the 10 students failed in their examination.

Instruments

They were two types of test conducted. The first is pre and post-test. These tests were a set of similar questions to measure students' vocabulary after watching the animated cartoons. A questionnaire was also given to students to investigate their preference in using animated cartoons in enhancing their vocabulary and listening skills. The pre and post questions consisted of vocabulary words and matching the correct pictures.

Findings and Conclusion

Pre and post test score

The pre and post test were used to compare the scores of their understanding.

Table 1
Pre and post test score

No.	Students (Respondents)	Pre test score	Percentage %	Post test score	Percentage %	Increment %
1.	Student 1	1/5	20%	5/5	100%	80%
2.	Student 2	0/5	0%	3/5	60%	60%
3.	Student 3	0/5	0%	2/5	40%	40%
4.	Student 4	0/5	0%	3/5	60%	60%
5.	Student 5	1/5	20%	4/5	80%	60%
6.	Student 6	0/5	0%	3/5	60%	60%
7.	Student 7	1/5	20%	5/5	100%	80%
8.	Student 8	0/5	0%	3/5	60%	60%
9.	Student 9	1/5	20%	4/5	80%	60%
10.	Student 10	0/5	0%	4/5	80%	80%

Base on Table 1 and the post test showed that there were tremendous improvement in the mastery of vocabulary after using animated cartoons. This was a great improvement compared with the pretest conducted earlier. The result revealed significant improvement and interest in the overall score were student 1 and student 7 scored 100% in mastering the vocabulary given.

Table .2
Respondents answers for questionnaire.

No.	Students (Respondents)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1.	Student 1	√	√	√	√	√
2.	Student 2	√	√	√	√	√
3.	Student 3	√	√	√	√	√
4.	Student 4	√	√	√	√	√
5.	Student 5	√	√	√	√	√
6.	Student 6	√	√	√	√	√
7.	Student 7	√	√	√	√	√
8.	Student 8	√	√	√	√	√
9.	Student 9	√	√	√	√	√
10.	Student 10	√	√	√	√	√

For the questionnaire as indicated in table 2, all the respondent showed a positive answer to learning English using animated cartoons. All of the students responded with a positive '√'. Base on these results shows that using animated cartoon not only increases their listening and improves their vocabulary but motivates low proficiency students in the lesson as well.

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