

# USING CARTOON AS ENGLISH LEARNING MEDIA: FOCUSING ON VOCABULARY AND LISTENING SKILL

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## Abstract

English language is a second language to most pupils in Indonesia. The importance of 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. The lack of exposure to English language has resulted to limited vocabulary among pupils from rural and semi-urban schools. This has led them to being weak in English language. The use of “Animated Cartoons” via YouTube is introduced to develop their listening skills and expand their vocabulary in order to master English language. Thus, the focus will be on 10 weak ability Form 1 pupils with strong influence of L1 background. Data was collected based on pre and post-test score and a questionnaire survey data was also collected and analyzed using descriptive statistic. The findings found that the use of ‘Animated Cartoons’ had a positive impact on the pupils and increased their acquisition of vocabulary and listening skills. Thus, it is crucial that the use ICT be integrated in English language curriculum to enable low proficient pupils’ mastery of the language and fulfil the vision in the National Education Blueprint.

**Key words:** Listening Skill, Cartoon, Media, Vocabulary, Learning Strategy

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## INTRODUCTION

Do you like watching cartoon? Have you ever watch one of English cartoon? Vocabulary is important for the students to support their four language skills (F. M. Sari, n.d.). It means that if the students master vocabulary, it will make the students easier to learn English language.

Teaching of English to young learners brings a number of challenges most of which stem from the characteristics of young learners that are different from those of older learners (F. M. Sari & Wahyudin, 2019; Sinaga & Oktaviani, 2020). Hence, taking these characteristics into account while determining the language instruction is of utmost importance. Young learners tend to learn implicitly rather than explicitly. They can understand meaningful messages, but cannot analyze the language as a system yet. Within this line, it is a crucial need to present and use the language within 'meaningful contexts' reflecting the authentic use of language. Although all grammar teaching is contextual at differing degrees, it is expected that “the teacher can contextualize the lesson through numerous methods including (but not limited to), using audio or visual materials, Children are good observers and they make use of such contextual clues like movements (body language), intonation,

mimics and gestures, actions and messages in order to understand and interpret the language itself (Ahluwalia, 2020; Almuafiry et al., 2017; Saputra et al., 2020). A further characteristic is that young learners enjoy fantasy and imagination. Games and cartoons suit well in fostering young learners' imagination and fantasy. The rationale behind choosing cartoons as teaching materials rather than pictures or stories is that they contain colorful characters and catchy visual presentations accompanied by enjoyable sounds and music (Tiku Ali & Patombongi, 2016; Yeremia et al., 2019; Zulkarnais et al., 2018). Teachers are interested in using animations while teaching all kinds of subjects (A. Sari & Adrian, 2020).

In this study context, the main reason for the selected students having lack of vocabulary is due to their dominant influence of mother tongue and the lack of exposure to English environment. As seen in another study 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. Technology usage in today's younger generation inside and outside of a classroom has become an epitome of a 21st century learning tool.

Despite the overall support for contextualized instruction coming from L2 pedagogical circles, there are few empirical studies concerning its benefits over alternative approaches at primary school levels. In fact, most of the work done in the field is based on the studies as to the effectiveness of games, pictures, stories, and songs in teaching young learners. Given the limited scope of previous research on the issue, it was deemed appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of authentic animated cartoon series "The Simpsons" in teaching grammar and vocabulary to young Indonesia learners of English compared to traditional teaching sessions in a primary school setting. This is the hypothesis the researcher set out to test.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Learning through Cartoons**

We often hear learners complaining about boring classes and activities. Using cartoons would certainly break the monotony of reading text after text in the educational institutions. Very often a picture speaks louder than words and has more impact than just reading the text (Diharjo et al., 2020; Pratiwi & Ayu, 2020). It is also believed that the usage of cartoons can reduce boredom and decrease academic stress, anxiety and unruly behavior.

We might have to incorporate some of these interests within our training environments. Now-a-days, 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, we often insert cartoons 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. Watching cartoons helps learners to improve their pronunciation, vocabulary and their speaking ability. Learners will be engaged in the dialogues of the significant scenes in the cartoons (L. A. Putri & Dewi, 2020; S. N. Sari & Aminatun, 2021). They imitate the characters and speak fluently as the characters do. Teachers, more than ever before, need to listen to the learners and observe their behavior from the point of thought and language development. The teachers may be surprised to discover how much of the language, creativity and thinking ability of the learners are developed and they could observe the spontaneous responses of learners after watching cartoons (Ambarwati & Mandasari, 2020; Rahmania & Mandasari, 2021; F. M. Sari, 2017). Cartoons are very important for the learners, because it improves the learner's imagination, attention, thinking and memorization in all the mind process.

#### **A. Importance of Listening**

Listening is an important skill that is needed for communication in people's daily lives. Listening is an integral part of language learning because it provides the oral input that acts as the platform for language acquisition and help learners to communicate in spoken interaction (Heri Kuswoyo & Wahyudin, 2017; Mandasari, 2016; Wahyudin & Sari, 2018). Teaching English language to students with low proficiency has always been a challenge due to the dominance of their (L1). 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. Listening is the most essential part of spoken communication as it is crucial in providing the content and meaningful response (Ayu, 2021; D Puspita, 2004). In mastering a language for communicative purpose, listening plays a vital role, as it assist the language learners to master pronunciation, word stress, vocabulary, and syntax and the understanding of messages conveyed can be based solely on tone of voice, pitch and accent; and this is only made possible when we listen (Agustin & Ayu, 2021; Dian Puspita & Amelia, 2020; SARI, 2013). 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”. This will definably increase the vocabulary count as well especially among low proficiency students who are from communities that do not use English language in their daily lives. Thus, listening is an integral part of the learning process. “It is the medium through which people gain a large proportion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and human affairs, their ideals, sense of values”

### **B. Vocabulary Acquisition**

Vocabulary is the core essence to English language teaching because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas. Vocabulary knowledge is often seen as an important tool for second language learners because a limited vocabulary hinders the acquisition and mastering a successful communication (Aminatun & Oktaviani, 2019; Ayu et al., 2021; Novanti & Suprayogi, 2021). Several factors can be identified on the difficulties faced by second language learners. All of them are somehow co-related on factors such as socioeconomic, ideological and cultural conditions beyond their own teaching and learning and the intellectual characteristics of learners (Apriyanti & Ayu, 2020). The teaching and learning of English in rural and semi urban school in Indonesia has always been a major Strule because English is hardly used except during classroom lessons. This gives the impression of English being a foreign language that does not serve a purpose in their community (Ayu, 2020; N. Putri & Aminatun, 2021). Consequently, there are students who are still not proficient in English even after more than 10 years of learning the language. Even though many programmers and policies has been implemented by the Ministry of Education (MOE) to alleviate the importance of English in schools, many students from rural and semi-urban areas with strong influence of mother tongue view English as a foreign language which is spoken only during language lessons in schools.

Despite the nation’s aspirations for youths to master English language, there still exist a category of students who are unable to master the language (Erya & Pustika, 2021; Skill, n.d.). This category of students have been labelled as low proficiency students. Their inability to communicate competently and their poor proficiency has resulted in Indonesia graduates being the major complaints among employers in private organizations resulting in them being unmarketable. The main reason for learning English is not to acquire native speakers’ capability but rather to be intelligible among international English speakers and those within their ‘community. English language today is a basic requirement need for job

seekers, especially in the private sector. This contributes to the number of students who are poorly equipped in the language skills and are considered as low proficiency students. As a fact, children are exposed to their mother language (L1) in their home surroundings and learn it first-hand.

In spite of the overall support for animations, there are few studies which reveal effects of using cartoons on enhancing learning or attitudes of learners (Puspaningtyas & Ulfa, 2020, 2021). Traditional methods which attribute the teacher a central role and the learners a passive role and present an explicit and de-contextualized language instruction which is not appropriate for the characteristics and needs of young learners and teachers are not satisfied with the results obtained through traditional methods (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020; Wahyudin, 2015).

## **METHOD**

Despite the overall support for contextualized instruction coming from L2 pedagogical circles, there are few empirical studies concerning its benefits over alternative approaches at primary school levels (F. M. Sari, 2019; Wahyudin, 2018). In fact, most of the work done in the field is based on the studies as to the effectiveness of games, pictures, stories, and songs in teaching young learners. Given the limited scope of previous research on the issue, it was deemed appropriate to evaluate the effectiveness of authentic animated cartoon series “The Simpsons” in teaching grammar and vocabulary to young Indonesia learners of English compared to traditional teaching sessions in a primary school setting. This is the hypothesis the researcher set out to test.

To investigate the effectiveness of authentic animated cartoons in teaching grammar and vocabulary to young Indonesian learners of English the following research questions are designed.

1. How cartoon can increase your listening skill and enrich your vocabulary?
2. How often learners using cartoon English to learn language?

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the study showed that the use of Animated cartoons via You Tube had a positive influence in enhancing low proficient students listening skills and vocabulary. The study revealed that these group of students whom were extremely weak in English

language and with an almost non-existing grasp of vocabulary were capable to acquire the understanding of targeted vocabulary using their listening skills. The usage of chrome book multimedia enhanced the learning of the language where student centered learning was able to be conducted, and the result of the research question are:

1. 100% students familiar with English cartoon
2. 90% students like watching English
3. 90% students ever watching English cartoon
4. 100% students think watching English cartoon can affect their listening and speaking skills
5. 100% students think watching English cartoon can affect their Vocabulary skill
6. Most of students quite often watching English cartoon in a week
7. There are a lot of kind cartoon that student favorite like, SpongeBob, Frozen, “Phineas and Ferb”, Avatar, etc

## **CONCLUSION**

The research can be widened to all the disciples and the number of activities can be increased. Activities using cartoons can be implemented to enhance not only the productive skill but also the receptive skill. Cartoons can also be used to teach literature. This activities were helpful to the learners to develop their speaking and writing skills through cartoons. Cartoons made the learners to enjoy the class and they were interested and curious to participate in the activities. They involved themselves with great enthusiasm in all the activities very actively. They did not show any hesitation to come forward and they interacted in English with their friends. Cartoons are harmless and it entertains everyone in learning a language naturally. Researchers have found that vocabulary acquisition is a crucial predictor of foreign language learning and reading motivation in first and second language learning. Thus, in order for low proficiency students to master a standard of English language, vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary count needed to be increased. Vocabulary Knowledge & Listening Skill among low level learners in Indonesia Though it is a fact that English is the second language in Indonesia, in reality, it resembles a foreign language to many Indonesian students, especially in the non-urban areas. This is because English is not used in their everyday activities since they can use either the national language, Indonesia language or for no ethnic Malays, their respective native

language (L1) (Handayani & Aminatun, 2020). 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 to master the acquisition of English language. Indonesians must be competent in English language if they were to compete in the international markets. Using animated cartoons via Youtube was introduced to encourage low proficient students to develop their listening skills and enhancing their vocabulary. Thus, this research was conducted using animated cartoons via YouTube to develop their listening skill and vocabulary among low proficient students.

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