



## ENGLISH LEARNING THROUGH CARTOONS

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### Abstract

*The best age for children to start learning a second language is from about 5 to 6 years old. However, children of these ages don't seem to focus as much on learning as parents would expect. Your child wants to play and have fun, and what you need to do is not to force them to study but to find them a suitable and interesting learning method. One of the best methods you may have heard about is to learn English through film and movies, an effective, effortless, and 100% free way to teach your kids English. Learners will be engaged in the dialogues of the significant scenes in the cartoons. 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 behaviour 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. Cartoons are very important for the learners, because it improves the learner's imagination, attention, thinking and memorisation in all the mind process.*

*Keywords:English, Learners, Cartoons, Kids, Communications, Schools, Kids*

### Introduction

Cartoons are the better medium of communication and, therefore, it deserves to be studied. Surprisingly, compared to the popularity enjoyed by the art and the artists and also compared to the importance of the art, there has been little work done in the art of cartooning. There is language involved in cartoons, a different kind of language. This makes it a matter of interest to study cartoons. Cartoon has always been considered an effective medium for several reasons. The language used is usually simple for the learners or the children to understand. Humour is an art of communication and is very useful to communicate something that is not so pleasant. Language learning and language teaching take place unconsciously. Cartoons help this process to take place. It creates a realistic target language world for the learner that assures learner-involvement. Since the learner is exposed to a realistic use of language, he becomes a participant of the target language world. This unconscious involvement of the learner in the language interaction process helps him acquire the language. Language is learnt mostly outside the classroom, i.e., in natural circumstances where language is used for communication. This

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objective can also be realised by television. This medium is readily accepted by learners, since they recognise it as being a part of their life outside classroom. Once the learner knows how to comprehend the language spoken on cartoons in an interactive classroom situation, they can improve and incorporate these skills and techniques into their regular cartoon viewing which gradually will result in their acquisition of the language. Cartoons would be an excellent tool for developing awareness of the critical features of the target language. Learners get an exposure to the culture where the language is spoken (through video recordings, commercials) along with the language. Child literacy is one of the main priorities of both federal and private organizations around the world. Literacy holistically involved the ability to use language for communication and interaction with other people.

### **Literature Review**

- Contemporary editorial cartoons continue to serve as an acceptable format for airing controversial views (Kuipers, 2011), often with the intent of swaying public opinion. In a study of political cartoons with presidential election themes, Edwards and Ware (2005) examined the impact of editorial cartoons on public opinion and concluded that negative caricatures of voters contributed to public apathy toward the electoral process. Similar conclusions about the power of comic art to influence public opinion were reported in a study by Josh Greenberg (2002), whose research suggested that cartoons may help people interpret life events. In contrast, other scholars have examined political cartoons as a reflection of public opinion rather than an instigator of thought. However the literature, here, presents contradictory conclusions. Edward Holley and Norman Stevens (1969), for instance, argue that cartoons are an accurate portrayal of public opinion, while others point to evidence indicating that cartoons do not necessarily reflect the general view nor serve as timely portraits of historic events (Gilmartin & Brunn, 1998; Meyer, Seidler, Curry, & Aveni, 1980).
- Studied as art forms (Robb, 2009), Zeitgeist ephemera (Holley & Stevens, 1969), primary sources (Thomas, 2004), and even agents of change (Edwards & Ware, 2005; see also Marin-Arrese, 2008; Neuberger & Kremar, 2008), editorial cartoons have been the subject of analysis in a variety of academic disciplines. However, scant research has been dedicated to the subject of cartoons or caricatures containing library themes. In fact, the author of this literature review found only one study, conducted by Alireza Isfandyari-Moghaddam and Vahideh Kashi-Nahanji (2010), devoted to the content analysis of themes in a small election of library cartoons, and that study failed to describe its selection process or the method of content analysis used.



- Articles written by scholars who promote the importance of studying comic art. This paper reviews the literature dedicated to each of these areas. HISTORICAL TRENDS Critical to any academic study is an historical overview of the topic. Unfortunately, the existing literature on library comic art covers very little history of the subject. Editorial and political cartoons, however, have held a prominent place in American journalism dating as far back as 1754 when Benjamin Franklin illustrated his famous “Join, or Die” editorial cartoon. His image of a severed snake, published in The Pennsylvania Gazette on May 9, 1754, was Franklin’s attempt to illustrate the necessity of colonial unity (Dewey, 2007, p. 2; Thomas, 2004, p. 426).
- By the late 1880s, political cartoons began to appear regularly in U.S. newspapers (Becker, 1959, p. 7; Hess & Northrop, 1996, pp. 68-70). From the beginning, newspaper cartoons had a satirical bent, though one scholar noted a decided shift in the early 20th century from political to social themes (Cary, 1933). Newspapers’ political cartoons were influential, particularly, because a good portion of the population was illiterate. Some of these early cartoons have been credited with influencing politics and even elections (Dewey, 2007, pp.34-35).

### Importance of Cartoons in Teaching

A cartoon is a simple drawing of the things we see around us in an entertaining way with lots of lively colours in it or a cartoon is a film, movie or a small video with animation in it. Cartoons are mainly meant for kids. They are usually printed in newspapers, comic books and magazines or they are broadcasted on the television. Cartoons were previously meant for the purpose of entertainment only. But these days’ cartoons are being extensively used for other purposes as well. Cartoons are now being used for education and spreading awareness amongst the people in addition to fun and entertainment.

Teaching is a very strenuous profession. It takes a lot of effort to transfer the whole lot of information from your own mind into someone else’s mind. For this reason, teaching necessitates a lot of new strategies, technologies, and ideas which can make this task easier. Cartoons have been abundantly used as a teaching aid for a very long time. They have made learning an easier and a better experience for the students. Cartoons have made humdrum subjects fascinating for the students. Cartoons bring in life into the dull pages of the books and the hidden secrets of the subject. Cartoons are very eye-catching. If you open a page with a cartoon drawn on it, the first thing you will notice on the page will be the cartoon drawn on it

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and without even going through the text you will try to fathom the cartoon image. One single cartoon drawn on one-fourth or one-sixth of a page can replace a page full of text. The books meant for toddlers or pre-nursery and nursery students are flooded with cartoon images because they are very pleasing to children's eyes. The cartoon images seen by the children leave an impression in their mind. They tend to remember what they saw in the form of cartoons, or what actions were performed by the cartoons or anything else. If used in a correct way, cartoons can be very benign.

In the conventional teaching methodology, knowledge was imparted to the students by means of a systematic conversation or a discussion. But the upcoming generation is a bit different. The new generation of children wants to scrutinize almost everything. With so many queries popping in children's mind, the conventional scheme of teaching flops. This presents the need for new techniques for teaching. Sometimes, this is achieved through the use of cartoons or comic strips. Cartoons have proven themselves to be very advantageous for educating children. From the very beginning, they have been conveying moral values.

### **Importance of Cartoons in Education**

- **Cartoons catch Attention:** Kids always want to enjoy each and every moment. They want to sense fun and humour all the time around them. And it is human nature to correlate cartoons with fun and humour. Therefore, it can be said that in search for entertainment the first entity around them which will seek student's attention will be cartoons or comic strips. Not only children, but even adults also do the same. Whenever we open a book we first look at the images printed on it and then the text. Similarly, the students will first read the comic strip and then the text. So in order to gain a student's attention toward a subject, the use of cartoons will be a great idea.
- **Cartoons Lead to a Better Understanding:** There are many topics which cannot be theoretically understood. They need practical experiences or real-life examples. Comic strips can help a lot in this situation. The comic strip can be easily used to narrate a story. With the use of cartoon characters and callouts, a story can be easily cooked up and the students will be able to understand the burdensome subjects very comfortably. Many writers are already using this concept of cartoons. Many history and economics book writers use cartoons or comic strips to present an important incidence which occurred in the past or a theory or concept which is beyond theoretical understanding. Instead of just writing an example it will be great if it is expressed in the form of a



comic strip which will gain the concentration of the student and will lead to a better comprehension.

- **Cartoons can Develop Public Speaking:** A cartoon comic strip has a lot of characters in it with different individual dialogues. A teacher can assign each of the characters to the students and tell them to perform a play on the comic strip. This will boost the student's confidence. The students will get a chance to speak or perform in front of the whole class. It will enhance their speaking skills. It is beneficial for the rest of the students as well because they will understand the story in a better way. It will be like a fun session for everyone.
  - **Cartoons are an Effective way to Teach Moral Education:** Sometimes it becomes difficult for the teachers to teach the moral values and good manners. Students may take them lightly. They may not understand the consequences if they do not behave well. This can be taught to them dramatically. By showing them a cartoon video or movie the students can learn how to handle different situations, or if they do not follow a proper conduct then what circumstances they have to face. Other than these many small things like how to keep up the friendship, differentiating between right and wrong, how to behave in front of others, how to follow your own dreams and many more things can be learned from watching cartoons or reading comic strips.
  - **Cartoons are a great Tool for Pre-Schooling:** Cartoons can seek the attention of the tiny tots. They can be taught nursery rhymes, alphabetical order or counting series using cartoons. It will be also an effective way to teach them stories. Physical exercises can also be taught in this manner. A cartoon video on physical exercise can be shown to the kids and they can be asked to perform the same exercises the characters are performing in the video.
  - **Cartoons can make Children Artists:** Cartoons can develop an artistic mind in the students. If you tell a student to draw a cartoon character from their own imagination they will show such an amazing creation that will astonish you. Writing a comic strip on their own will enhance the thinking skills and writing skills of the students. This will also help in their brain developments as they will have to think about how to form dialogues from their story and what kind of cartoon will suit their character. This coordination between their brains and hands will develop their brain.
  - **Cartoons will enhance Thinking Skills:** Printed cartoons are not just in the form of comic strips. There are simple cartoon images also which have no text printed on them. They require critical thinking level to interpret what the cartoon is saying. There may be many possible outcomes but choosing the right one requires higher order thinking skills.
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- **Cartoons can Improve Vocabulary:** While watching cartoon movies, children can learn a lot of new words. They can learn their meaning and how to use them in sentences. They may also be able to learn how the voice tones can or gesture can change the meaning of the whole sentences. They may also learn what words to use on what occasions.
- **Cartoons can improve the Student-Teacher Relationship:** Cartoons are liked by all children. If the teacher will use a cartoon to teach the students, the students will start to like the teacher. When the teacher will offer the students to see a cartoon or read comics to understand some theory or a subject the students will develop a liking for the teacher. Once this relation is developed, the students will be more attentive towards the teacher and will listen to every word said by the teacher. The student-teacher bond will be enhanced.
- **Cartoons are an Inexpensive Tool for Teaching:** As compared to other tools like projectors, computers, and other varieties of smart technology cartoons are very cheap. They need to be just printed on a sheet of paper in the case of a comic strip or just need to be displayed on a television screen if it is an animation video or movie. Cartoons are very easily available. They can be downloaded from the internet, comic strips can be cut out from newspaper or magazines. There many television channels which show cartoon movies all the time. In this ways, they become a very inexpensive tool compared to others.

### **Positive Effects of Watching Cartoons on Children**

The importance of cartoons for children can be seen from the various positive effects that cartoons have on child behaviour and development. Here are some positive effects that cartoons can have on children:

#### **1. Helps Children Get an Early Start on Learning**

Cartoons can help kids get an early start on learning. The positive influence of cartoons on children can be seen especially in the case of educational cartoons that teach shapes, numbers, and colours. Such cartoons can teach basic things to children in a fun and interactive way, thus making learning an enjoyable activity. The moving, talking pictures and colourful visuals make learning interesting for children.



## 2. Helps in the Cognitive Development

Watching cartoons can help develop your child's cognitive skills. It can help develop logic and reasoning ability, visual and auditory processing, and sustained and selective attention of a child.

## 3. Helps in the Language Development

Cartoons can expose your children to different languages, thus helping children in developing their linguistic abilities. Allowing them to watch cartoons in your native tongue, for example, can help them learn the language better. By watching different cartoons kids can also improve their pronunciation and their manner of talking.

## 4. Enhances Creativity

Watching cartoons help increase children's imagination and creativity. Your child will be able to think of new ideas inspired by certain cartoons and come up with new stories or artwork based on the cartoons he watches.

## 5. Promotes Laughter and Relieves Stress

Children find cartoons amusing and often laugh out loud at the antics of the cartoon characters. Laughter is a good stress buster and a confidence builder. It also boosts immunity and causes the release of endorphins that cause us to have positive feelings.

## 6. Helps Kids Learn About Different Things

Watching cartoons is a great way to teach your kids about local customs, traditions, history, and mythology. For example, watching animated versions of the Ramayana or Mahabharata can teach kids about Indian mythology. Watching cartoons about Aesop's Fables or Panchatantra can teach children about good morals, kindness, and compassion.

## Negative Impact of Watching Cartoons on Kids

While cartoons have many positive effects on children, they can also have negative effects on child behaviour and development. Here are the various negative effects that cartoons can have on children.

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### **1. Encourages Violence**

Watching cartoons which depict violence can encourage children to become violent in real life. Also, children may believe that no one gets hurt or feels pain since cartoons escape unscathed after experiencing violence or an accident. For example, characters in Tom and Jerry, The Road Runner, and Oggy and the Cockroaches often hit each other or cause each other to fall from heights, often without any real consequences.

### **2. Promotes Unruly Behaviour and Lack of Empathy**

There are several cartoons which show characters displaying rude or disobedient behaviour towards their teachers and elders. Children may mimic this behaviour and challenge their parents or teachers when they are disciplined for bad behaviour.

### **3. Promotes the Use of Foul Language**

Cartoons often include language that is unfit for children. Children are impressionable, and they may start using bad language that they learn from cartoons in real life.

### **4. Encourages Unsocial Behaviour**

There are several cartoons which encourage antisocial behaviour and give wrong messages to children. Then there are some cartoons that contain sexual innuendos, encourage aggression, and promote bratty behaviour. These can affect your child's behaviour and make them think it is normal to be aggressive, spoiled, or violent.

### **5. May Lead to Health Problems Due to Sedentary Lifestyle**

Too many hours of sitting in front of a screen watching cartoons can cause several health issues due to inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle. These include obesity, vision problems, and nutritional deficiencies due to bad food habits.

### **6. Promotes Bad Role Models**

Children often idolize their favourite cartoon character and mimic them or aspire to be like them. Often, the object of their admiration could be a misleading role model who encourages

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the wrong habits or displays insensitive behaviour towards fellow beings. This kind of impact of cartoons on children's psychology can often lead to devastating consequences and result in children being withdrawn, uncommunicative, antisocial, or unruly.

### **The Effects Of Using Cartoon Videos**

The use of cartoon videos with subtitles appropriately with context/ circumstance and object of learners is much benefit in teaching listening comprehension. Language teachers are suggested to consider the benefit of using captions when teaching listening skills through video viewing, which could not only make comprehension of authentic video less difficult and encourage conscious language learning but also increase students' interest in maintaining or increasing their knowledge of the target language by promoting new lexicon in a appropriate context.).

The suitability of context with object of learners as children was through research of In this study, fifth graders were chosen to research about the effects of viewing subtitles of English cartoon videos on listening comprehension. And the kind of English cartoon videos were not only suitable and interesting videos for children as "The Ant Bully", "The Wild", "Valiant", "The Incredibles", and "Flushed" but also educational morals of contents. Subtitles and vocabulary were simple because of suitable cartoon videos styles that made language learners, as children seem to be motivate and interesting in watching. However, the results had acquired on listening comprehension through watching cartoon videos with subtitles and without that was difference. On the contrary, he chose participants who were advanced, uni- versity-level ESL students participated in the study. They were intensive English language students who represented fifteen different first language backgrounds. With 2 two excerpts from educational television programs as "whales" and "civil rights", but both of them were approximately of equal difficulty and the syntactic complexity of the captions. Thus, to use of cartoon videos in suitable object of learners and context on listening comprehension, this is important for teaching language.

In addition, the research was carried out to study 17 to 19 year-old, 4th year non-English major students of technology school, in Taiwan. With the circumstance, these students were chosen in the random circumstance and in low-intermediate of English proficiency. Besides, the training of their English listening was neglected in long time, and the students' environment is surrounded by mother tongue. And he. also judged caption in target language making propitious condition for students' listening comprehension. However, using video captions in the circumstance of crowded students and irregular English listening are not very effectively.

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## **Tips for Parents to Deal With the Side Effects of Cartoons on a Child**

Now that we have talked about the various advantages and disadvantages of cartoons and the impact of cartoons on children's behaviour, here are some tips for parents to deal with the negative side effects of cartoons:

### **1. Watch With Your Kids**

Watching a cartoon with your kids will allow you to monitor what they see and also observe their reaction to various events in the storyline. It also helps you bond better with your child. Knowing what their favourite cartoon character is and laughing with them will help you understand your child's way of thinking and improve your relationship with the child.

### **2. Limit the Number of Hours**

Set a rule that limits the time for watching TV or cartoons for 1 hour a day, especially for young children. Encourage them to go out and play rather than sit and watch cartoons.

### **3. Select Appropriate or Educational Cartoons**

Allow your child to watch only age-appropriate or educational cartoons that do not depict or encourage negative behaviour.

### **4. Explain the Difference Between Cartoons and Reality**

Explain the difference between cartoons and reality to your child. Teach your child about what is harmful, what is acceptable and what is not realistic. For example, you could explain to your child that although a character appears to have escaped unscathed after experiencing violence, it is not the case in real life.

### **5. Use Filtering and Monitoring Applications**

Use parental control applications which have monitoring and filtering software to filter out inappropriate content and lock content which you do not want your child to access. Make sure you do not leave the child alone in front of the TV or iPad for hours without monitoring what they are watching.

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## **6. Explore Informative Channels**

Explore channels like Discovery, National Geographic, and Animal Planet for informative and educational content that will aid in the overall development of your child. You can also take them out to experience what they have seen on TV. For example, if they watch a program about the galaxy or solar system, you could take them on a visit to the planetarium and even point out constellations and planets to them in the night sky.

## **7. Watch Programs With Language Aids**

Encourage your child to watch programs with language aids that help them learn letters of the alphabet, words, and rhymes.

## **8. Use Audio CDs**

For storytime and rhymes, you can use audio CDs rather than cartoons, as this will encourage your child to be a better listener.

## **9. Do Not Let Them Eat Sitting In Front of the TV**

Eating while watching the television or iPad sets the stage for a lifetime of bad eating habits such as binge-eating and getting addicted to junk food. Children often tend to overeat when they are in front of a screen. They also tend to make unhealthy food choices. Eat together at the dining table as a family and avoid watching TV during mealtimes. This will help the kids focus on the meal and encourage them to eat nutritious food and stop when they are full.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, many researchers studied about the effects of videos with subtitles on listening comprehension of second language learners and they have also come up important findings that help teaching methods of language teachers better in the epoch, which English is international language. By the reference of relevant researches, the researcher of this paper summarized some of findings of the latest researchers in order to approach those findings in bringing into play of research method. It is also thought that if a child will watch cartoons he will start to behave like a cartoon. This is not always correct. Watching the same cartoon all day can make him like that but watching it for half or one hour will not have much effect on him. This also depends on the type of cartoon the child is watching. If the cartoon character behaves positively in his role it will have a good effect on the child. Cartoons can also become a good teaching tool. This inexpensive tool has so many advantages. It can not only seek the student's attention but it can

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also teach him many things. From pre-schooling to middle schooling, cartoons play a very important role. Instead of creating a stressed and monotonous atmosphere, cartoons create a relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere.

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