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Igniting Learners' Behavior And Language Development Through Cartoon Movies: A Phenomenological Study

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Abstract

Children at the current days were more exposed to different cartoon movies. This study aimed to uncover the different experiences and observations of parents in their children who were exposed to cartoon movies. It employed a phenomenological design which structures the consciousness of experiences of the informants. Results revealed that the learners exhibited the abilities to ask excessive questions, articulated words clearly, increased language awareness, and imitated and mimicked conversation. Pedagogical implications are incorporated which strengthen language acquisition among the children.

Keywords: cartoon movies, behavior, language development, phenomenology

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Learning the language does not only happen in the classroom or with the help of the adults. Many children nowadays love watching cartoons and tried to mimic the language being used by the characters. In the same manner, they used this language in dealing with other children and even with the adults. It would be easy

for them to articulate themselves using the target language.

As a matter of fact, the study of Arifani (2020) revealed that children learned vocabulary (Rohimajaya, 2021; Fuadah, 2020) by just watching cartoon videos at home, though they do not have a background of the English language. Conversely, watching cartoon movies motivated the learners increase their reading comprehension skills. This has a strong implication to language teachers especially in facilitating schema which is importance in facilitating the development of reading comprehension among the children (Chen & Pholsward, 2011).

Correspondingly, Cartoon Network even helped learner to acquire the American English (Postic, 2015). On the other hand, a case study which was conducted by Kumar (2013) found out that cartoon characters had shown to have a significant influence on the behavior of preschoolers (Biswas, 2013). Children could also converse with their parents relative death based on the animated films (Bridgewater et al., 2021).

Furthermore, previous studies focused only on the detection of violence in the cartoon videos (Khalil et al., 2021), on the behavioral and cognitive development brought by their exposure to the media (Zahra et al., 2021). On the contrary, Jacinto (2021) posited that animated movies influenced the academic and spiritual aspects of the learners. Other study also found out that Disney Movies were therapeutic especially to the mourning families. However, none of the studies were conducted in the local parlance. This created a gap which the present study tried to fill.

Indeed, this study is timely and relevant since it will determine the efficacy of watching animated movies as a tool in enhancing pupils' interaction in the English class. Also, this will provide a pedagogical implication which could serve as a guiding principle for teachers in enhancing their teaching skills. The aforementioned reasons motivated the researchers to pursue this endeavor.

1.2 Research Questions

1.1.1 How do English cartoon movies enhance developed the linguistic competence of learners?

1.2.2 What pedagogical implications can be derived based on the findings of

the study?

1.3 Delimitation and Limitation

This study was conducted among in ECOFI Learning Center in Doroluman, Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines. It involved parents whose children were exposed to watching cartoon/animated movies at home. Excluded were those parents who were not in the contexts of the criteria set.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study is qualitative-phenomenology. Qualitative research showed the behavior and views of the target participants relative to a particular topic to be explored (Hammersly, 2018; Aveling et al., 2015; Brown, 2010). In-depth interview, focus groups, ethnography, content analysis, and case study are some of the methods used in this approach. Results are interpreted through descriptive and inferences which can be taken directly from the data obtained (Kim et al., 2017; Vaismoradi et al., 2013). It does not use any numerical data unlike the quantitative approach (Aguilera et al., 2006).

Conversely, phenomenology explores on the lived experiences of the participants (Fink, 2020). In order to understand the in-depth meaning of the responses of the participants, it will make an assumption based on the ontology and epistemology which underpin for the success of the conduct of the phenomenological study. Phenomenology does not contradict quantitative method; however, it asks questions in a different manner which further give the deeper implications of the meaning of the phenomenon (Patton, 2020; Stolz, 2020).

Therefore, this study is qualitative-phenomenology since it listened to the lived experiences of parents relative to the role of cartoon movies in igniting learners' social interactions. In the same manner, it tried to present the wider perspectives on its applicability in the pedagogical aspects which in turn could be used by the students in learning as well as those who engage into researches.

2.2 Research Participants

The participants of the study were chosen using the purposive sampling, specifically the criterion based. There were 10 parents whose children were exposed to watching English cartoon/animated movies at home. Also, their children could express in the English language.

2.3 Data Gathering Procedure

The gathering of the data followed the following protocols. First, we wrote a letter to the Director for Instruction of the institution down to the Dean of the College of Education relative to the study. Another letter was sent to the administrator of ECOFI Learning Center about the interview which would be conducted on parents whose children are exposed to watching cartoon/animated movies at home. Upon approval, we met them and personally talked to them about the objectives and purpose of the study.

The Interview Guide Questions (Turner III, 2020) were prepared and validated by pool of experts. Contents were checked to make it appropriate for the contexts of qualitative research. Next, we gave the Consent-to-Participate Form (Miller & Bouton, 2007) which stated their rights as participants. Prior to the interview, we asked them to affix their signature as a manifestation of their full participation. However, it was explained to them that they were allowed to withdraw when they felt any discomforts. The date and time of the interview was scheduled.

During the interview, the informants were given the time to express themselves in order to cull out the needed information. It was recorded, transcribed, and translated to English for universality. Thematic analysis was done by the data analyst. Correspondingly, we returned back to the participants and asked their confirmation about the results. On the other hand, a token was given for the time and effort they shared. Lastly, results were presented in tabular and textual forms.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were arranged based on the responses of the participants. Thematic analysis was done by identifying the emergent themes (Joffe, 2012). Patterns of data

were scrutinized in order to come up with new insights and concepts based on the experiences of the participants (Clarke & Braun, 2014).

2.5 Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to the following standards by Halai (2006) that we have to obtain the informed consent from the participants. This provides the concept of respect where they could not feel that they are coerced. More importantly, they have the full access to the needed information prior to the interview. Hence, everything was explained to them. Included were the elements of research such as purpose, procedures, time period, risks, benefits, and a clause which articulated their voluntary participation and the right to withdraw.

Following, is the principle of beneficence and reciprocity. The study could not inflict any harm and risks to the participants. This also provided them with the benefits. The principle of reciprocity compensated them with their participation. Added to this is the anonymity of the participants and the confidentiality of the shared information. Hence, their names were hidden by assigning codes or pseudonyms. The findings would be used for research purposes only.

3. Result and Discussion

To answer the question how do English Cartoon Movies enhanced the child interaction at home, themes and thematic statements were drawn through a thematic analysis. Results are presented below in table 1.

Asked Excessive Questions. Children who were exposed in watching cartoon/animated movies asked a lot of questions to the adults that surround them. They became intuitive and curious about the things that surround them. There are a lot of things that they want immediate response and clear answer.

Hence, it was presented during the interview that:

“I observed that my son is not contented with a very simple answer. After I explained to him, he tended to ask another question. It was like an endless question and answer.” (P6)

Another participant reiterated that:

“He become too curious even on the simplest things. Sometimes, I am caught in the middle because the mode of questioning is quite complicated and cannot be easily responded with a very simple answer. Parents need to be ready as well to make them satisfied.” (P10)

Exposure to cartoon movies allowed children to develop their linguistic skills through asking questions. As their curiosity tickles their interest, it can be attributed by the mere fact that they wanted to have answers to all the questions that run in their minds. Typically, they want immediate and clear responses from adults. Hence, it was suggested that readiness is a must to easily give them the clear answer (Abuzahra et al., 2016).

Articulated Words Clearly. Because of their exposure to cartoon/animated movies, the children were able to express themselves in the English language with ease. They were very particular of the words and the corresponding sound. They could articulate themselves in a native-like tongue. This manifested that the children are able to communicate in the language with intense and with the meaning can easily be understood. However, one of the parents expressed that:

“I observed that my child is like a native speaker of the English language. He can articulate well without any difficulties.” (P2)

In addition, another participant verbalized that:

“My son has the ability to interact with his interlocutors because I can see that he has the command of the language.” (P5)

Movies showed to have a significant influence on children's acquisition of the language. It would be easy for them to express themselves in the English language because of their long exposure. On the other hand, watching animated/ cartoon movies integrated the concept of that learning the language could be easy and fun (Uchikoshi, 2009).

Increased Language Awareness. For learners who have a long exposure to cartoon/animative movies can check the grammatical features of the language. In the same manner, their vocabulary is quite advanced compared to the children of their age. They utilized words that only the native speakers of the English language used. One of the participants affirmed the finding that:

“Most of the time my daughter used words that difficult for me to understand. I even asked her and let her explained what she tried to convey.” (P3)

Also,

My son can identify when someone’s grammar is not correct. He too made a self-check.” (P4)

Liu (2005) stated that children may acquire the vocabulary as well as the syntactic features of the language. Similarly, it increased their competencies in the macro skills. In the same vein, they would be able to gain confidence as they converse with other people and a deep awareness and understanding of the cultures of native speaking countries (Kuppens, 2010).

Imitated and Mimicked Conversations. One of the advantages of watching animated/cartoon movies among the children is that they could imitate and mimic the utterances of the characters. Usually, they tried to visualize that they are the one of the main characters of the movie and tried to present it in a way that they are indeed part of the casts. Consequently, they did it when conversing to their classmates and even to their teachers.

The participants agreed that: “He used to mimic the conversations on the movie.” (P7) “He can imitate the conversations. He even sounded like them.” (P9)

Children do not only mimic the language of the characters but also the emotions being portrayed. This is the most important social regulator (Slifer et al., 2006). In the study conducted by Kimbara (2006) that mimicry is a way of speaker’s gestures with the interlocutor which makes it as interactional phenomenon.

Table 1. Themes and Core Ideas on the Development of Linguistic Competence of Children who are exposed at Watching Cartoon Movies at Home

Themes	Core Ideas
Asked Excessive Questions	The children who were exposed to watching cartoon/animated movies were curious about the things that surround them
Articulated Words Clearly	They can express themselves without any difficulty
Increased Language Awareness	They were able to identify the grammatical features of their utterances
Imitated and Mimicked Conversations	Copied the accent of the characters of the cartoon/animated movies

3.1 Implications for Pedagogy

Indeed, this study made a clear implication that learning does not occur only in the four corners of the classroom. Children learned the language in different aspects especially if there are available resources at home. In the case of the children who could express themselves in the English language because of their exposure to English cartoon/animated movies directed that learning can be fun.

In language teaching, it is important that teachers also have to support the quest of the children who expressed themselves in a foreign language. The beauty of this phenomenon can be utilized in the contexts of teaching. Teachers can utilize this approach to enhance the communicative competence of the learners. It is one way of strengthening the pedagogical competence of teachers.

More importantly, teachers are provided with the information which could be essential in honing the potentialities of their learners. Furthermore, teachers must have to guide their learners well as they tried to reach the apex of success. The potential of watching cartoon movies as a tool in developing the language capabilities of the children is desired.

3.2 Implications for Further Research

This study is only limited to the parents of Elementary pupils in one of the private institutions in the Municipality of Arakan, Cotabato, Philippines. Hence, it implies that the same study will be conducted among the children who study in the government institution more specifically in the institution's laboratory school where majority of the learners do not have the access with the technology at home.

A comparative analysis can be done in both groups and try to see the disparity of learnings. Above all, this can also be done among the high school students. An Action Research will be conducted so that suggestions to improve the learning of the English language could be determined directly from the participants.

3.3 Concluding Remarks

Conducting this research is crucial in the development of our potentialities as researchers. We were able to listen the stories of parents as well as understand their experiences. As such, we too have learned a lot of lessons which we could use in our own classes and allow them to use the same. Through this, they could ensure that their learners would have the grasp of the bodies of knowledge that they try to imply.

It is also worth noting that teachers have to teach mimicry as a strategy in learning the English language. Undeniably, there are many learners especially in the elementary level have poor level of comprehension level because they are not exposed to the language. This can be attributed to their socioeconomic status as well as the support which they could get from their parents, teachers, and peers.

Nevertheless, teachers are findings ways which enabled their learners to have the command of the language. They have been focused on the needs of their learners in order to increase participation as well as the learning outcomes. Lastly, seeing the learners becoming eloquent in the English language is considered the biggest achievement.

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