

CARTOON AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION OF CHILDREN

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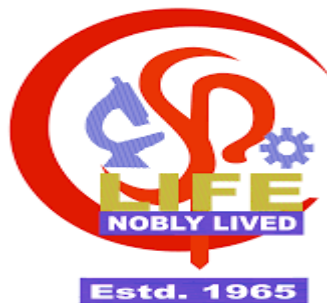
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Declaration

I do hereby declare that the project “Cartoons and its effect on the language acquisition of children” is the record of genuine research work done by me under the guidance of Ms Mary Sooria Department of English , St.Paul’s College, Kalamassery.

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Certificate

This is certify that the project work “Cartoon and its effects on the language acquisition of children.”Is the record of original work carried out by Jenitta.C.Saji under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Mary Sooria, Department of English , St.Paul’s College, Kalamassery.

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INTRODUCTION

The world is moving at a faster pace and people hardly find time for each other. Everyone is involved in a mad rush and often people tend to forget that the most important element is one's family. It's quite ironic that this important factor is often neglected though all the hard work is done for the betterment of the family. The worst affected by the busy schedule of the parents are the children. Children often find their own ways to vanish in to the magic land of fantasy.

The world we live in is a world of globalization and technology, it has bought us many comforts but these comforts are now overpowering the human race. The trend of working class parents are far and wide and this causes changes in the life of the next generation. Children without a guidance , parental support and love will find their own ways to be merry and they fall into their own idea of right and wrong. Few decades back, mothers use to spent time with their children and there was also the guidance of the grandparents and children use to learn all the moral values and lessons from them. There use to be physical outdoor activities which had much positive effect on children mentally and physically. They used to have a healthy environment to grow up. But now most of the children stay within the close doors.

Kids are like sponges, they absorb everything they see around them without knowing the right and wrong. They are very much sensitive whatever imprints in their mind at an young age will never change and it will create a bad impression in their physical and psychological abilities. The television is a glue stick which attracts children of all ages. Parents in order to engage their children, parents allow them to be entertained by this device without any proper guidance from the adults. The most entertaining for kids is the cartoon series and it is a nonstop telecasting show so that the kids get sunk into it and they spent hours and hours in front of the screen which might cause them different kind of health disorder .

Cartoons have a vital role in the development of a child's well being, both intellectual and communicational ability. Cartoons also exhibit many illogical and violent activities which can

change a child's thought towards life and society. Language is one of the affected areas. In India cartoons are telecasted in English, Hindi and in the regional languages across different states. A child who is learning to speak language will be influenced by the cartoons they watch.

The history of cartoons goes back to 1300 B C . Cartoons have been an important part of convivial culture and civilization. The earlier cartoons of Egyptian civilization were in authenticity another way of mass communication. The Greeks have portrayed cartoons in their poetry. Well the Japanese made their own form of cartoons, they were the first to make cartoon images into papers. They utilized them to tell stories of gone past.



The above figure, the first animation cartoon made in the world is the Fantasmagorie, this came out in the year 1908, is a silent cartoon and the creator of this cartoon was Emile Cohl. Later on the best cartoon of the Walt Disney came out in 1928 and it became the most success full cartoon ever made.



As the world progressed cartoons became a part of the life of every family mainly kids. The younger generation of every family is in love with this fantasy world in which their mind's creativities comes into life. Even the parents are also interested in cartoons as they give relaxations from their busy work. Currently the dependence on cartoons by parents has increased in an uncontrollable rate and this has caused many effects on the children of this generation. Earlier children use to be under the guidance of the elders, mothers or grandparents and it use to be joint families. In this new era, the families has shrunk to micro families and both the parents would be working and they get very less time to spend with their children. Cartoons are now the navigators of the upcoming generation and this has caused many advantages and disadvantages in the families and society.

To understand how far watching cartoons have affected the language development of children a survey has been conducted putting forward an argument, making use of language acquisition theory, if watching cartoons a good medium for the improvement of language?

Language and it's birth

Language is the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country. Language in a broader sense, is the method of communication that involves a particular human language. Scientific study of language is called linguistics .Debates have been taking place concerning the birth of language since Gorgias and Plato since ancient Greece. Thinkers such as Rousseau have argued that language originated from emotions while others like Kant have held that it originated from rational and logical thoughts. The intention of language formation in the world initially was for the communication in order to facilitate learning the use of tools and weapons, to plan hunting, to develop a “theory of mind” and the tool of thought , and to attract mate. The adaptations of the languages which we see took over many millions of years.

Estimate number of human language in the world is 5000 and 7000. Natural languages are spoken or signed, but any language can be encoded into secondary media using auditory visual, or tactile stimuli for example writing, whistling, singing or Braille. This is because human language is modality independent. All language rely on the process of semiotics to relate signs to particular meaning, oral manual and tactile language.

Human language has the properties of productivity and displacement and relies entirely on social conventions and learning, it's complex structure affords as much wider range of expression than any known system of animal communication. Language is thought to have originated when early hominines started gradually changing their primate communication system, acquiring the ability to form a theory of other minds and shared intentionality. This development is sometimes thought to have coincided with an increasing brain volume and many linguists see the structure of language as having evolved to serve specific communicative and social functions. Humans acquire language through social interaction in early childhood and children generally speak fluently by

approximately three years old. The use of language is deeply entrenched in human culture. Therefore in addition to its strictly communicative uses, language also has many social and cultural uses, such as signifying group identity, social, satisfactory, as well as social grooming and entertainment. Language evolves and diversify over time and the history of their evolution can be reconstructed by comparing modern languages to determine which trials their ancestral language must have had in order for the later development stages to occur. A language that descends from the same ancestral family is called language family.

The Indo-European family is the most widely spoken and includes languages like as diverse as English ,Russian ,and Hindi; The Sino-Tibetan family includes Mandarin and other Chinese languages, Bodo and Tibetan ; the Afro-Asiatic family include Arabic, Somali and Hebrew; the Bantu language include Swahili, and Zulu and hundreds of other languages spoken throughout Africa; the Malayo-Polynesian language include Indonesian, Malay, Tagalong, and hundreds of other languages spoken throughout the pacific. The languages from the Dravidian family, spoken mostly in southern India, include Tamil, Telugu and Kannada. Academic consensus holds that between 50% and 90% of languages spoken at the beginning of the 21 century will probably have become extinct by the year 2100. The first written language form is Sumerian and its age back up to at least 3500BC, the earliest proof of this written language was Kish tablet found in Iraq .

A lot of linguists believe that all human language arrived from a single language spoken in the East Africa around 50000 years ago. They found clue scattered throughout the vocabulary and grammars. There are various word order used in the language of the world. English use subject verb object order (SVO) other languages such as Latin they use subject object verb (SOV). In rare cases OVS, OSV,VOS,VSO are used. Well in the new paper published in the proceedings of National Academy of Sciences Merritt Ruhlen and Murray Gell – Mann co – director of Santa Fe institute program on Evolution of human language argue that original language used is SOV. This language would have spoken by the East African Population who seemingly invented full modern language and spread around the world.

The researchers came to a conclusion that after drawing a family tree which shows the historic relationship of all the languages of the world all the Romance languages like (Italian, Romanian, French, Spanish) derived from Latin which was spoken in Rome 2000 years ago. The Latin family itself is a branch of very large family tree whose other branches include Germanic, Slavic, Greek, Indic and others together all these family's make up the Indo European family, which fits like a puzzle piece with all other language families in the world. Out of 2000 modern language that fit in the family tree researchers found that more than half are SOB languages. The ones that are SVO,OVS,OSV all derive directly from SOV language, never the other way around. Furthermore languages which are VSO and VOS always derive from SVO languages. Thus all languages descended from an original SOB word order.

The first written language of the world is Sumerian. It is the language of ancient Sumer and a language isolate that was spoken in Mesopotamia modern day (Iraq) and in Syria. During the 3rdmillinneum BC an intimate cultural symbiosis .developed between the Sumerians and the semantic speaking Akkadian, which include wide spread of bilingualism. The influence of Sumerians and East Semitic Akkadian on each other is evident in all areas from lexical borrowing on a substantial scale to syntactic, morphological, phonological convergence, this had prompted



scholars to refer to Sumerian and Akkadian in the third millennium BC as a Sprachbunt , these are the images of the oldest written languages in the world.

Akkadian gradually replaced Sumerians as a spoken language around 2000 BC .but Sumerian continued to be used as a sacred ceremonial, literary and scientific language in the Akkadian speaking Mesopotamian states such as Assyria and Babylonian until the first century AD.



There after it was lightly forgotten until the 19th century Assyriologist began deciphering the cuneiform inscriptions and excavated tablets left by them. This is what language is made for and how it is made in the world for the first time to help the people convey messages and thoughts to each other and it is spread all over the world and in different slangs and forms. There are approximately 6500 language all around the world, however about 2000 of the languages have

fewer than 1000 people. Most popular language in the world is Mandarin (Chinese) and the second most widely spoken language is Spanish and third comes English which is supposed to be the highest in number. English language is mainly important in the countries which were British colonies once. All other country they use their language as the major language of the country.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Language acquisition is the process by which humans acquire the capacity to perceive and comprehend language, as well as to produce and use words and sentences to communicate. Language acquisition involves structures rules and representation. The capacity to successfully use language requires one to acquire a range of tools including phonology, morphology, syntax, semantic, and extensive vocabulary. Language can be vocalized as in speech, can e used manually such as signs. Human language capacity is represented in the brain. Even though human language capacity is finite one can say and understand an infinite number of sentences which is based on a syntactic principal called recursion. Evidence suggests that every individual has three recursive mechanisms that allow sentences to go indeterminately. These three mechanism are : relativization, complementation, and coordination .

Language acquisition usually refers to first language acquisition , which studies infant's acquisition of their native language , whether that be spoken language or signed language as a result a pelingual deafness , though it can also refers to bilingual first language acquisition which refers to an infant's simultaneously acquisition of two native language . This is distinguished from second language acquisition, which deals with the acquisition (in both children and adults) of additional languages . In addition to speech , reading and writing a language with an entirely different script compounds the complexities of true foreign language literacy. Language acquisition is one of the quintessential human traits.

Doctors and scientists say that children start learning languages from their mother's womb and it is a fact. So at pregnancy period mother is been told be near nice sounds that will help the baby in its growth. Doctors also ask the mothers to talk with the infant that it will help in the healthy development of the mothers and child bond. So language is the base for everything, it is a connection that help human beings communicate with each other from the time of birth, the acquiring of language by kids is called is language acquisition theory it states that children are able to learn language out of desire to communicate with their surroundings environment and world. Kids acquire language from all kind of social atmosphere they are in and they find it very much engrossing to absorb language, children are like sponges they absorb the good and bad in the surroundings without recognizing it. They always like to break free and speak their hearts open. If the language surrounding them is not right it will effect there language acquisition.

Well the first place of language acquisition takes place at the womb of the mother. It is said that the child recognize the mother's voice as an infant in the mother's womb and when the mother speaks with the baby the voice and the language is acquired by the baby , babies recognize their mothers voice from the last ten weeks of pregnancy. Then at birth they can distinguish between the sounds of their native language and a foreign language, so it is that the mother is the baby's first language teacher.

Language acquisition takes place in the house in between the family members when a child grows up he /she observes the people around them and develops the native language , if the family is not aware of the child growing up between them and use poor language before them it will affect them distressingly . The family members should always use proper language in front of children. Children minds are like clear slates once it is written it is written and it will be extremely difficult to move it out of their vocabulary , the family members should take steps to encourage their kids to speak in the right form, their mistakes should be rectified and doubts should be cleared.

The third place of language acquisition is that between the siblings and peer groups when the children starts going to school and make new friend around , who are individuals from different

homes and community , each others language and style will influence the children and it will bring drastic changes in the language formation ,children will grasp new language from interesting dialects and merge to form a new language , it can change to good or bad according to the peer group in which the child blend into. In the house the language of the elder sibling will also influence the child's language. As the child grows his language will be a blend of his experience and peer group, all this will influence the child either good or bad ways. Curse words are mostly mastered by these groups.

Language acquisition happens from the school classes when the teachers start to teach new languages, when she introduces new words and dialect, it influences the children. When the teacher begins new segment of different language it will be imprinted in children's mind by narrating stories and poetry which will easily strike the children and it will become easy for them to develop the usage of the word into their vocabulary. A language study completes when a child learns to read, write and speak a language. In school all their three skills are developed with the help of a guide .When a student learns a new language it will be difficult for them to recognize different accents to catch up on and it will make a mess. The students always try to learn a new language with the help of the mother tongue of the child, it is always that when they are taught the foreign language they translate that term into their native language to memorize the word. Teacher's language also dominates the language of the pupils, well language acquisition is not complete with the mistake and confusion through which the children go through when the teachers teach new languages .

Children acquire language from the social surrounding. It will include social gatherings, public spaces; function etc and they soak up language from the surroundings. It is difficult for a guardian to take control of language which the kids grasp from the surroundings. They continuously try to improve their language, and it doesn't matter to them if it is a right term to use or not. “ The limit of my language means the limit of my world”(By Wittgenstein , page no 1, 2nd paragraph) Language is also learned by children from story books and children magazines. To an extend all this will work for language studies. As it is the time of globalization and technology ,and

in developing country like India, people are living in text heavy world social media is a other way through which language acquisition takes place with children, as children of nowadays know there world and grow with all the knowledge about it .

Some early observations – based ideas about language acquisition were proposed by Plato, who felt that word-meaning mapping is some from was innate. Additionally Sanskrit grammarians debated for over twelve centuries whether humans ability to recognize the meaning of words was God given or passed down by previous generations and learned from already established conventions a child learning the word for cow by listening to trusted speakers talking about cows.

Philosophers in ancient society were interested in how humans acquired the ability to understand the language and produce well before empirical methods for testing those theories were developed but for the most part they seemed to regard language acquisition as q subset of man's ability to acquire knowledge and learn concepts

Empiricists like Thomas Hobbs and John Lock argue that the knowledge emerges ultimately from abstract sense impressions. These argument lean towards “nature” side of argument that language is acquired through sensory experience which led to Rudolf Carnap's Aufbau, an attempt to learn all knowledge from sense datum using the notion of “remembrance as similar” to bind them into clusters , which would eventually map into language . Proponent of behaviorism argue that language may be learned through a form of tolerant conditioning in BF Skinner's verbal behavior (1957) he suggested that the successful use is sign , such as a word of lexical unit , given a certain stimulus , reinforces its “momentary” or contextual probability. Some empiricist theories of language acquisition include the statistical learning theory .Charl's F Hockett of language acquisition, relation framed theory, functional linguistics, social interaction theory , and usage based language acquisition .

CARTOONS AND SURVEY REPORTS

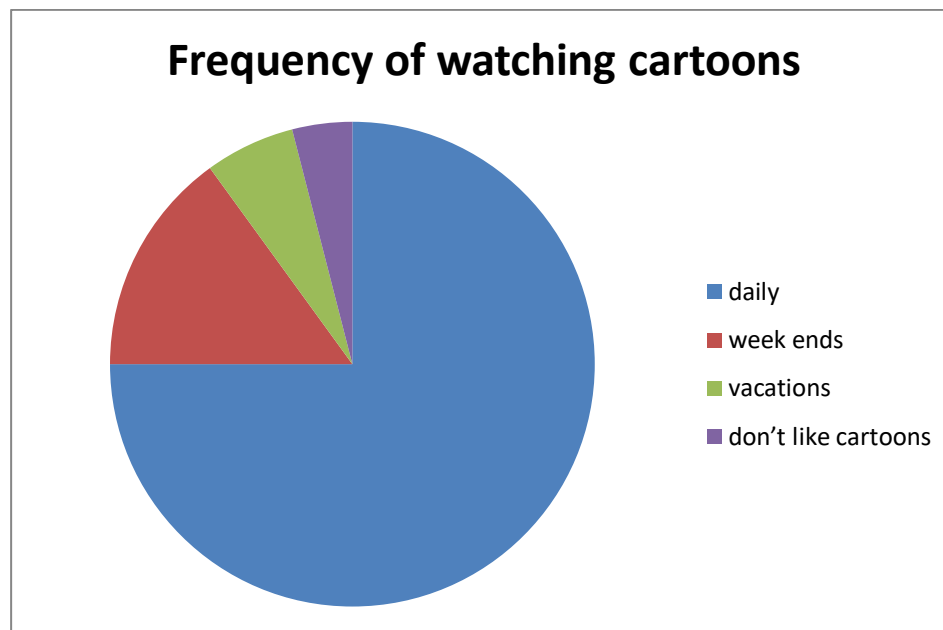
All children loves cartoon and the depth at which it has influenced children is always a question. As human beings they are not given the right care and protection and love so they will

have to find their own love and care and they are glued to the television magnetic wave. Cartoon influence the language acquisition of children. It is not that surprising that kids in this generation can talk more easily and catch up with words easily, with all the accents and the tongue slips, which will be highly influenced by the cartoons. Parents should be very much aware of what the child is listening and watching. All this will influence the mental development of the child. Previous research works partially proves that it is not a changed idea of thought, it is the ultimate fact and way through which children learn new languages.

The research work conducted a survey among students in between the age group of 10 - 11 to know more about how much is the influence of cartoons among them. Almost every student love cartoons and there is only 5% who doesn't like cartoons as they say that it is a mess and is a waste of time. Cartoons are appreciated worldwide appreciate and it entertains both the young and elder generations of a family. There are certain combination of characters which justifies the themes of the cartoon and impress all generation. As per the survey records it is a positive idea to be embraced with a speck of thought to be done about the cartoons.

When we speak about the kind of cartoons children watch, it also influence children and their language . There are different kind of cartoon genre such as Comic unrealistic cartoons, Chase cartoons , mute cartoons with small messages , pop cartoons , super hero cartoons detective cartoons and so on. All cartoons are suppose to have a content something which will enrich the children as well as their language ability evenly and it may help them in their intellectual ability. Children prefer cartoon according to which how much they can relate to it the content. There are certain cartoons which are preferred by boys and girls. There are cartoons which are preferred by both boys and girls such cartoons which are worldwide popular among elder generation as well. Cartoons are not easy stuff to create it need a content which will grasp the attention of the children. The cartoons have should have a proper telecasting time too according to the survey records. Children watch on daily basis, they will completely ignore a cartoon which will not be much worth spending time on they are the precious group of critics .When a child acquire new languages from cartoons it is obvious to have a interconnection with his or hers favorite cartoon character . The

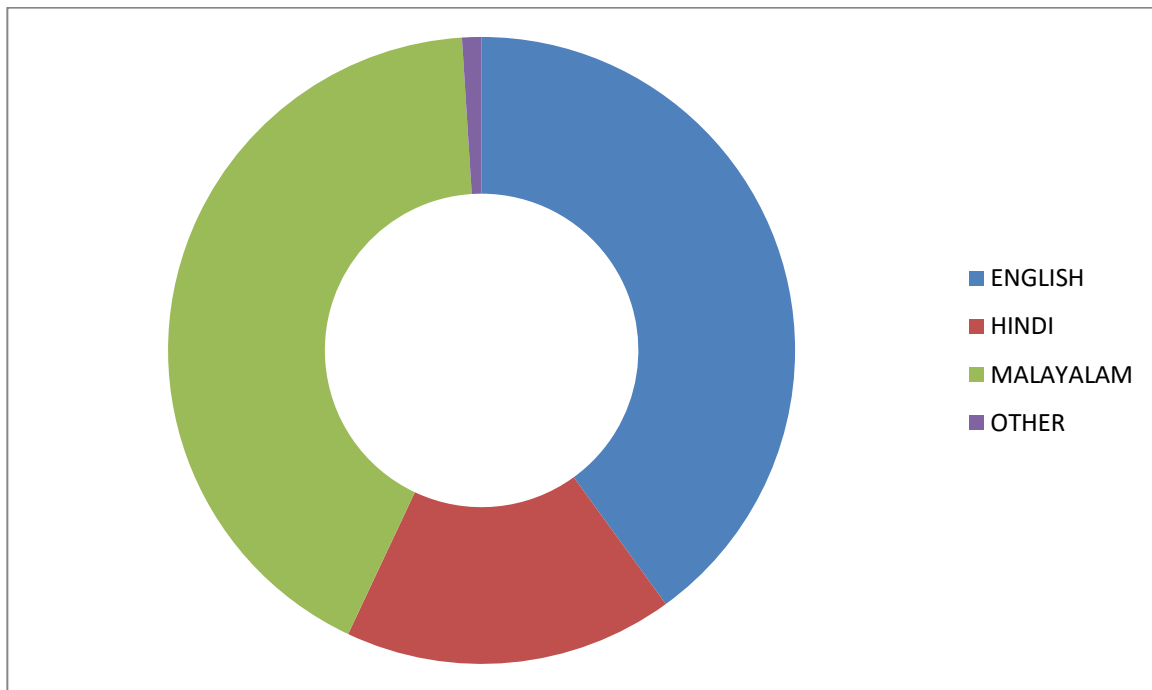
children are not to be blamed , when asked about the language acquisition which takes up from the cartoons children say that it is cool to speak in the way as the characters speak



It is very much visible that how much will cartoon influence the children and to what extend it is. 75% of children like watching cartoon regularly, only 15% of children prefer watching cartoon week end (and that is a controlled manner brought to them by the parents). Some of the children are only allowed to watch cartoons in vacations (This treatment is taken by the extra academic ambitious parents). There are 4% of children who are not interested in any forms of cartoons. Children's like comes in different ways children like different cartoon shows due to different facts according to cartoon quality, language they are comfortable in, time duration of the cartoon telecasted, message the cartoon gives out and so on . A talk with parents clears it out that they see cartoon as a minor entertainer show for kids. Most of the parents are not much aware about the cartoon their kids watch.

Some of them believe that cartoons are the cause of the mischief that they do around house , some believes that cartoons are a waste of time and will not help the children in any way , very few parents are clear about the advantages and disadvantages of cartoon. While interacting with a few teachers it was known that even they prefer children to watch cartoons as they believe that it will help in the development of children's language as far as it does not affect the academics of children

. Well at young age children grasp's language easily and it is an opportunity for them to learn different languages as well but most of them take up there comfort zones and focus on single language but it is better than getting more comfortable with once own mother tongue which will not help developing any other language . With the result of survey the language graph which the children are most audience for is in

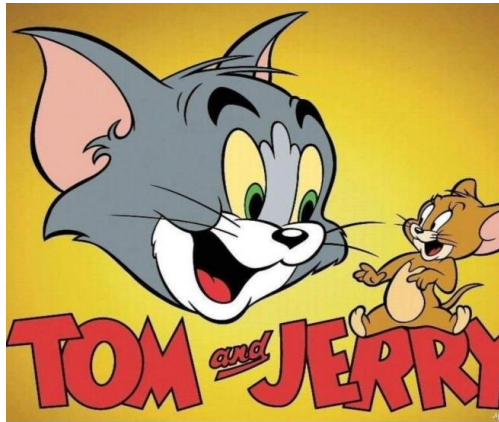


So it is the percentage of language that children prefer to watch cartoon in . 42% of children loves to watch cartoons in the their native language (Malayalam) , 40% of them like to watch it in English , 17% of them like to watch it in Hindi (national language), only 1% of kids try to watch cartoons in different language . It is clearly seen that only less than half of the percentage of the children are interested in watching cartoons in different language and most of the others take up a comfort of getting entertained with their native language.

According to children cartoons are just entertainers and it is just for relaxation from their studies.

But unknowingly cartoons helps students in learning language but when they are stuck to their comfort they lose the chance to learn a new language. Scientist has proven that children can easily pick up new languages smoothly .Cartoon also helps children to improve their imagination and creativity and it will improve moral values in children as well. There are few popular cartoons the

children love to watch which include which are enjoyed people of all age groups .





Most of these cartoons are commercial ones and it does create great influence in the life of children , certain cartoons create negative impacts on kids ,some other cartoons can create vice versa on kids. There are cartoons which will help to develop the memory and IQ skills of children also which will help in the language efficiency of the children. Cartoons that give kids ideas about alphabets and pronunciation.



Different children have different intelligence quotient (IQ), some will have low IQ, some will have average IQ, and above average IQ as well by the census it is clear that children love to learn new thing from cartoon , while interacting with some teachers and parents they said that they do find negative and positive changes in the language of children, they said that they found different terms in their conversations. They state that this might be due to the impact of cartoons. They also affirm that cartoons have bad impact on their verbal communication as well. There are some cartoon channels which leads children to get involved in expletive terms .Children easily catch up negatives than positives it may take long time for them to learn something good but it will only take them fraction of seconds to learn something bad. According to the data we got with the census both parents and teachers are worried that whether cartoons are good or bad for kids .

Students at this age does not take language serious as it is ,there are very few who take up the opportunity to learn new languages , words and synonyms into their dictionary ,while interacting with students they said that few of got effected with the cartoons. Sometimes they get carried away by the cartoon and get disturbed in studies as well, most of them does not realize that they are getting carried away with these cartoons and is the reason for their academic problems. Parents always try to keep a healthy proportion of studies and cartoons but it fails or succeeds in very light chances. While interacting with students they said how they loved to watch cartoons and how much they use to get carried away by characters they loved and they also said that they have tried to emulate different characters and few of them got into dangerous situations like harming their siblings. So watching cartoons not only effect children in languages but also their lifestyle and mannerism. Almost all the kids who loved to watch cartoons always did try to mimic their heroes and it may get into dangerous situations and they had to be given advice from doctors , this has happened in both positive and negative way. This is a topic that is been barely been talked about. Hence it's been understood that too much use of TV, phone or computer might lead to many health disorders such as eye sight problems , due to cartoon view vision will be affected in the interactions it is clear that only few of the kids has got health issues due to exes of cartoon watching, but most

of them used to get a head ache after watching cartoons . These are matters of concern for the teachers and parents as well.

The survey gave away appropriate conclusion for the argument that cartoons are good for language development in kids there are 50:50 chance that a child will develop language with the help of cartoon. With the help of survey and from the parents and teachers opinion children can learn language but only in a limited form. Cartoons are a good platform for children to practice their learned language which they have learnt

CONCLUSION

All the theories, census and brain chewing has come in a conclusion as to how well does the cartoons can improve the quality of a child's language and education. The theory states

that language acquisition starts from a very young age and while a language is acquired by a child it is imperative to practice reading, writing, and listening in order to improve one's language ability. This is what is happening in schools for years, when it comes to a child's education from cartoons it stays always as a question mark. Learning languages need concentration and time to give maximum attention to each details, this should be done consciously with full attention. Cartoon helps to reduce this time frame of studying by playing a role of unconsciously framing our mind and help to study languages effortlessly. They give children more confidence of trying to say new terms. Cartoons help in the easy learning of language. But the question is how many of them take the opportunity to learn a new language. While interacting with students it was understood how much language helped them in taking away the fear of being presentable in front of someone who is speaking that language. Children loves to interact with each other and if language becomes a barrier for them in a very young age it might take away their confidence to be presentable in front of someone Cartoon helps them in picking up new languages easily in the form of communication and give them the confidence and fluidity in the language. Cartoons help children in the communication section of the language which is the most important and visible medium other than reading or writing. While watching cartoons the study take place in the unconscious mind of the child. When they are watching cartoon with full concentration the terms get embedded in their mind naturally and they will be used by the student at the need of the time. And thi would create a great impact in their language communication. In interacting with them they gave a feedback as they get great help in improving the language. It is scientifically proven that listening is the best way to get the basic and best way to start learning a language. Children always try to work up on their language skill and cartoons keep a healthy track for them. According to teachers cartoons are the best way to start educating the languages in the primary classes and when it comes to higher classes it should not take away much time from the children and the cartoon they watch should be some way educational for them.

Teachers prefer cartoons which have the standard of keeping both the education and entertainment, but there are only fewer teachers who support or think that cartoons will help the children. The

argument they keep saying is that there are only few students who would keep a track of language and will try to study and rest of all students will take it only as a leisure time and it will affect their studies badly. So teachers are giving it a (50 – 50) chance of language learning taking place, but children are so stubborn in their words that they are getting a very good exposure to their language development through cartoons. Let us keep it that way and when it comes to whether parents agree or disagree about the fact of children watching cartoon it's been concluded that if nothing is effecting their studies in any way and supporting them then in their language it is ok for them about cartoons but they are definitely going to keep a balance in both their study time and watching cartoons. While throughout all the census questions, all the students has answered as honestly as possible, they clearly said that how cartoons affect them in both positive and negative way. In the census it could clearly define that how much the children are aware about their cartoon usage and how much they are getting help from the cartoons in their language development. There is an atmosphere of satisfaction and dissatisfaction for different groups of people and a child finds it that cartoons are not harmful if they are using it with right thoughts There are many ways to improve language and watching cartoon cannot be completely depended on it. With the help of the survey taken it gives out the result that the language can be only studied with concentration and working to its fluency. And the conclusion of the language learning through cartoon is can only be small helping in the language improvement of a child. And in other words cartoons does very little in the language development of a child. Rather than helping children it will create many troubles for children psychologically and physically in many ways.

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