CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter will present the summary of the use of cartoons in the learning of the English language based on the findings presented in the previous chapter. This is followed by the limitations of using cartoons, the implications of this study and future research recommendations.

5.1 The Use of Cartoons in the Learning of the English Language

Numerous literatures such as Melor (1999), Doring (2002), and Chiasson (2002), which are presented in the earlier chapters, have revealed that cartoons are suitable to be used in the teaching and learning of the English language. Cartoons promote the learning of the English language through their various revealing features. Among the features, the humour in cartoons is seen as the key feature in the process of learning the English language using cartoons.

The key of learning lies on one's interest and mindset. Cartoons with their jokes and humour play an important role in developing the students' interest in the learning of the English language. The humour and jokes in cartoons create a lively learning environment and enjoyable learning atmosphere which are very important in cultivating and arousing students' interest towards the lesson. They managed to attract and keep the students' attention to stay focus throughout the lesson. Hence,

cartoons also make learning English a distinct process rather than the mundane learning routine. Therefore, the humour and jokes in cartoons make learning English more enjoyable and interesting and not something that is dull as commonly perceived by most students. They also reduce the anxiety and stress among the students as the situation during the learning process is more relaxed and comfortable and students are ever ready to learn. Students will feel fresh and be more attentive in the learning process. Learning English using cartoons is also seen as something easy and simple in the eyes of the students as they can be learnt from various sources and are not confined to only textbooks. This factor would influence the changing of attitude and mindset among the students towards English and the learning of it. Thus, cartoons could motivate students to learn and improve their proficiency. Therefore, cartoons could also contribute to the students' success in the learning of the English language.

The use of cartoons in the learning and teaching of English also benefits the teachers as cartoons could influence and facilitate the teaching process. They are easily available and can be found in abundance in local newspapers and magazines which make them ideal visual and teaching aids. So, with little expenses teachers could make a world of difference in making learning more fun, interesting, enjoyable and also meaningful. Cartoons are able to provoke the merriment in classroom which also helps teachers to have an enjoyable teaching process which in turn encourage positive attitude and determination for them to be better teachers. Teachers who are determined and motivated will continuously improve on their

teaching which in turn contributes to the effective teaching of the English language. As cartoons are able to elicit immediate responses from the students, the teachers find it rewarding as students' active participation in classroom activities could motivate them too. Since teachers also play a major influence in the learning process of their students, teachers who are motivated will in turn motivate their students to excel in their learning.

It is apparent that cartoons and their contents encourage possible interpretations as they appear in a wide variety of contexts. With this important feature to offer, cartoons encourage an interactive learning approach which encourages students to participate actively in the learning process, be responsible of their own learning and also take risk to learn. During this process students are actually refining and widening their knowledge as well as reflecting on their ability in the language and at the same time discovering their strengths and weaknesses that could be improved on.

Students are engaged in a deep thinking process which encourages and requires them to be analytical and critical in analysing the cartoons in order to achieve visual recognition and expressions of the cartoons. Students need to be creative and imaginative in their thinking to come up with their point of views or expanding their ideas which are to be expressed in the form of speaking or written English. Hence, these are what make learning English using cartoons as challenging tasks to students as they would have to use their ability in the language to the fullest.

They need to express their side of interpretations of the cartoons given. They would highly depend on themselves and their own abilities in completing the given task.

The language produced through this learning process is authentic which reflects the students' actual ability in the language. This could provide teachers with information in order to find focus in their teaching and in selecting suitable teaching materials that would cater to the learning needs of the students. This also enables them to determine the type of learners they have and therefore influence them in choosing as well as improving their teaching style to meet the needs of the learning process. Hence, enhance the teaching and learning of the English language.

In the process of learning writing, cartoons and their visual contents encourage expansion of ideas as the illustrations enable students to generate and stimulate ideas as well as provide details on the characters, emotions, environment or even feelings. The visuals of cartoons act as reference points in which students could refer to when seeking for further information to elaborate on. Since cartoons often present local issues which are familiar to the students, students could also relate them in their writing. Furthermore, cartoons guide students to organise their ideas in their writing and keep students focus on the topic brought forward by the cartoons.

The use of cartoons in teaching and learning English encourages students to be more knowledgeable as students would embark on exploring new issues and

knowledge. They would associate their real life experiences, cultural, social and background knowledge in various issues, logical reasoning, personal opinions and ideas in presenting their views based on the cartoons given. Cartoons also encourage students to expand the ideas that are generated by the cartoons. Therefore, the use of cartoons in learning the English language leaves students with a remarkable learning experience, motivates them to learn more, improves their proficiency and fluency in the language as well as equips themselves with a lot of knowledge and be competent in the language.

The linguistic elements in cartoons could help students to improve their English. The captions or dialogues in cartoons help to enhance the communication of meanings and convey messages effectively to the readers. Therefore, they also encourage better interpretation of the cartoons. Furthermore, the linguistic elements in cartoons could also contribute to the development of vocabularies. Students could learn new words from them and also learn the correct use of the words. Since the language used in cartoons is often simple and reflects the real life language of people from different level in societies, students could learn the correct use of language in context.

Apart from that, visuals are obviously visually captivating, therefore, cartoons could be effective visual and teaching aids as visuals make learning easier. Words are remembered better using visuals. Visuals or cartoons which complement the linguistic elements are better because not only that they help in understanding

the cartoons but also help to enhance the remembrance of the language functions and their usage more effectively. This results in them being easier to remember and reproduce whenever required.

The use of cartoons in learning English could also encourage peer learning. Cartoons as mentioned earlier encourage possible interpretations which could result in interactive approach in the learning of English. Students are engaged in healthy discussions based on the topics brought forward by the cartoons given. Students could communicate their opinions based on the cartoons and they could also share and complement each other's opinion in the classroom. Students could also argue on any disagreement occurred on the views presented by their friends. They have the opportunities to criticise the opinion of others as well as to correct each other's mistake during the discussion. These learning processes encourage active use of language and participation on the part of the students making learning language interesting and meaningful processes. This is because students are greatly involved in them and feel less stressful. Therefore, the use of cartoons helps students to improve their proficiency and fluency in the language.

5.2   Limitation of the Use of Cartoons in the Learning of the English Language

It is undeniable that the use of cartoons in the learning of the English Language provides an alternative teaching material making learning more enjoyable and interesting. It also contributes to effective teaching and learning of

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the language. However, there are also limitations in the use of cartoons in the learning of English. Cartoons which are selected to be used in the teaching and learning of any language in general and English in particular must be carefully selected for them to be effective teaching materials. They must be able to meet the students' level of proficiency and language ability so that the students are able to handle them linguistically. These criteria are important in order for the students to understand them and therefore enable them to relate to the teaching points being highlighted by the teachers. The inability to understand cartoons and to literally see their relation to the teaching points being addressed could lead to the failure of understanding the lesson and also ineffective use of cartoons in teaching and learning. It is quite a challenging task to find cartoons which are suitable for the purpose of education, which contain suitable use of language and carry the appropriate message with familiar context in reality.

The cartoons which are selected to be used in the teaching and learning of English need to possess visual clarity for students to be able to perceive and recognize their contents so as to interpret them. Visually, cartoons must be clear in print, colours and illustrations for instance, to be able to communicate meaning or convey their messages effectively to enable the understanding of the cartoons. Cartoons which are not clear will not make it in the lessons as they are difficult to interpret and understand.

Besides being clear in illustrations, cartoons which are selected to be used in classroom instructions must be interesting enough and dramatic in order to be able to elicit responses and stimulate ideas for students to work on the task given to them. This is important because without these features, the students will not be able to produce satisfying outcome of the task given to them. This is because cartoons which are flat with not much of actions or interesting features in communicating meaning or conveying the messages will not be able to do so effectively. Therefore, they are difficult to be perceived and interpreted by the students and hinder the process of understanding the visuals and the learning process at large. This happened during the second session of the data collection where the cartoon which shows the illustration on flood incident is found to be quite dull thus failed to stimulate much idea from them. The students' writings are relatively short. There was not much elaboration on the characters of the cartoons or any extraordinary ideas included in most of the students' writings. However, there are attempts being made in elaborating the incident and the environment of the cartoons as flood incident is a familiar issue to the students. On the other hand, the students who were given the linear form of instruction, managed to write more on the topic as they make use of their real life experience and knowledge of the flood incident in their writing. They were able to include details of the incidents such as the damage done by flood to their village and the process of rescuing the flood victims by the authorities.

Another important feature is making sure that the instruction for the task given to the students are clear enough for the students to understand when using cartoons in classroom activities. This is to ensure that the students do what they are supposed to do and not otherwise. It is often difficult to give clear and brief instructions. Most of the times there is a need for teachers to verbally explain what needs to be done by the students. It is important for teachers not to give the students too much information which could affect the originality and authenticity of their work. The difficulty lies on giving the amount of the information needed by the students which happen most of the time during the data collection session. It is crucial that the instruction given can guide the students to produce the expected outcome.

In preparing the linear form of instruction, the instruction has to be made similar to those of the cartoons for the purpose of comparing the outcome with the ones produce by students with the cartoons. Therefore, the linear instructions are found to be quite lengthy and therefore, in some way, influence the writings produced by the students who were given this form of instruction. It is quite a task to come up with instructions which are very similar to the one presented by the cartoons. Therefore, the comparison of the students' writings does not involve what the content is all about but major focus is on the way of how these students write their ideas or the strategies which they employ in producing their writings based on the respective instructions given to them.

5.3   Implications of the Study

This study has shown that cartoons are suitable to be used in the teaching and learning of the English language although they are commonly seen as inappropriate or educationally unsound material. The use of cartoons in the learning of the English language has several implications in the learning and teaching of the English language.

Cartoons have helped to break through the boredom in classroom environment resulted in a more enjoyable and interesting learning process experience by the students. They have the ability to motivate students to keep their attention focus and encourage students to improve themselves in the English language. Cartoons are also able to motivate teachers to improve on their teaching to suit the students' learning needs.

Teachers play an important role in selecting and deciding on the appropriate cartoons to be used as teaching materials to ensure their effectiveness in the teaching and learning of the English language. They are often needed to employ adopt and adapt approach in this process. Teachers need to be creative. The use of cartoons in their teaching has to be suitable and interesting to the students.

Based on this study, students are made clear about the learning of English where it does not confine to merely textbooks. English could also be learnt from

various sources and materials which are interesting and appealing such as from cartoons. Although it may seem to be impossible or difficult at first, provided that the students are willing to put some effort in it, they will surely learn something from the materials.

Teachers must be observant during the teaching so that they will notice the students' effort in improving their language ability and the strategies they employ in learning the English language. Students do engage themselves in various strategies in the process of learning despite their low ability in the language.

5.4   Recommendations for Future Research

Cartoons have shown some great potential as effective teaching aids in the learning of the English language. So, based on this research and its findings, further and related researches could be carried out to further exploit the role of cartoons in the teaching and learning of English. A similar study could be carried out to look into the effect of using cartoons in the teaching of other language skills such as the speaking skill and to see the extent of which cartoons could influence the learning of the English language. The features of cartoons which make them appropriate teaching materials could also be further investigated in the effort to encourage the use of cartoons in the learning of English and also to convince teachers that cartoons which are carefully selected could be healthy teaching resources.

Another research could be carried out to investigate the relationship between visual perception in general or the visual perception of cartoons and the learning of the English language. The role of visual perception and cartoons and also their influence in the learning and improving English could also be looked into. In the issue of visual perception, cartoons can be used as a resource to investigate the role of visual perception and the process of critical thinking as to whether the perception of visuals encourage critical thinking in the process of learning the English language.

As cartoons are well known for being non-suitable or educationally unsound, the language use in cartoons can also be analysed in order to reveal the features of these languages which affect the learning of the English language so that they could be made worthy for the purpose of learning. The effects of language in cartoons to the development of the English language could also be looked into to determine whether they are really detrimental to the development of English in students.

Other than using cartoons in print, animated cartoons could also be used in investigating the roles of cartoons in language learning. Since cartoons are very much related to young children, therefore, a study could be carried out to investigate the relationship of cartoons and early language development in children to find out the factors that influence the learning of the English language in children in the acquisition of second language.

5.5   Conclusion

Cartoons are very useful visual and teaching aids. Cartoons promote language learning as they are suitable to be used in the teaching and learning of the English language. Despite the negative connotation they carry, a little touch of creativity could make cartoons more than suitable and effective to facilitate the teaching and learning of English.

This study has provided some insights into the use of cartoons in the learning of English. The findings of this study are hoped to shed some lights on the role of visuals such as cartoons in language learning and therefore encourage more teachers to have faith on creative materials like cartoons to be used in classrooms in order to facilitate the teaching and learning process.