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# The effect of interactive videos on Iranian EFL learners' lexical knowledge in the context of secondary schools

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**ABSTRACT**
Using English-subtitled movies may play an important role in learning new vocabulary items based on the results of other similar studies. However, there are not many studies on the impact of watching English movies without captions. Also, the impact of watching cartoons on young learners and their attitudes towards this type of learning is a neglected field of study. To fill in this gap, this study investigated the effects of watching English cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning and Iranian young learners' attitudes towards watching English cartoons for EFL learning. The current study examined the effects of watching a series of cartoons (Caillou) on incidental vocabulary learning using a quasi-experimental design. A total of 21 young students from two intact classes of a private school located in Tehran, who were learning English as a foreign language (EFL), participated in the study. Immediately after 10 sessions of conducting the treatment for both the experimental and control groups, they were given a 25-item multiple choice test. Two weeks after the treatment, they were given another 25-item multiple choice test with 5 items in common with the immediate posttest. The participants were assigned to one of the two groups: Group A (10 sessions of watching Caillou series cartoons) and Group B (10 sessions of reading comprehension tasks). T-test analyses were conducted to examine development between and within each group. Results revealed that the experimental group demonstrated significant gains based on the multiple choice test. In addition, Group A gained better results in the delayed posttest. After conducting the task, an attitude questionnaire was given to the participants of the experimental group.

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## Introduction

New vocabulary items learned by students tend to be forgotten as they are learned through the wrong methods. One significant challenge is that course books and movies designed for learners are not authentic sources for them. When movies are used effectively, this authentic material helps bring the real world into the classroom and significantly enliven EFL classes (Kelly, Kelley, Offner & Vorland, 2002). Furthermore, the importance of using technology and multimedia is an undeniable fact. According to the rapid development of technology from the 1980s, these days computers are one of the key factors of second language learning pedagogy. Educators recognize that utilizing computer technology and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) programs can be convenient to create both independent and collaborative learning environments and provide students with language experiences as they move through the various stages of second language acquisition (Kung, 2002).

Research has shown that L2 words can be learned incidentally through watching audio-visual materials. Although there are a large number of studies that have investigated incidental vocabulary learning through reading a single text or by watching subtitled movies, there is a lack of research on incidental vocabulary learning through viewing cartoons for young learners, especially in Iran. The present study is trying to fill this gap and examines Iranian students' attitudes towards watching cartoons for learning new words.

This study mainly focused on the impact of watching cartoons on Iranian young learners' incidental vocabulary learning. One of the most considerable benefits of watching movies is that it provides learners with large amounts of authentic and spoken L2 input (Webb, 2015). There is evidence that L2 vocabulary might be learned incidentally through watching short educational video clips (e.g., Montero Perez, Peters, Clarebout, & Desmet, 2014; Neuman & Koskinen, 1992). Based on the age of the learners, the attempt is to choose attractive cartoons, with suitable and engaging content for the young learners. Another important factor is learners' attitudes towards watching cartoons for learning vocabulary items. Thus, this study intends to investigate the attitudes of the learners after the treatment.

## Literature review

### The use of technology in EFL teaching

Through a variety of communicative and interactive activities, the effective use of technology can help foreign language learners strengthen their linguistic skills and learning attitude, as well as build their self-instruction strategies and self-confidence (Lai & Kritsonis, 2006). Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are very important in the field of education because they can change the environment of the classroom and allow the subject matter to become more accessible to the learner (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). For this reason, EFL teachers must decide how - and how not - to use technology in the classroom (Morgan, 2008). In this regard, integrating technology into classroom instruction involves more than just teaching computer skills, it demands that educators look for means of innovation in order to encourage students' engagement and build up their learning; therefore, one way to accomplish this important aim is the use of instructional technology in an effective way.



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Several theoretical and empirical studies have been carried out to confirm that the use of ICTs in the teaching and learning process is crucial. Research has demonstrated that the use of technology motivates students to learn the content more effectively (Mayora, 2006). Ilter (2009, p. 136) states that "technology might be one of the factors that affect students' attitude positively in the teaching-learning process". Furthermore, according to O'Dwyer, Russell, Bebell, and Tucker-Seeley (2005), technology allows students to develop critical thinking skills, high levels of understanding, and problem-solving.

Different technological tools are applied to help EFL students improve their learning skills. The tools that are worth mentioning comprise English language learning websites, CALL programs, presentation software, electronic dictionaries, chatting and email messaging programs, CD players, and learning video clips (Nomass, 2013).

**Incidental vocabulary learning**

Vocabulary is the dominant constituent in learning a second language (Barcroft, 2004; Hunt & Beglar, 2005; Kim, 2008). DiCarlo (2006) recommended that films could help in the process of learning a language because they offer a conversation that suggests contextualized vocabulary (Seferoglu, 2008).

Second language learning largely depends on vocabulary, as the building blocks from which learners start their second language (L2) acquisition. Hence, its significance lies inherently deep within the first stages of the acquisition of any language. During the past decades, L2 vocabulary learning has become of great research interest. A great deal of research has advocated that vocabulary is a key aspect of second language acquisition, especially when it comes to incidental learning. It seems that incidental vocabulary learning largely depends on the context surrounding each word and the amount of attention that the learner places on both meaning and form. However, the type of context seems to affect the correct interpretation of lexical meaning, since it may lead learners to correctly or incorrectly infer the meaning of words (Webb, 2008).

Incidental vocabulary learning is one of the key aspects of language acquisition. This concept, which is also referred to as passive learning (Shmidth, 1990) or implicit learning (Gu, 2003), is the process of acquiring vocabulary without placing the focus on specific words to be learned (Paribakht & Wesche, 1999).

In recent years, several studies have investigated the effects of presenting information using multiple modalities, such as text, audio, pictures, and dynamic videos, on L2 learning (Al-Seghayer, 2001; Duquette & Painchaud, 1996; Mousavi, Low, & Sweller, 1995). In Neuman and Koskinen's study (1992), the results showed an advantage in gain and retention of words learned from watching subtitled television. It was suggested, therefore, that written words associated with a visual text played an important role in adult non-native speakers' retention of vocabulary presented via television.

**Movies in Classrooms and Related Studies**

Class format will change according to the usual variables: the number of students, their relative skill and maturity, class duration, availability of screening facilities, etc. Ideally, small groups are best (6-8 students), and if one of the goals is discussion, these groups should talk with each other as soon as possible after the film is shown. As most classes are large and resources



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limited, some changes in teaching forms are necessary.

Separation is good as it allows a greater sense of intimacy within the group. The membership of different groups should remain static, also to encourage intimacy and trust, thereby lessening the embarrassment of students who are shy about speaking in front of others. For lower-level (freshman) courses it's better to show a film and then use it as the basis for class activities for the next three to four weeks. This usually involves a combination of assignments including readings, compositions, research, and group debates.

In a study related to the effects of subtitling tasks on vocabulary learning and their effective uses Lertola (2012) reported on a quasi-experimental study carried out at the National University of Ireland to investigate the development of subtitling in the foreign-language class. The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods and focused on the effects of the subtitling task on incidental vocabulary acquisition. The sixteen students of Italian as a foreign language were assigned to either subtitling practice (Experimental Group) or oral comprehension tasks and writing tasks (Control Group). Both groups worked for a total of four hours (1 hour per week).

All participants in this study by Lertola (2012) took a pre-test to ensure the target words were unknown to the learners; immediate and delayed post-tests were administered after the experiment. The results are presented and discussed. The results of this study indicated that both conditions (i.e. subtitling and non-subtitling) result in a clear improvement in learners' incidental vocabulary acquisition from pre-test to immediate and delayed post-tests, which confirms the first hypothesis of the study. Regarding the second hypothesis, statistically significant results emerge only at the post-delayed test. Due to the limited number of participants in this study, it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions. Nevertheless, this research supports the positive results obtained in recent studies on the use of the subtitling practice as an effective pedagogical tool in the EFL class, and it greatly requires further research on the topic.

In another research, Alavinia and Chegini (2012) tried to find out the viable interrelationship between elementary Iranian academic individuals' gender and their performance in terms of vocabulary learning as a result of task-complexity-based incidental vocabulary instruction. The study was conducted with sixty Iranian academic learners, and the instruments used were Nelson Test, English Vocabulary in Use Elementary Level Test, and Basic Tactics for Listening. Regarding the findings of this study, while the effect of gender on learners' performance was quite significant for the experimental group participants no such significant difference was found to be at work regarding the relationship between the control group participants' gender and their performance on the vocabulary pretest and posttest. Task sequencing in terms of complexity and difficulty has always been regarded as a main determining factor contributing to the comprehensibility of the input provided for learners.

In another study by Dibaj (2011), he compared the vocabulary learning of monolingual learners of English as a second language with bilingual learners of English as a third language. The study is based on data from 52 monolingual Persian-speaking learners of English and 45 bilingual Azeri Persian-speaking learners of English. All the participants were

females studying English as a foreign language at two universities in Iran. The informants were exposed to two incidental and four intentional vocabulary learning exercises. They were then measured at four difficulty levels using the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (Paribakht & Wesche, 1997). Variables such as English language proficiency, intelligence, family educational background, gender, age, and type of university were controlled.

Dibaj (2011) also mentioned that third language learners outperformed their second language counterparts at all word difficulty levels. The findings are discussed in relation to bilinguals' higher levels of executive and inhibitory control. The results of the current and similar studies indicated that L3 learners outperform L2 learners in learning a new language.

In a study by Etemadi (2012), the impact of bimodal subtitling on content comprehension of English movies on undergraduate students was studied. In this study, forty-four senior undergraduate students studying at Shiraz Islamic Azad University were selected from two intact classes of the Tapes and Films Translation course. Two BBC documentary movies (Dangerous knowledge and Where's my robot?), one with English subtitles and the other without subtitles were selected based on the content and level of difficulty of the language. First, both classes watched the same movies, but class 1 first watched 'Dangerous knowledge' with English subtitling and then 'Where's my robot?' without subtitling. To counteract the order effect class 2 first watched 'where's my robot?' and then 'Dangerous knowledge'.

After viewing the movies, the participants answered the relevant multiple choice vocabulary and content comprehension questions. The data gathered were subjected to the statistical procedure of paired samples t-test. This research on watching English movies with bimodal subtitling has shown that films are not only a means of motivation to entertain students, but also they could assist learners to comprehend the language as spoken in various accents. That is, EFL learners in general are exposed to the authentic language uttered by people with different accents in various parts of the United States and the United Kingdom.

Therefore, it is hard for learners to hear every single word because they are used to Standard English. Furthermore, this is a useful practice to get acquainted with different accents of English around the world, and bimodal subtitling is a perfect choice to assist the comprehension of the movies.

However, Etemadi (2012) in his research suggested that bimodal subtitling had no effect on L2 vocabulary recognition, due to the fact that exposure to the film once had probably no effect on vocabulary learning. Since to learning vocabulary from subtitled movies students have to watch them with a high frequency of repetition and focus. It can be assumed that subtitled movies could have an effect on vocabulary recognition if learners watch the movie more than once. Viewing the movie twice or more may help students recognize vocabulary and they may learn new expressions and idioms.

In a study by Huang and Yang (2012), they reported the significance of incidental vocabulary learning as the main source of learner-centered vocabulary acquisition in authentic situations. They concluded that in the past decades, extensive reading has been the main focus on incidental learning research. Recent studies have



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examined how information technology media can assist learners in acquiring vocabulary incidentally. More specifically, vivid 3D simulation scenarios and players' interactions and communications may be applied to construct an incidental language learning environment.

As it was mentioned before, most studies of L2 vocabulary learning in context have used samples of adults or adolescents; there have been few studies of children, especially those beginning to learn a second language. By the way, a study on young children may show different results with similar treatments.

According to what was mentioned in the review of the related literature, technology, and English language education are very closely related (Singhal, 1997). The problem is that the research studies in the field of using technology (especially multimedia) for learning vocabulary in the educational context of Iran were not sufficient. This study was an attempt to relate these two important components to each other and seeks the answer to the following research questions:

1. **Does the use of English cartoons have a significant effect on Iranian EFL young learners' incidental vocabulary learning?**
2. **What are the attitudes of Iranian EFL young learners towards using cartoons to improve their vocabulary knowledge?**

## Method

### Participants

A total number of 25 female students from two intact classes participated in this study. However, since they were not aware of the real nature of the study and were not informed about an upcoming delayed posttest, on the day of the delayed posttest, 4 of them did not attend the delayed posttest session. Thus, the genuine number of the participants in the current study became 21 Iranian EFL language learners from a private school in Tehran. All of them were pre-intermediate students. Their age ranged from 13 to 15 and they all had at least two years of English learning experience. The students were divided into one experimental and one control group. 10 participants of the experimental group watched 8-10 minutes of cartoons in 10 sessions and took part in the pre-task and post-task lessons. 11 participants of the control group carried out the reading comprehension tasks in 10 sessions. Two teachers collaborated in this study in two different classes in order to conduct the tasks for the students. Before implementing the main study, a pilot study was run by 100 students from three intact classes with the same level of proficiency with the experimental and control group.

### Data collection and analysis

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, proper and interesting cartoons for the learners' age and level of proficiency based on the questionnaires which were given to the professional teachers were chosen. Reading texts for the control group also were adopted based on the target words of the cartoons and teachers' opinions. Before starting the study, one movie session was piloted on a group of students, and questionnaires were used to pinpoint the attitudes of the participants towards the cartoons. A lesson plan was designed based on the framework of designing tasks according to Ellis (2004) for each session of the treatment and this lesson plan informed the teachers about the pre-task activities

and post-task activities. After 10 sessions, to measure participants' vocabulary learning and retention, two vocabulary tests were administered: an immediate posttest and a delayed posttest

In order to figure out the attitudes of the experimental group towards incidental vocabulary learning by watching English cartoons, a questionnaire was designed. This questionnaire included 14 questions about young learners' attitudes towards learning English, watching English cartoons, learning new vocabulary items, enjoyment of learning with cartoons, students' progress after watching English cartoons, and young learners' motivation for learning new words and watching cartoons. The items of this questionnaire were checked and assessed by five experienced EFL teachers.

The accurate estimation of the development of vocabulary knowledge during the treatment depended on the existence of two tests with approximately the same level of difficulty. The development of such tests, however, has proved to be very difficult (Bachman, 1990). Hence, in order to obviate the problem and instead of looking for two such tests, using two tests and equating the scores on such tests could provide a better strategy. Therefore, a total of 60 items were written. The items then were piloted on a sample of 100 students. The data were analyzed using the Rasch model. Five items with the best fit were selected to function as the common items across the two tests. Forty other items with adequate psychometric characteristics and fit were selected. This set of items was randomly divided into two sets. Along with the five common items (which provide a leverage for later score equating), two tests (each with 25 items) were developed.

One test was administered as the immediate post-test and the other test as the delayed post-test. The data were combined and analyzed using the Rasch model. The items were put on the same scale using the common-item equating technique (Bond & Fox, 2015). The ability estimates of the participants on the immediate post-test and delayed post-test were compared to see if any change has happened.

After collecting the papers as data collection, four sets of papers were ought to be analyzed in order to find answers to the research questions of this study. First, an independent samples t-test was conducted between the experimental group and the control group for the posttest (immediately after the implementation of treatment).

In order to see the statistical significance of the difference, a factorial mixed within-between subjects ANOVA was run. With a paired sample t-test in the next phase, the difference between the results of the posttest and the delayed posttest of the experimental group was revealed. Another paired sample t-test comprised the results of the posttest and the delayed posttest of the control group.

Also, another independent samples t-test was conducted on the delayed posttests (two weeks after the treatment) of both groups to elaborate on the differences in their achievement scores in total.

## Results

### Rasch Model

The initial sets of items were calibrated through the Rasch model. The analyses were all run in the Winsteps software (Linacre 2010). The first step in the analysis was to ensure that the assumptions of unidimensionality and local independence holds in the data.



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Unidimensionality was checked through a principal components analysis (PCA) of the residuals. The results indicated that the first residual dimension explained only 1.8 eigenvalues which mean that there is no second dimension in the data.

In addition, the inspection of the residual correlations among the items revealed that there were no correlations above the 0.2 level (Yen, 1989). Hence, there are no cases of local dependence on the items.

Fit statistics were then examined. The Winsteps software reports two types of fit indices: the infit MNSQ and the outfit MNSQ. It is suggested the fit indices between 0.7 and 1.3 indicate adequate fit. Hence, forty-five items with the best-fit indices were selected.

Out of the 45 items, five items with the best fit were selected to function as the common items. The remaining 40 items were randomly divided into two sets of 20 items. Along with the 5 common items, two tests with 25 items were formed.

Each set of scores (from the pretest and the posttest) was separately analyzed through the Rasch model to make sure that the assumptions of unidimensionality and local independence hold in the data. After ensuring that the data meet the assumptions of the Rasch model, Common item equating was utilized to bring the two sets of scores from the pretest and the post into the same scale. The cross-plot of the scores showed that the common items acted as expected. The final step in the analysis was to obtain the measures for each individual on both the pretest and the posttest. Statistical analyses were performed on these measures.

**Mixed ANOVA**

In order to see the statistical significance of the difference, a factorial mixed within-between subjects ANOVA was run. The grouping of the participants based on the task they work on was considered as the between-subject factor while the posttest and the delayed-posttests for both the experimental and control groups were taken as within-subject factors.

The initial results of ANOVA are displayed in Table 1 Before running the mixed ANOVA, the assumptions were checked. The Box's M test of homogeneity of covariance matrices was not significant (p was greater than .001). Before interpreting the results, it must be checked that the interaction terms are not significant. A significant interaction term means the main effects can not be interpreted as they appear. As it is shown in table 1 interactions are not significant.

Table

1. Mixed ANOVA results (test of within subject effects)

| Effect | **Type III Sum of Squares** | **df** | **Mean Square** | **F** | **Sig.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pretest & posttest** | 1.387 | 1 | 1.387 | 3.099 | .094 |
| | 1.387 | 1.000 | 1.387 | 3.099 | .094 |
| | 1.387 | 1.000 | 1.387 | 3.099 | .094 |
| | 1.387 | 1.000 | 1.387 | 3.099 | .094 |
| | 1.603 | 1 | 1.603 | 3.581 | .159 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pretest & posttest** | 1.603 | 1.000 | 1.603 | 3.581 | .159 |
| **Experimental group * Control group** | 1.603 | 1.000 | 1.603 | 3.581 | .159 |
| | 1.603 | 1.000 | 1.603 | 3.581 | .159 |
| | 8.505 | 19 | .448 | | |
| **Error (Pretest & posttest)** | 8.505 | 19.000 | .448 | | |
| | 8.505 | 19.000 | .448 | | |
| | 8.505 | 19.000 | .448 | | |
| | | | | | |

The measures in Table 2 show that there was a significant main effect of different tasks between the experimental and control group. Hence, the types of tasks (movies and reading comprehension tasks) are significantly different from each other.

Table 2. Mixed ANOVA results (test of between subject effects)

| Effect | Type III Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intercept | 59.072 | 1 | 59.072 | 49.765 | .000 |
| Group | 43.444 | 1 | 43.444 | 36.600 | .000 |
| Error | 22.553 | 19 | 1.187 | | |

**Descriptive Statistics**

According to the results of the descriptive statistics (see Table 3), the participants of the control group had better performance in the immediate posttest session (M=0.51, SD=0.95) in comparison with their performance in the delayed-posttest (M=0.07, SD=0.79). The mean scores of both tests of the control group were really close to each other.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the students in the control group (posttest and delayed-posttest)

| Test | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Control group posttest | 11 | 0.514902 | 0.958645 |
| Control group delayed-posttest | 11 | 0.079181 | 0.791532 |

Based on the values in Table 4, the learners of the experimental group had a better performance in the posttest (M=3.31, SD=1.82). There is a significant difference in the mean scores of the posttest and delayed-posttest (M= 1.82, SD=0.79).



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Table

4. Descriptive Statistics for the students in the experimental group (posttest and delayed-posttest)

| Test | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Experimental group posttest** | 10 | 3.3192 | 1.50273 |
| **Experimental group delayed-posttest** | 10 | 1.821447 | 0.793555 |

As it is obvious in Table 5, if we compared the mean score of the experimental group in the posttest (M=3.31, SD=1.50) with the mean score of this test in the control group, we could see a significant difference in the performance of these two groups. The experimental group had a better performance which shows that the treatment of the experimental group was more effective than the treatment of the control group.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for posttest scores in experimental and control groups

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Experimental group** | 10 | 3.319215 | 1.502735 |
| **Control group** | 11 | 0.514902 | 0.958645 |

**Table 6 indicates that the mean score of the experimental group in the delayed-posttest (M=1.82, SD=0.79) was better than the mean score of the control group in the delayed-posttest (M=0.07, SD=0.79).**

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics for delayed- posttest scores in experimental and control groups

| Group | N | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Experimental group** | 10 | 1.821447 | 0.793555 |
| **Control group** | 11 | 0.079181 | 0.791532 |

**T-test**

After conducting descriptive statistics, a t-test was used to compare the performance of each group in both tests. The t-test results revealed that both groups had differences in their performance from posttest to delayed-posttest. Participants in the control group performed on an average of 0.59 from posttest to delayed posttest whereas their peers in the experimental group performed1.49 point averagely. As Table 7 demonstrates, the declination of the experimental group was significant at a 0.007 level ($p < .01$).

Table 7. Paired sample T-test for the students in control and experimental groups (posttest and delayed-posttest)

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Lower Upper | | | |
| **Control** | 0.59408 | 0.79768 | 0.24051 | 0.05 | 2.470 | 10 | .033 |
| | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | | | | | | | |
| **Experimental group** | 1.49777 | 1.34727 | 0.42604 | 0.53 | 3.516 | 9 | .007 |

Table 8. Independent T-test for posttest scores in experimental and control groups

| | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Lower Upper |
| **Equated pretest** | Equal variances assumed | 5.489 | 19 | .000 | 1.90063 | 0.34626 | 1.17589 2.62537 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 5.488 | 18.801 | .000 | 1.90063 | 0.34631 | 1.17528 2.62598 |

Values in Table 8 compared the results of the posttests for both control and experimental groups and values in Table 9 compared the results of the delayed-posttest for both groups. The results indicated that participants of the experimental group had better performance in both posttest and delayed-posttest but the participants of both groups had better performance in the posttest session compared to their performance in the delayed-posttest session.

Table 9. Independent T-test for delayed- posttest scores in experimental and control groups



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| | | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | Lower Upper |
| **Equated pretest** | Equal variances assumed | 5.150 | 19 | 0.000 | 2.80431 | 0.54457 | 1.66453 3.94410 |
| | Equal variances not assumed | 5.042 | 15.039 | 0.000 | 2.80431 | 0.55621 | 1.61905 3.98958 |

**As it is shown in Table 10, young learners reported positive attitudes towards watching English cartoons. All of the participants in the experimental group mentioned that watching cartoons make learning absorbing (M=5.00, SD=0). Enjoyment of watching cartoons (M=4.90, SD=0.31), using English cartoons in the future (M=4.80, SD=0.43), ease of learning EFL(M=4.70, SD=0.48), saving time(M=4.70, SD=0.48), ease of learning vocabulary items(M=4.70, SD=0.48), creating motivation in learners(M=4.70, SD=0.48), making progress in learning EFL (M=4.70, SD=0.48), and retention of new vocabulary items (M=4.60, SD=0.69) were the other positive features of learning through watching English cartoons mentioned by a great number of participants after the treatment.**

Table 10. Students' attitudes towards watching English cartoons for incidental vocabulary learning

| Items | M | SD |
|---|---|---|
| Make learning absorbing | 5.00 | 0.00 |
| Enjoy watching English cartoons | 4.90 | 0.31 |
| Using English cartoons for learning EFL in the future | 4.80 | 0.42 |
| Ease of learning EFL | 4.70 | 0.48 |
| Learning new words in less time | 4.70 | 0.48 |
| Ease of learning new vocabulary items | 4.70 | 0.48 |
| Motivating learners for learning | 4.70 | 0.48 |
| Making progress in learning EFL | 4.70 | 0.48 |
| Retention of new vocabulary items | 4.60 | 0.69 |
| Enjoy learning English | 4.50 | 0.52 |
| Enjoy learning new vocabulary items | 4.50 | 0.52 |
| Enjoy watching movies for learning EFL | 4.50 | 0.52 |
| Willingness to learn EFL through watching cartoons | 4.50 | 0.70 |
| The usefulness of watching cartoons in EFL classes | 4.30 | 0.82 |

Note: Likert scales: 1. strongly disagree; 2. disagree; 3. undecided; 4. agree; 5. strongly agree.

**Discussion**

The results of the current study revealed that both groups, the experimental group who watched the Cailou series of cartoons for 10 sessions, and the control group who had reading comprehension tasks for 10 sessions, performed better in the posttest session. They had to answer the multiple-choice questions based on the target words. The results showed that the experimental group performed much better than the other group who accomplished the reading comprehension tasks.

The results showed that the difference between groups in terms of gains was statistically significant. Therefore, it can be argued that watching the movie clips facilitated the development of the vocabulary knowledge of the students regardless of the captions. In comparison, it was obvious that doing reading comprehension tasks helped the students to improve their incidental vocabulary knowledge based on the multiple choice test results. By the way, the achievements of the control group proved that the context of the cartoons may help students to learn more vocabulary items.

Regarding the retention of the target words, the comparison of the results of the posttest of both the experimental and control group showed that watching cartoons had significant effects on remembering the meaning of the words. However, both groups had better performance in the immediate posttest. So we can conclude that over time, participants of both groups had forgotten the meaning of many words.

As it was stated before, both groups' initial knowledge about the target words were similar at the beginning of the study. In other words both groups had not seen most of the words before and had not known what they meant. After viewing the movie clips and doing reading comprehension test, the results of the immediate posttest showed that both groups improved. The improvement of the students' vocabulary knowledge indicates that both groups not only remembered seeing the words but also they could accurately use many of the target words and provide the Persian translations or synonyms of them. The researchers believe that the development in the knowledge of the target words stemmed from the importance of encountering the words in the context. Overall, our study supported the belief that most vocabulary is learned from context (Sternberg, 1987). Because the researchers did not provide any information about the target words, the participants were not even aware of the focus of the study until the debriefing done after the posttest. Based on the previous studies on vocabulary development, one might argue that contextualization in vocabulary teaching might be a source of improvement. Our study might have provided evidence to the assumption that incidental or indirect learning of vocabulary can be achieved by resorting to contextual cues (Duquette & Painchaud, 1996).

According to the attitudes of the young learners towards CALL and specially the use of multimedia for teaching, the results of the current study were closely related to the results of the other studies in this field. Many scholars have revealed that movies used in EFL classroom can become an important part of the curriculum. This is based on the fact that movies provide exposures to "real language," used in authentic settings and in the cultural context which the foreign language is spoken. They also have found that movies catch



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the learners' interest and it can positively affect their motivation to learn (Kusumarasdyati, 2004; Luo, 2004). As it was proved in this study, all the mean scores of the attitude questionnaire were above 4 that showed all the young learners enjoyed watching English cartoons and find it a helpful way of learning EFL.

Using movies in the EFL classrooms was new and very pleasant experience for the students. They claimed that they enjoyed the assigned activities in the classroom. Students were more motivated to see and hear real-life situations than to follow the activities in the graded book. Their impression is that movies also provide a relaxed atmosphere for students. Students claimed that using movie is a good way to improve English vocabulary and gives them more chances to practice English.

**Conclusion**

Considering the importance of learning new vocabulary items and on the other hand using technology in EFL teaching, there is a scarcity of studies on integration of them. There is evidence that L2 vocabulary might be learned incidentally through watching short, educational video clips (e.g., Montero Perez, Peters, Clarebout, & Desmet, 2014; Neuman & Koskinen, 1992).This study attempted to prove the impact of watching English cartoons on incidental vocabulary learning in young EFL students.

This research on watching English movies without subtitling has shown that films are not only a mean of motivation to entertain students, but also they could assist learners to learn new vocabulary items. In many cases that were mentioned in the previous sections, the impact of subtitled movies on incidental vocabulary learning was examined. In the current study, as the participants were young learners, motivation and entertainment of the tasks were the key factors. So, we decided to choose a series of cartoons for the students and there were no subtitle for them. Students were not informed about the study and the purpose of it. They just watched the cartoons for fun. The results clarified that even this type of tasks could have significant effects on learning new vocabulary items incidentally.

However, in this research watching cartoons had significant effect on L2 vocabulary recognition and learning, in other researches there is a fact that expose to the film once had probably no effect on vocabulary learning. Since, as Koolstra and Beentjes (1999) claimed, for learning vocabulary through watching movies students have to watch them with high frequency. It can be assumed that the results of our study were in contrast with the results of other studies from this point of view. The results proved that movies could have an effect on vocabulary recognition if learners watch the movie just once.

The positive perspectives of the participants towards watching cartoons for EFL learning showed that this type of teaching could be one of the favorite ways of learning for students. So, in this way students are more motivated and learning may happen in a short time and the results of teaching may be very satisfying.

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