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CARTOONS: A MEANINGFUL LISTENING COMPREHENSION RESOURCE IN AN EFL CLASSROOM

***Dibujos Animados: Un Recurso para Desarrollar la
Comprensión Oral Significativa en el Aula de Inglés***

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Cartoons: A Meaningful Listening Comprehension Resource in an EFL Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a qualitative study which looked up to answer the following research question: What is the impact of using a set of activities based on cartoons to develop listening skills in fifth graders at a public school in Bogota? This study was carried out approximately during eight months in a public school in Bogota. The resources used to collect data were class observations which were registered in field notes. Interviews and surveys were applied to the population that was part of this study, the workshops and class observations were also used to describe the students' listening development process. The outcomes and findings demonstrated that cartoons helped the students enhance their listening skills in three levels: the responsive, the selective and the extensive. This occurred as a result of the meaningful activities created to be put into practice in the classroom after the kids watched the animated series.

Keywords: *cartoons, listening comprehension, constructivism (learning), classroom environment, educational resources*

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Dibujos Animados: Un Recurso para Desarrollar la Comprensión Oral Significativa en el Aula de Inglés

RESUMEN

Este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación cualitativa enmarcada en los principios de la investigación acción participativa que buscaba responder la siguiente pregunta ¿Cuál es el impacto de utilizar una serie de actividades basadas en dibujos animados en el desarrollo de la escucha de niños en quinto grado de un colegio público de la ciudad de Bogotá? Este estudio fue realizado aproximadamente en un periodo de 8 meses en la institución educativa. Para dar cuenta del proceso de desarrollo de la escucha en la población que hizo parte de esta investigación, se llevaron a cabo observaciones de clase, entrevistas, talleres y encuestas que describen el proceso de mejora de los pequeños en esta habilidad. Los hallazgos demostraron que las series animadas ayudaron a los estudiantes a desarrollar su escucha en tres niveles: el receptivo, el selectivo y el extensivo, esto ocurrió gracias al contenido significativo que los niños vieron en las series animadas.

Palabras clave: *dibujos animados, comprensión oral, innovación pedagógica, ambiente de aprendizaje, material educativo*

INTRODUCTION

The descriptive action research project reported in this article characterized the development of the students' listening process in an English language classroom from a public school in Bogota. This study aimed at describing the role of a set of activities based on cartoons to develop listening skills in fifth graders at an educational public institution.

Observations of the English classes, identification of perceptions and the relation that the students had with the English language and more specifically with the listening skill were done in order to provide a deep description of this phenomenon. The previous process was done in order to set a suitable environment, in which the students developed the listening skill which was indispensable for them to start an effective communicative process. In this regard, MEN (Ministerio de Educación Nacional de Colombia [MEN], 2006) in its *Estndares básicos de lenguas extranjeras: Inglés* (2006) stated that in fifth grade kids should be capable of "identifying characters names and the main events from a fairy tale read by the teacher using images videos or any other audiovisual material" (p.20). Nonetheless, based on the observations made to underpin this research, it was possible to realize that the listening skill had been being taught isolated from the learning process that kids were supposed to have in the English language.

Finally, it was important to determine whether the students were learning despite the fact that the listening skill was not being considered in their learning process with the purpose of coming up with didactic strategies that could facilitate a successful approach to the development of this skill.

Theoretical Framework

Cartoons

According to Wright (2005), a cartoon is a "comedy based around a situation. A protagonist still has a goal, develops a game plan that's opposed and battles someone or something for the outcome" (p. 114). This means that animated sitcoms or cartoons were created to amuse the audience and complement or even change their perceptions of their daily routines. This is

accomplished due to the structure that the cartoon has because as it is claimed by Wright (2005) they “stand out for their clever dialogue and multitude of jokes” (p. 114). Therefore, within cartoons one clear intention: is to make people laugh and see the positive aspects of living in spite of going through difficult situations. Having defined cartoons in its own essence and after inferring what its purpose is in the human beings’ lives it is pertinent to be profound in relation to what its role in the English classroom would be.

Cartoons as a learning resource

As it was claimed before, one of the factors that enriches a cartoon is that it has been created to amuse people. This means that this tool could be used also to make the kids’ learning process in EFL different and meaningful. This, due to the components that are part of the cartoon itself, it is a video, but it also involves images and colors, components that are vital in children’s learning process as we are going to explain below:

Videos: In accordance with Mayer (2001) a video can be understood as an audiovisual resource because “both images and sounds are presented” (p. 2). In this sense, cartoons can be used in the English classroom because they both have these features and as it is well known both images and sounds are attractive to learners when they are becoming familiar with new knowledge. Hence, it is important to point out that the sound plus the image build up a situation that is going to be figured out by the learners thanks to the connection that the kid creates between these elements.

Images: This is the second component of the cartoon structure, and it is indispensable for the kids’ English learning process because as Feinstein (2006) poses, “it seems impossible to discuss learning without reference to vision and images. We see, we imagine, we develop inside, and we get the picture” (p. 491). Thereby, images help students to have a first hint or a first idea of what they are going to learn. For instance, if as pre-listening activity images are used to introduce the key vocabulary that is going to be listened to, the apprentices will end up making

connections among the images that they saw before the listening and the listening itself which is the right path for a learner to enhance this skill.

Colors: This concept is important in the learning process of a language because it is going to cause in learners a learned response which in Crowther and Wellhousen's words is (2004) "an assimilation of knowledge and is dependent on sex, age, income level, cultural background and so on" (p. 31). Then, colors are vital in the English learning process due to the fact that they help learners infer and understand the adventures and situations that they are seeing and listening through the cartoons in the learning environment.

As we clarified previously, videos, images and colors can be used individually in the English skills' enhancement. Nevertheless, it is when they are implemented together through the cartoons that they end up helping the learners foster their listening skills. In order to reinforce the previous definition of cartoons which came up after conjoining the concepts of *videos*, *images*, and *colors* it is a must to relate it to the concept of learning resource so that, this concept is framed into the educational field. According to Wayne (2006), a learning resource "lies beyond the knowledge and expertise of teacher and their ability to transfer the content into a learning experience for the student" (p. 247). In this case, cartoons go beyond the mere knowledge, and they look up to make the learners realize that they can have fun in the English classroom while they comprehend the adventures that the characters from the T.V. series are experiencing. Therefore, Ross' definition reaffirms that the meaning of cartoon is redefined when it is used in the English classroom because it changes the context in which kids are learning the language.

Cartoons in the English classroom

As it has been stated before, it is conceivable to realize that the definition of cartoons changes when it is applied in a learning environment. However, they can also transform the learning context. This is why it is indispensable to define the English classroom to evidence in a clearer way why these terms change themselves in a bidirectional way. From Thompson's perspective (2015) the English classroom is an environment which "involves a task design focused on both

the theories and practices of communicative activity” (p. 88). Then, in the classroom the learners should learn the language patterns; nonetheless, the emphasis must be on the materials and the activities that are used to help the students develop their language skills, in our case, the listening skill. All this bearing in mind that the task should be communicative because this is the main purpose of learning a new language, it is to be able to express and communicate what one feels, experiences and lives.

In the learning environment, cartoons have this communicative intent because they transmit the learners not only the language’s patterns in an implicit way, but also a meaningful message which is that they can learn and understand a new language through the cartoon using its content to solve activities that are going to transcend the grammar field. Therefore, cartoons transform the English classroom in a context where the main feature is the communication. Thus, the students are going to experience a connection between knowledge and the English language through the cartoon’s content.

The listening skill

After defining and placing the concept of cartoon in the English classroom, it is crucial to associate it with the listening skill in order to underpin the impact that they have in the enhancement of this skill. But, before doing so, the listening skill is to be defined in its own essence. Barclay (2012) defines listening as “an active process and plays an essential role in concept development” (p. 78). This premise suits with the purpose that cartoons should have in the English classroom because as it has been affirmed, it is indispensable to listen and understand in a right way if we want to accomplish effective communication with others. But, to achieve this goal, the first step is to catch the student interest in learning the language and what better way cartoons to guarantee an active listening development while they become familiar with the language patterns that are required to manage the English language.

Similarly, Avila et al. (2008) state that active listening is “the cognitive process of actively sensing, interpreting, evaluating and responding to the verbal and nonverbal messages” (p.

119). Clearly, there is a well based bond between cartoons and the active listening that the students must develop in English, this, due to the situations that the students are watching in the episodes because they are not only developing their listening skills, but they are also enriching themselves with cultural aspects that build up their daily life. As it might be expected, cartoons let them to become familiar with different traditions from other parts of the world as the intention of their content is to help learners reflect upon the features that make up the different societies in which the humankind lives.

When people are watching T.V. and they connect with the content, they sense what they listen to, this is what should be done first to figure out what is occurring in the cartoon. Afterwards, the audience interprets and evaluates what they are seeing and listening to with the intention of feeling identified with it. Finally, people create a response expressing what they have learnt from what they have seen. Nevertheless, before accomplishing the active listening in a foreign language, the learner must develop three essential levels to assure a good enhancement of this skill, these are, the responsive, the selective and the extensive.

The listening skill levels

The responsive listening level: This level is defined as that part of the listening in which listeners continuously come in contact with assumptions and expectations that are in variance to their own (Rost, 2013). In this sense, the memories, and opinions that the students have regarding the situations seen in cartoons are going to affect the way in which kids will comprehend it.

The selective listening level: According to Shendel (1979) it “demands that target information be picked up and stored accurately” (p. 5). In the language learning process, this means that students need to have the capability of discriminating specific parts of events that they are watching of listening to in the cartoons.

The extensive listening level: In this part of the listening process Verghese (1989) claims that the learners have an “exposure to a wide variety of structures and sounds” (p. 71). Thus, this is an indispensable stage to begin transcending from the basic listening levels to the active

listening development. Hence, students must be able to remember most situations and the adventures that they see in the cartoons which will help them be in the capacity of figuring out other people's messages in real life. (It is important to clarify that we will deepen into these listening levels in the results section because they arose when the evidence was being gathered, classified, and analyzed by the researchers).

Listening comprehension and cartoons: A didactic perspective

There are several materials and activities that can be used to help students enhance their listening skills. But what makes cartoons different from other sources? What is the plus that makes their usage in the learning process meaningful for the listening skill development? To highlight this aspect, the concepts of *didactic* and *listening comprehension* will be defined and then linked to the concept of cartoons. In relation to listening comprehension Chapelle (2003) states that it "is based on the learner capacities involved in listening and the situations in which examinees would be doing their listening" (p. 159). This definition presents the first characteristic that needs to be considered when differentiating cartoons from other learning tools. Bearing this in mind, students need to have contact with meaningful situations to succeed in the tasks that they will be asked to do, if the content that the students watched in the series grew a set of interest and knowledge in their heads, they are going to be excited and will push themselves to prove that they understood and that they are learning.

However, when creating listening activities, a didactic perspective must be posed. Regarding this Billings and Roberts (2013) claim that listening classes should "have both an identified structure and a clear goal – without being slavishly attached to the outlines, they use full resources to engage and hold the audience's attention" (p. 18). Thus, the tool that is used to teach is the main means to guarantee that students are going to be connected to English; this is the didactic role that cartoons play in the classroom, due to their purpose which is to make people laugh. Nevertheless, the potential of this source would be wasted if it is not used to teach the students cultural patterns from several places such as customs, traditions and society features in an

attempt of enriching both their world view and their listening skills. Hence, cartoons are the key to revolutionizing the learning environment, they let the English classes flow while a meaningful content is being taught in an implicit way to the kids, after they watch the cartoons, a word or a phrase will be left in their minds and that is what is going to use to take the students' listening enhancement off.

METHODOLOGY

Following the action research principles this study aimed at describing the role of a set of activities based on cartoons to develop listening skills in fifth graders at a public school in Bogota. This methodology was chosen as this study took place in an educational context. Besides, it allows the researchers observe the population, identify a problematic, think of a lesson planning or pedagogical proposal to improve it to finally reflect upon the findings and results to evaluate and measure its effectiveness. In relation to what was previously stated, Baldwin (2018) points out that "action research is conducted to solve a problem or obtain information to inform a local practice" (p. 46). In this case, the main problematic was located in the students' listening skill. Nevertheless, it is necessary to define the action research as a bidirectional process because as Baldwin (2018) claims "the main goal is to improve practice" (p. 46). This means that not only apprentices will improve their EFL listening skills, but also the teacher will open their perceptions on how to address the different issues that are found in the classroom.

Population and Sampling

This research was carried out in a public school located in the south of Bogota, Colombia. This school has one branch with 2400 students. This institution offers education to girls and boys from middle-low class in two shifts. This study was developed in the main school branch with primary schoolers because this population was the one who needed a first meaningful approach to English.

The participants were 68 fifth graders from the school located in Bogota, Colombia who signed a consent form in which the purpose of the research and their participation in it was explained.

The English head teacher also expressed his disposition to participate in it was required. The selection of participants responds to typical sampling because as Bostick, Jiao, and Onwuegbzie (2004) say “the researcher studies an individual group or setting that is typical or average” (p. 125). In this case, the population that was part of this study shared similar social backgrounds, economic status and were about the same ages which permitted us to infer that they were part of an average group.

Instruments

Several instruments were used to collect the research data. Class observations, surveys, workshops, and interviews. The first step was to get all the information consents signed by the participants. Afterwards, class observations were carried out; five English classes of 100 minutes each were observed. All the situations happening in the classroom were registered through field notes. This process was done observing three English sessions weekly in all fifth grades when possible.

The first survey was applied in order to know the students’ social background and the perception that they had about the English class, another survey was created for the English head teacher to know about his professional background and his teaching perspective. In this survey, the students expressed their interest in working on their favorite cartoons which were mostly three: *The fairly oddparents, Phineas and Ferb* and *Gravity falls*.

As this research was following the action research principles three cycles of intervention that lasted two months were designed. Each one, thinking of using one of the cartoons previously mentioned to develop the listening skill in the learners through the creation of different types of listening workshops, these were: *Sequences of images, multiple - choice question activities* and *matching listening workshops*. Moreover, surveys and interviews were applied and answered by the participants individually at the beginning and at the end of every cycle with the purpose of evidencing the students’ improvement in this skill.

Procedure and Analysis

To analyze data, the grounded approach was implemented because as it is suggested by Gibson and Hartman (2014) it permits the researchers “to arrive at a set of well-developed categories closely related to the data and each other in a fully integrated theory” (p. 82). Therefore, there are not any pre-establish categories, they emerge from the data that was collected in order to create a profound and well based analysis, the identification of categories followed a meticulous revision of the data to give validity and reliability to the findings. This process was done applying triangulation which Holmes (2005) defines as “the research practice of comparing and combining different sources of evidence in order to reach a better understanding of the research topic” (p. 40). In this case, the field notes, interviews, surveys. and workshops were compared and contrasted to corroborate that an improvement in the participants listening skills did occur. The first stage was to analyze the field notes constructed based on the class observations, the second stage was the analysis of the surveys that were applied to students, and then, the analysis of the listening artifacts was done. Finally, the transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed. Having in mind the purpose of finding common items in the pieces of evidence the color coding was implemented highlighting the items that could help us respond the research question. The evidence was kept in envelopes bearing in mind the date of collection.

To underpin this analysis, it was indispensable to name, group and find relations among participants’ answers because as it is proposed by Williams (2004) “appropriate grouping of information on a display is one of the most important factors in determining its usability” (p. 154). Then, this was a useful strategy that helped us have a clear picture of the phenomenon that was being studied.

RESULTS

From the analysis three main categories emerged, each one related to the main research question which is: What is the impact of using a set of activities based on cartoons to develop

listening skills in fifth graders at a public school in Bogota? Data revealed that the apprentices developed their listening skills in three levels *the responsive*, *the selective* and *the extensive*.

Developing the responsive listening level through cartoons content

According to Barone and Tellis (2018) the enhancement of this level occurs through the creation of a “communication activity with a specific objective, to comprehend, to evaluate and retrain what is being transmitted” (p. 62). Data revealed that in the first listening exercised (the organization of a sequence of images based on the chapter the emotion commotion *from the fairly oddparents* cartoon) students were capable of comprehending the situation and the message that was transmitted to them. This is evident in an extract taken from one field notes written during one of sessions:

(...) the teacher showed them that they had to organize the sequence of images giving them a number to order them. Once the instruction was given and clarified, the students started doing the task. While passing by the desks of the kids comments such as “yo me acuerdo que va después de esto y me acuerdo que acá Timmy no sentía” (I remember that it goes after this, and I remember that here Timmy did not feel) were listened. After the kids finished doing the activity, the teacher told the pupils that he would play the chapter again and will stop the chapter in each scene that should be number for them to say the number out loud and put a tick if they numbered right or cross it out if the number was wrong. (Most of the pupils were excited while doing this activity, they were shouting the right numbers of the scenes). (Field note #8)

This response demonstrated that the first cartoon helped the students use the responsive listening level to figure out the situation and understand the facts that they were watching. It is important to remark that the main objective of this listening level is to comprehend the situation that is being listened to and watched (Barone and Tellis, 2018). In this case, it might be claimed that this goal was fulfilled. Likewise, learners were also testing if they understood what they

watched. This, by trying to remember what happened in the episode to retrain the information and the main message that was being transmitted to them.

Besides, this activity highlighted the relevance of transmission when the listening development is at its first stages, learners have to listen to a situation with full communicative content and intent to be able to evaluate what is being perceived by them with the purpose of building up an opinion related to what is listened. Hence, the opinion establishment is what comes to reinforce the responsive listening level because it is what bases the memory when recalling events previously listened and observed. Thus, the improvement in the responsive listening field is evident in the following extract from the second interview:

¿Crees qué has mejorado en alguna habilidad en inglés? Si, en el listening, yo recuerdo que antes de que viéramos los padrinos mágicos yo casi no entendía nada. Pero, en ese capítulo entendí que Timmy [el personaje principal de la serie] no tenía emociones y que pues deseo no sentir nada, porque sus amigos lo molestaban. (Interview # 1)

Do you think you have improved any English skill? Yes, the listening. I remember that before watching the Fairly Odd Parents, I did not understand much. But from that episode I understood that Timmy (main character in the series) did not have emotions and wished to not have any because his friends would tease him.¹

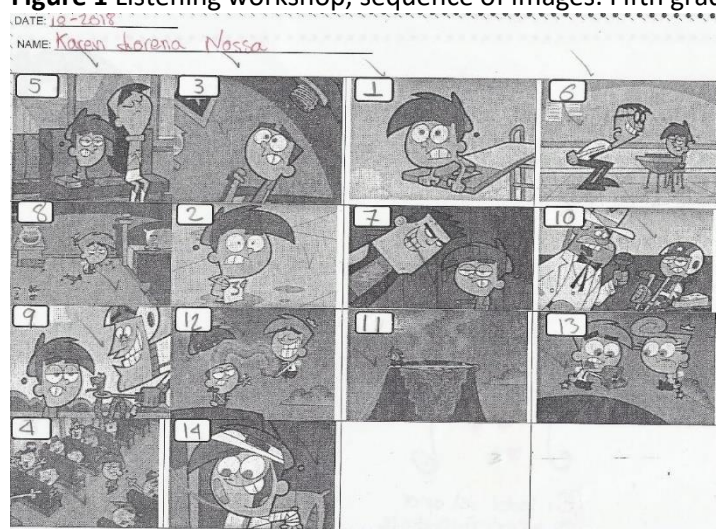
This claim revealed that students were capable of focusing on the cartoon's content to capture the main message of the chapter. Kids were also showing the capacity of evaluating the factors that made the main character to desire not to have feelings which is an experience that they can have as individuals in their daily life. This means that one of the keys to succeeding when developing listening skills has to do with relating what is being listened to one's own context. Thus, all these features permit to state that learners enhanced their listening because they were

¹ The translation is made for publication purposes.

not only able to understand what they were listening to, but also, they were in the capacity of interpreting these situations.

On the other hand, before analyzing the results from the listening task, it is important to clarify that before passing the workshop to the students, they completed an activity in which they recognized the main characters from the cartoons. Afterwards, the kids saw the episode. Finally, they solved the listening task; a sequence of images that they had to organize to give the chapter events their correct order, this would reaffirm an improvement in the responsive listening level:

Figure 1 Listening workshop, sequence of images. Fifth graders. Adapted from Hartman (2004).



Note. Image retrieved from the cartoon *The Fairly OddParents*, episode *Emotion Commotion*.

This listening workshop showed that the students were able to organize the sequence of images due to two factors. Firstly, they were capable of comprehending the situation that they watched in the cartoon. Secondly, they retained this information to remember the events order to complete the task. In other words, there are three aspects needed to activate the listening development in learners. The first is the memory which is powered on when the students see the images. The second is the way apprentices connected with the situations they observed, this is if they were meaningful or funny to them or not and the third is their point of view regarding the events sequence which might differ from other classmates' perceptions.

Thus, evidence revealed that the students developed these features in the responsive level due to the activity that was proposed to them. It should be highlighted that this is the first stage to

guarantee a real contact with language because in the classroom the students experienced the fact of having different opinions when the same situation is listened.

Fostering the selective listening level through cartoons content

With regards to the selective listening level, the kids used it to identify specific situations that happened in the second episode watched in the second cycle of intervention *The Phineas and Ferb* chapter entitled mom's birthday) to select the correct one and answer the multiple – choice workshop that was designed based on it. According to Wood (2008) the selective listening is “focusing on only particular part of messages” (p. 89). The students achieved this purpose as it can be appreciated below:

While the students were developing the listening activity a student told the teacher: Profe, osea yo entendí que todo lo que vimos en el capítulo está en las preguntas porque a la mamá de Phineas y Ferb le iban a dar un vestido, pero al fin no, y le hicieron un vídeo. Pero, entendí que al final, el regalo que le dieron a la mamá de Phineas y Ferb fue el video porque pasa en una parte del capítulo, además entendí algunas palabras que están en las preguntas. (Field note #13)

Teacher, I mean, I understood that everything we watched on the episode is within the questions because Phineas and Ferb's mother was going to be given a dress, but at the end, no, they made a video of her. But I understood that by the end the present given to Phineas and Ferb's mother was the video because it happens some time on the episode. Besides, I understood some words that were in the questions².

Data pointed out that the cartoon's content was a means for students to implement their selective listening level and focus on the key parts that helped them answer the listening task. Then, even though, several facts happened in the episode, apprentices were able to discriminate the different situations that occurred in the chapter. In this level, learners approached the ability

² The translation is made for publication purposes.

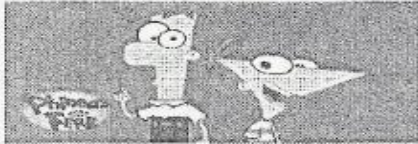
to think fast and establish relations between their picture memories and what they experienced while watching the episode. This factor demonstrated that children are advancing in their learning process because they are starting to manage the language having in mind realistic patterns.

Regarding the listening workshop which was a multiple - choice task based on the cartoon's episode in which learners had to pick the right answer, most of them performed well in it. Then, it can be affirmed that the learners improved their listening skill in the selective level as it may be appreciated below:

Figure 2 Listening workshop. Multiple - choice. Fifth graders. Adapted from Marsh and Povenmire (2007)

Listening workshop #2

Name: **VALENTINA CASTIBLANCO**
 Grade: **504**
 Score: **5.0**



Let's check what you understood from the episode "Mom's birthday".

1. Who sang a song for mom on her birthday?
☒ A. Phineas, Ferb and Candace
 B. Phineas Friends
 C. Isabella
 D. Candace
2. Who called mom using a T.V.?
 A. All the family
 B. A friend
 C. Her sister
☒ D. Dad
3. What was the gift of Phineas and Ferb for their mom?
 A. A dress
 B. A cake
☒ C. A breakfast
 D. A family video
4. Who were the first ones who congratulated mom on her birthday?
 A. It was dad
 B. It was Candace
 C. It was all the family
☒ D. It was Phineas and Ferb
5. Who was not in the party?
☒ A. Perry and dad
 B. Phineas and Ferb
 C. Perry, Phineas and Ferb
 D. All the family was in the party.

Note. Image retrieved from the cartoon *Phineas and Ferb*, episode *Mom's birthday*.

Moreover, data revealed that cartoons content helped students improve their selective listening skills, because after watching the episode, they understood some keywords that helped them figure out what the right answer was. In other words, they took what they needed to succeed in the activity. According to Johri and Martin (2005). The improvement of this level of listening is good because it “helps one pick out quickly those ideas that are relevant” (p. 43). One student in the class had a similar perception while doing this activity:

¿Crees qué has mejorado en alguna habilidad en inglés?

Si, en la escucha, sobre todo cuando vimos Phineas y Ferb porque en esa tarea [taller de escucha] vi palabras que aparecieron en el capítulo y luego las vi en la hoja y así me acordaba en que parte del capítulo pasó lo que decía en la hoja. (Interview #3)

Do you think you have improved any English skill?

Yes, at school. Above all when we watched Phineas and Ferb because in that task [listening workshop] I saw words that appeared in the episode and then I saw them on the page and that way I would remember in which part of the episode what it said on the page happened ³.

Then, most students performed well in this listening task because they tried to identify specific situation details that occurred in the cartoon. Therefore, when reading the questions and the possible answers, they quickly searched for relevant words and ideas that were related to the question asked in the workshop. On the other hand, evidence reaffirmed that it is not possible to isolate the listening development from the concept development due to the fact that the concepts that are seen and listened are remembered by any individual not only in the classroom to solve listening workshops, but also when interacting with others in real life.

³ The translation is made for publication purposes.

Enhancing the extensive listening level through cartoons content

The students reach this level when they solve activities that involved more intensive listening and the kids feel that they are being tested (Dillon and Ming, 2016). This listening level underpins the workshop based on the third cartoon *Gravity Falls* episode Blendin's game that the students watched in the third intervention cycle. In this task, learners were asked to cut and paste an image which represents a scene from the chapter with the dialogue that a character said in that moment, in order to give the episode its corresponding order. For some children, this was a demanding activity as it can be seen below:

At the end of the class the teacher asked the kids: How did you feel with the Gravity falls activity [The listening workshop] S1 replied: Bien profe, me di cuenta de que algunas frases describían lo que se veía en la imagen y aunque no las entendí todas bien, hubo unas que sí las entendí todas, pero era difícil. (Field note #19)

Good, teacher. I realized that some phrases described what could be seen in the images and, although I did not understand them all, there were some that I did, but it was difficult⁴.

The previous evidence demonstrated that the third cartoon's episode helped the students enhance their listening skill in the extensive level. This was accomplished due to the strategies that the learners used to complete the task, they used the words that they understood to infer the whole meaning of the utterances that the characters were expressing. However, some children posed that this was a hard task for them because it was their first time doing this type of activity.

Hence, apprentices inferred that developing a language skill might be demanding, but to learn it and manage it, they can use different resources such as the selection of key words, the relation among sentences and scenes or images to figure out the meaning of complete situations seen

⁴ The translation is made for publication purposes.

through the T.V. screen in the classroom. In spite of the issues that the students pointed out while solving this listening workshop, an improvement in this listening level can be reaffirmed as most pupils performed well in this task:

Figure 3 Listening matching workshop. Fifth graders. Adapted from Hirsh (2012).

NAMES: emerson daniel Heradoy
angel palma

GRADE: 504

SCORE: 5.0

144

1. 2. 3.

PUT THE IMAGE WITH ITS TEXT ON IN ORDER

1. 2.

PLEASE PASTE THE IMAGE HERE

PLEASE PASTE THE IMAGE HERE

TEXT:

1. NO ONE SHOULD BE ALONE ON THEIR BIRTHDAY

2. IT'S OUR FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY TODAY AND WE PROMISE NOT TO LEAVE HIS SIDE

3. 4.

PLEASE PASTE THE IMAGE HERE

PLEASE PASTE THE IMAGE HERE

TEXT:

3. HURRY, BACK TO SOO'S BIRTHDAY

4. THANKS, YOU MUST BE SOME KIND OF GENIOUS

5. 6.

PLEASE PASTE THE IMAGE HERE

PLEASE PASTE THE IMAGE HERE

TEXT:

5. COULD YOU MOVE SEATS? THAT IS A PLACE OF HONOR FOR MY DAD.

6. YOU PARTY WITHOUT ME, DUDE

Note. Image retrieved from the cartoon *Gravity falls*, episode *Blendin's game*.

The students' matching listening activity showed that due to the cartoon's content students have potentialized their extensive listening level. This was accomplished because learners started with easy tasks, then went on with the most difficult ones; a process that has contributed to a meaningful development in the three indispensable listening levels. Furthermore, learners have realized that they possess the capability of succeeding in any type of listening activity. This is affirmed by a student below:

¿Consideras que has mejorado tu inglés en alguna habilidad?

Si, en la escucha porque antes no entendía nada y ahora comprendo un poco mejor al profe, cuando habla y las series cuando las veo (Interview #5).

Do you consider that you have improved any of your English skills?

Yes, at school because I did not understand anything before, and now I can understand the teacher a little bit more; when he speaks and the series when I watch them⁵.

CONCLUSIONS

Our study was guided by one specific question: What is the impact of using a set of activities based on cartoons to develop listening skills in fifth graders at a public school in Bogota?

Overall findings revealed that the research participants saw in cartoons a possibility to connect with the English language in a different way due to the funny content that these types of programs presented to them. Therefore, cartoons had an innovative impact in the English learning environment because they showed the learners that they had the capabilities to figure out what they were listening to start a communicative process with other individuals.

In relation to the role that cartoons played in the students' learning process, findings demonstrated that they became a support since the structure of these programs helped students feel motivated in the English classes which is a very important factor when getting engaged with a new language. Nevertheless, it is important to claim that the usage of cartoons as a tool to enhance the learners' listening skills implied to have access to the technological devices for them to have a meaningful contact not only with the material, but also with the English language.

On the other hand, data pointed out that the students accomplished to develop the responsive, the selective and the extensive listening levels because of the structure that guided the creation of the listening workshops. This means that going from the easier task to the most demanding one helped learner realize that there are not any barriers when learning is the main goal. In addition, the head teachers need to recognize that there are different paths to teach English

⁵ The translation is made for publication purposes.

apart from the grammar field. This means, that they need to reflect upon the usage of the tools that they have in the classrooms which might enrich the students' learning process.

In conclusion, cartoons were an innovative source that helped the students develop their listening skills, due to their structure and content which guaranteed a meaningful listening skills' development. Nonetheless, it could be interesting to enquire how the cartoons' content might work to develop the other skills such as, reading writing and speaking, or if it is wanted, the researcher could integrate all the skills to have an integral enhancing process of the individual in EFL.

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