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The Impact of English Cartoons on Children's English Language Development: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Cartoons can teach children a vast amount of information and valuable life lessons in an entertaining and engaging manner. Cartoons can also help children acquire various skills, like collaboration, negotiating, critical thinking, and problem-solving. In addition, cartoon-viewing has been increasingly linked with children's language development and improvement. Accordingly, this study examined the impact of watching English cartoons on children's English language acquisition in the Libyan setting. Case study research was conducted, which involved three years of direct observation of a two-year-old Libyan girl. The data analysis and results revealed that a purposeful and consistent approach to watching English cartoons can lead to remarkable English language learning outcomes. Specifically, the child in this study demonstrated notable English language development across various areas, including vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, pronunciation, comprehension, production, and emotional expression. The findings of this study shed light on the benefits of following a systematic approach to using English language media-based content as an innovative and motivating method for English language teaching and learning in the Libyan home environment and Libyan English language learning classroom.

KEYWORDS: English cartoons, environment, innate abilities, interaction, language acquisition..

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1.INTRODUCTION

Language development is a dynamic and intricate process that involves several skills, such as comprehension and production. Yet, remarkably, this process often takes place relatively quickly and effortlessly for children acquiring their first language everywhere in the world and in very similar developmental stages [1, 2]. This fascinating phenomenon of first language acquisition has garnered considerable attention from scholars and led to the development of several explanatory language acquisition theories, such as behaviourist, nativist, innatist, and interactionist theories.

The behaviorist view, developed by B. F. Skinner, postulates that children acquire their first language by imitating the language they hear in their environment (e.g., from their parents) [3]. On the other hand, the nativist perspective, proposed by Noam Chomsky, challenges the behaviourist view that language results from habit formation based on environmental exposure. Conversely, the nativist view argues that humans are born with natural abilities for language acquisition [3]. Notably, the interactionist viewpoint, established by Berko Gleason, highlights the multifaceted nature of language acquisition and suggests that it is influenced by three interconnected factors: (1) exposure to the surrounding environment, (2) a child's inherent abilities, and (3) social interaction. Thus, in addition to the first two perspectives put forth by the behaviorist and nativist theories, the interactionist perspective underscores the role of social engagement in language development [3].

The early years of a child's life (i.e., preschool) represent a sensitive milestone in language development. Specifically, language production begins in the first six months with cooing and progresses to babbling in the latter half of the first year. Between 12 and 24 months, most children articulate their first recognizable word. This stage is known as the holophrastic (one-word) stage, where children use words to represent entire thoughts (e.g., saying "milk" to communicate "I want milk"). From 2 to 5 years of age, children rapidly expand their vocabulary and begin stringing words together into simple sentences. Early speech takes place at about two years old and is often described as "telegraphic", which lacks many grammatical elements, such as bound morphemes and function words, but still follows correct word order [2, 4].

By the age of three, children have established the grammatical framework of their native language. Their sentences become longer and more complex as they begin using auxiliaries, copulas, modals, negatives, and early syntactic movements. Around this time, children also try to form questions and produce complex sentences with multiple verbs or clauses, including relative clauses [2]. By the age of four, children typically master the basic structures of their native language, enabling them to ask questions, give commands, recount real events, and even invent stories- all while mostly using correct grammar. As they join pre-school, children continue to refine their English language skills [4].

The process of first language acquisition is theoretically complex; however, it occurs effortlessly and instinctively for children. Consequently, there is a common agreement that early childhood is the best time to learn foreign languages because young children are more receptive and their language abilities develop most quickly and efficiently during this age [5]. This stage also provides optimal conditions for simultaneous bilingualism, allowing children exposed to two languages to acquire both as native tongues [4, 6].

Moreover, Krashen [5] posits that language learning is most effective when learners are immersed in engaging, meaningful, and understandable content within a relaxed environment. According to Krashen [5], a fun and stimulating learning context reduces the "affective filter", which represents emotional obstacles such as anxiety or boredom that can impede language acquisition. In other words, the success of language learning can be directly influenced by eliminating negative feelings and providing a comfortable and engaging environment for learners [5].

In this respect, the role of media, particularly cartoons, has been extensively studied in relation to children's language exposure. It has been noted that cartoons provide authentic input for presenting language in an amusing manner. Furthermore, various children's shows purposefully focus on using simplified and repeated language to facilitate language acquisition. Also, many shows feature interactive content that requires children to interact and cooperate with the characters, which promotes their understanding and response skills [7].

On the other hand, the investigation into the impact of cartoons on children's lan-

guage development has yielded mixed findings. Some studies revealed no notable influence of cartoons on children's language [8.9], whereas other studies stressed that the benefits of cartoon viewing are largely determined by their content. For example, cartoons, such as Dora the Explorer, encourage children to respond to verbal cues and interact with characters. The interactive nature of these cartoons has been linked to enhanced vocabulary, comprehension, cognitive skills, and the ability to follow instructions. Conversely, exposure to non-educational or inappropriate content has been associated with poorer language outcomes [7].

Notably, some scholars [2, 10] highlighted that television alone cannot lead to language acquisition and that interactive conversations between adults and children are crucial for language development. Conversely, other researchers [11-14] have observed significant positive impacts from cartoon viewing on children's English as a second language development across various areas, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax, and so on, even in the absence of interactive support in the child's environment. It is important to note that these studies have been conducted in different contexts: Saudi Arabia [11], Lithuania [12], West Africa [13], and the Philippines [14], respectively.

Despite garnering considerable attention worldwide, the influence of cartoons on children's English language development has been given little attention in the Libyan context. Markedly, despite English holding a significant status in Libya, learning it remains challenging, as many Libyan learners report poor proficiency levels. As a result, there have been constant appeals for further research that explores innovative approaches to address this issue [15-17].

Accordingly, this study aimed to address this gap by investigating how television exposure at an early age influences English language acquisition among Libyan children. In particular, this research examined the impact of English cartoons on Libyan children's English language development. The rationale behind the research objective was to elicit and provide insights for enhancing English language learning and teaching approaches in Libya.

2.MATERIALS AND METHODS

To achieve the aims of this study and examine the impact of watching English car-

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toons on children's language acquisition, case study research was conducted. A case study is a research approach that observes the topic under investigation in its natural environment. It is often employed when the aim is to study people, organizations, and programs closely and in-depth [18]. The rationale for selecting this research approach for this study was that it was crucial to observe a child's language growth and improvement thoroughly and meticulously within the child's real environment (i.e., home) to ensure the depth and credibility of the research findings.

This case study was conducted on Sama, a two-year-old Libyan girl. Sama lives in Benghazi, Libya, with her family of four, including her father, mother, and six-year-old sister. The main language spoken in Sama's home environment by all her family members is Arabic. This case study examined the impact of consistently exposing Sama to English cartoons.

The selection of Sama as the subject of this case study was based on two factors: (1) Sama was two at the beginning of this study, which is commonly considered an ideal age for observing and analysing the effect of exposure to a new language, and (2) the fact that Sama had not joined school yet ensured that there were no other factors (e.g., intervention from school) that could affect the trustworthiness of the findings.

Sama's English language development was documented for three years, starting when she was two years old and continuing until she turned five. During this time, she was exposed daily to English cartoons for three distinct hours. The data collection methods included systematic observations, detailed written records of produced utterances, and video and audio recordings. These data were gathered monthly throughout the study period.

The data analysis process involved examining the written records and converting the data in the videos and recordings to transcription to facilitate the analysis process. Subsequently, the data were analysed using pre-established criteria by the researcher: vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, pronunciation, understanding and responding, and expressing emotions.

The researcher of this study was Sama's mother, an English language instructor and researcher, who actively observed and recorded Sama's language progress. Sama's

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mother is proficient in the English language. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that she possesses a neutral, non-native English accent. Moreover, it is crucial to clarify that the main language used at Sama's home was Arabic, which was spoken by Sama's father, mother, and sister. At the beginning of the study, Sama's mother only spoke Arabic with her. However, when English began to emerge in Sama's utterances (shortly after a month of Sama's exposure to cartoons), Sama's mother started to use English occasionally to interact with her and respond to her English utterances. In particular, Sama's mother alternated between English and Arabic, addressing Sama following the language used by her.

As a researcher, conducting a case study on a family member (her daughter) had both advantages and disadvantages. As for the advantages, the researcher had constant access to the child, which made it easier to collect data consistently and without interruptions. Moreover, the researcher was able to gather detailed and real-time observations, which could not be easily obtained in external studies. Also, the child remained in a familiar setting, which reduced observer effects.

On the other hand, bias and subjectivity were among the disadvantages threatening the credibility of this study. That is to say, as the child's mother, the researcher could have unconscious biases that influence data collection and interpretation. To overcome these disadvantages, the researcher sought external validation, involving three other researchers in observing Sama and reviewing the collected data and the analysis process.

3-Types of Cartoons Sama has Viewed

Sama's exposure to television was purposely focused on educational cartoons that involved straightforward language, narration, interaction, and repetitive activities. These cartoons were originally created to develop, enhance, and reinforce kids' vocabulary, comprehension, and conversational abilities in an entertaining and approachable manner. It is important to highlight that all the programs Sama viewed featured an American accent. The intention behind concentrating on a single accent was to investigate whether she would adopt that particular accent.

Particularly, Sama watched a variety of English cartoons, such as Sofia the First, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Fancy Nancy, and so on. However, there were four shows that the researcher focused on expos-

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ing Sama to regularly because they were highly instructive and communicative. These were: Barney & Friends, Dora the Explorer, Doc McStuffins, and Mickey Mouse Clubhouse. The following is a brief description of the key focus in each of these shows.

1.Barney & Friends is a non-animated series in which Barney, a purple dinosaur, and his friends play games and sing songs while teaching things like colours, shapes, numbers, and important concepts, such as friendship, honesty, etc. Barney uses a lot of songs that employ repetition to teach new words. For instance, the song "If You're Happy and You Know It" teaches kids action phrases like shout, clap, and stomp. Additional examples of vocabulary used in Barney & Friends include common verbs like dance, sing, and play, and simple nouns like ball, flower, and tree.

2.Dora the Explorer is an animated series in which Dora, the main character, invites viewers to join her in various types of adventures that include problem-solving and exploration. The language used by Dora often includes questions that require interaction and response from the viewers. For instance, she frequently employs phrases such as "Can you find the...?" and "Let's go to the...," and uses basic nouns, verbs, and prepositions. Examples of vocabulary featured in Dora the Explorer include common items such as a backpack, map, mountain, and treasure, and actions like go, look, help, and find.

3.In the cartoon, Doc McStuffins, a young girl, Doc McStuffins, works in collaboration with her animal friends to "fix/treat" toys. Through her interactions with toy patients, Doc and her friends introduce basic medical concepts and highlight medical vocabulary using terms such as "check-up", "diagnosis", "stethoscope", "bandage", and "temperature". Additionally, the show emphasizes the value of empathy and kindness by frequently using verbs like "help", "comfort", and "care".

4.The animated program, Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, revolves around Mickey and his interactive adventures that encourage early problem-solving skills. In each episode, a problem is introduced by Mickey, who invites viewers to join him to solve the day's challenge. Mickey asks guiding questions during the episode to lead the viewers to answer the problem. The language in Mickey Mouse Clubhouse is simple and repetitive. It often uses clear, straightforward questions and

prompts to engage the audience, such as "Can you help me find the...?" or "What tool do we need?".

4.RESULTS

The analysis of Sama's English language growth over the three years of this case study revealed significant transitions and improvements. To facilitate the analysis and presentation of the results, the researcher categorized Sama's development during the three years into five key areas: vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, pronunciation, understanding and responding, and expressing emotions. It is noteworthy that during this study, Sama continued to acquire the Arabic language and use it in her home setting with her family members.

4.1.Vocabulary

This section focuses on Sama's vocabulary development and use during the three years.

1-At ages 2 to 3

Sama acquired a small amount of vocabulary, mostly nouns referring to objects in her immediate environment, such as common household items (e.g., "cups", "books", "balls", and familiar actions or daily activities like "running", "jumping", and "playing".

2-At ages 3 to 4

Sama's vocabulary expanded considerably. It consisted of more nouns, verbs, and simple adjectives. For example, she acquired exploration-related vocabulary (e.g., backpack, bridge, treasure, map), verbs (e.g., climb, swim), adjectives (e.g., big, red), and medical care terms (e.g., doctor, diagnosis, check-up, stethoscope). Moreover, she showed correct and meaningful use of this vocabulary during her daily playtime and interactions.

3-At ages 4 to 5

Sama's vocabulary became more advanced and involved references to abstract concepts. For instance, it involved terms that describe time (e.g., yesterday, tomorrow, later), and adjectives that describe feelings (e.g., excited, scared, tired). In addition, she could use more complex noun phrases to describe something (e.g., the tall, blue building).

4.2.Grammar and Sentence Structure

This section highlights Sama's language growth in sentence building and structure over the three years of the study.

1-At ages 2 to 3

Initially, Sama's sentences consisted of two-word phrases, which seemed to be ac-

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quired as chunks. Examples of these phrases were "mommy go" or "more juice". At this phase, Sama's utterances lacked functional words like articles, prepositions, or auxiliaries. By three years old, Sama began to utter three-word and longer phrases, which consisted of subject, verb, and object (e.g., "Daddy eat cookie"). Also, Sama demonstrated some use of pronouns (e.g., I, you). However, during this stage, she frequently omitted the subject from her sentences.

2-At ages 3 to 4

Sama incorporated additional elements such as articles, prepositions, and conjunctions into her sentences. Also, she used the plural and possessive /s/ markers (e.g., "my toys" and "mommy's shoes"). During this stage, Sama used negations and questions, which were clearly learned in the form of chunks (e.g., "I don't want it", "I can't do it", "what's that?", "Can you help me?").

At this phase, the present simple tense emerged in Sama's language (though sometimes without proper subject-verb agreement, as in "she play in the room"), and the progressive "-ing" marker. However, her use of auxiliaries, such as "is", was inconsistent. For instance, her utterances included both "The dog barking" and "The dog is barking", as well as "Mommy cooking dinner in the kitchen and daddy is sleeping".

3-At ages 4 to 5

Sama started experimenting with question-forming. The initial stage of forming questions involved omitting the auxiliary ("Daddy eating?"), but over time, she learned to produce accurate yes/no and WH question forms (e.g., "Is daddy eating?", and "What is daddy watching?"). Moreover, she followed a similar experimental path with forming negations, from early experimentation to complete mastery.

Furthermore, this stage marked the emergence of the past tense in Sama's utterances, which she used appropriately to refer to past events, tell a short story, and describe a sequence of events (e.g., "I dropped my toy and I breaked it"). However, she applied the "-ed" marker to all past verbs and did not produce any irregular past verb forms at this stage (e.g., "goed" instead of "went").

As she was nearly five, Sama's sentences became more complex and she started using relative clauses (e.g., "I want the toy that grandma bought me") and conditional clauses (e.g., "If I finish my snack, can I play

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with my friends?"). Moreover, Sama developed an understanding of time, which was evident in her ability to use the future tense to describe upcoming events (e.g., "I will eat my chocolate after lunch").

4.3. Pronunciation

This section examines Sama's phonological development over the three years, focusing on three dimensions: pronunciation accuracy, accent, and intonation.

1-At ages 2 to 3

Pronunciation Accuracy: Sama's speech was characterized by unclear articulation. She often simplified complex sounds. For example, she pronounced "rat" as "wat". (substituting "r" with "w"). Also, she often reduced consonant clusters (e.g., tr), pronouncing words like "train" as "rain". Generally, her production of vowel sounds was more accurate than her pronunciation of consonants at this stage.

Accent: From the outset of the study, Sama pronounced the vocabulary she acquired in a very similar way to what she heard on TV (i.e., in an American accent), despite the problems identified in the previous stage.

Intonation: Sama occasionally imitated some of the intonations she heard (e.g., using rising intonation at the end of "cookie?" to ask if she could have it). However, Sama's use of intonation at this stage was imprecise and inconsistent.

3-At ages 3 to 4

Pronunciation Accuracy: During this stage, Sama's pronunciation became clearer, and she overcame the difficulties she encountered in the previous stages (e.g., with consonant clusters). However, she experienced some problems in producing fricative sounds like "sh" and "th". For example, she pronounced "ship" as "sip", and "thorn" as "sorn".

Accent: Sama's accent continued to reflect the American input she received.

Intonation: Sama's use of intonation became more accurate and consistent. For instance, she consistently used rising intonation when asking questions.

3-At ages 4 to 5

Pronunciation Accuracy: This stage marked a notable improvement in Sama's pronunciation. She could produce most sounds correctly at this phase, except for fricative sounds, which she occasionally mispronounced.

Accent: Sama's accent at this stage was similar to a native American child her age.

Intonation: At this stage, Sama's intonation

was accurate; she used correct intonation patterns following the type of sentences she uttered, whether statements, questions, or exclamations.

4.4.Understanding and Responding

This section discusses Sama's reaction to input, focusing on her comprehension and response skills.

1-At ages 2 to 3

Sama could understand and follow basic instructions, such as the ones she viewed on Dora the Explorer or Mickey Mouse Clubhouse. For example, she could understand when Mickey says, "Are you ready?", answering with "yes". Also, Sama could respond to simple instructions from her mother in familiar and immediate everyday contexts, such as "Come here" or "Please pass the book". Her responses at this stage were restricted to "yes" and "no".

2-At ages 3 to 4

Sama showed improvement in this area, which was evident in her ability to understand more complex instructions that were not immediately context-bound, like "Can you find the key?". Her responses developed to include phrases like "I can't, and I don't know".

3-At ages 4 to 5

Sama's comprehension and response skills improved remarkably at this stage. She could follow multi-step directions (e.g., take the book and put it on the table). In addition, she could respond using more advanced phrases, like "of course", "it's heavy", and "Which one?".

4.5.Expressing Emotions

This section discusses Sama's use of English to describe her feelings.

1-At ages 2 to 3

Sama's expression of her emotions took place only when she was nearly three years old. Also, the initial stage was limited to using one word, often the following three adjectives: "happy, sad, mad". She used them interchangeably to express her feelings.

2-At ages 3 to 4

Sama's ability to express her feelings improved. She started to express her emotions more clearly and use more varied adjectives (e.g., scared, excited, sleepy).

3-At ages 4 to 5

Sama could express her emotions in addition to giving reasons for them. For example, she would say "I'm excited to play!" or "I feel sad because I lost my toy".

Table (1) below summarises the results of this case study.

Table (1): Summary of the Case Study Results

Developmental Area	**Age Range (Years)**	**Key Observations/ Findings**
Vocabulary	2 to 3	Acquired a limited vocabulary- mainly nouns referring to common items (e.g., books) and basic actions (e.g., running).
Vocabulary	3 to 4	Expanded vocabulary including nouns, verbs, and simple adjectives (e.g., backpack, climb, big).
Vocabulary	4 to 5	Acquired more complex and abstract words, such as time descriptors (e.g., yesterday); emotion adjectives (e.g., excited); and used descriptive phrases (e.g., the tall, blue building)
Grammar and Sentence Building	2 to 3	Formed two-word phrases (e.g. "Mommy go"); three-word phrases lacking function words; used pronouns inconsistently
Grammar and Sentence Building	3 to 4	Incorporated articles, prepositions, and conjunctions; applied plural and possessive markers; produced negations and questions as chunks (e.g., "What's that?" "I don't want it"); used present simple tense with inaccurate subject/verb agreement; used progressive tense but with inconsistent auxiliaries
Grammar and Sentence Building	4 to 5	Experimented with questions-formation initially omitting auxiliaries, then mastering yes/no and WH forms; used past tense (often overgeneralized with "-ed") and later used relative and conditional clauses, and future tense.
Pronunciation	2 to 3	Accuracy: unclear articulation of words with simplified and reduced consonant clusters; vowels produced more accurately than consonants; Accent: mimicked American TV; Intonation: inconsistent.
Pronunciation	3 to 4	Accuracy: clearer articulation of words ; overcame many consonant cluster issues; struggled with fricative sounds (e.g., "ship" → "sip");Accent: remained American; Intonation: improved, especially in questions

Pronunciation	4 to 5	Accuracy: marked improvement overall with most sounds produced correctly; occasional struggles with fricatives; Accent: matured to a Native American levelIntonation: was appropriate and varied for statements, questions, etc.
Understanding and Responding	2 to 3	Comprehension was limited to basic instructions from TVor her mother; responses were primarily "yes" or "no".
Understanding and Responding	3 to 4	Improved comprehension allowed for understanding more complex commands; responses included phrases like "I can't" or "I don't know".
Understanding and Responding	4 to 5	Significantly enhanced comprehension- capable of following multi-step directions; responses became more varied (e.g., "Of course", "it's heavy", "Which one?").
Expressing Emotions	2 to 3	Began to express emotions near age three using single-word adjectives (e.g., "happy", "sad", "mad") Interchangeably.
Expressing Emotions	3 to 4	Improved expression with a broader range of adjectives (e.g., scared, excited).
Expressing Emotions	4 to 5	Expressed emotions with added reasoning (e.g., "I'm excited to play!" or "I feel sad because I lost my toy").

5. DISCUSSION

The results of Sama's case study revealed that she progressed from not having any knowledge of English at age two to achieving a satisfactory level of proficiency by age five. Sama's English language development during the three years was observed and measured across five areas: vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure, pronunciation, understanding and responding, and expressing emotions.

The findings indicate that Sama's development across all five areas was closely linked to the content she observed on television, particularly during the early stage. At the initial phase of the research, Sama's mother did not engage with her in English; she was only an observer. Nonetheless, Sama mimicked the language she heard on TV, and this was detected across areas of vocabulary, grammar and sentence construction, pronunciation, understanding and responding, and emotional expression.

The evidence revealing that Sama was copying the content she watched on TV is that the words she used were not part of her

mother's commonly used vocabulary. Sama used words she was exposed to in programs such as Dora the Explorer (e.g., map, treasure), Doc McStuffins (e.g., diagnosis, check-up, feel better), and Mickey Mouse Clubhouse (e.g., tools, mystery, etc). The same observation was noted in her grammatical and sentence-building skills, pronunciation, understanding and responding, and emotional expression. This outcome highlights the influence of media on Sama's English language development. Moreover, the findings are consistent with the behaviourist [3] viewpoint regarding language acquisition, which underscores the role of environmental input on children's language acquisition and stresses that the language children acquire and produce is linked to the input they receive from their surroundings.

Moreover, a noteworthy observation was Sama's adoption of an American accent, which was influenced by the cartoons she watched. The evidence linking Sama's accent to the cartoons she watched is that the cartoons offered consistent examples of native American pronunciation. In contrast, Sama's mother, the only other source of English in Sama's environment, did not possess an American accent and spoke English inconsistently with her. This indicates that the media input was the main reason for Sama's American accent development. This finding further supports the behaviourist perspective [3] and their emphasis on the significant role of environmental exposure. In this case, Sama's consistent exposure to English through cartoons, which all featured an American accent, resulted in her speaking English with an American accent.

Moreover, Sama's acquisition of an American accent echoes the research findings of Alghonaim [11], Poštič [12], Trota et al. [14], and Tobias [19], who reported that children who frequently watch English cartoons tend to adopt the accents presented in those cartoons. Just like Sama, the children in the studies by Alghonaim [11], Poštič [12], and Trota et al. [14] acquired English in non-English-speaking environments. This indicates that children's acquisition of native English accents in these studies was primarily tied to the received media input. In line with these findings, Tobias [19] stressed that children's pronunciation is strongly affected by the phonetic input they receive in their daily environment. Further, Tobias [19] emphasized that if children receive

constant English input with a non-native accent, whether from their teacher or other people around them, they are likely to adopt similar pronunciation patterns in their own spoken English. These observations indicate that the accent children adopt is influenced by the type and amount of input they receive in that accent.

Furthermore, the analysis of Sama's progress in the subsequent stages across all five areas revealed two important findings. First, Sama's English language growth followed similar developmental stages observed in children acquiring their first language [2-4], such as acquiring concrete before abstract terms, progressing from the one-word stage to the two-word stage, and advancing to more complex sentences. Also, Sama acquired easier sounds before more complex ones, and so on. This finding aligns with the nativist perspective, which maintains that all children acquire language following similar phases [3].

Second, as Sama advanced through stages, it seemed that she was experimenting with the language she learned, producing utterances that could not have been based on imitation. This was observed through the errors she made, which could not have been learned from television or her mother. Notable examples of these errors include using grammatical rules where they do not apply, such as using the "-ed" past tense marker with irregular verbs. This observation indicates that Sama was building and extending her own understanding of English grammar, using information from the cartoons and her mother's input, who consistently used the "-ed" marker for regular verbs. This outcome is supported by Chomsky's nativist perspective [3], which postulates that children have an inborn ability to acquire language and construct their own grammar by making their own conclusions and generalizations.

Another important factor to consider in discussing the results of Sama's case study is the role of interaction with her mother. Sama's interaction with her mother did not start from the beginning of the study but took place as Sama started addressing her mother in English. Specifically, whenever Sama spoke English, her mother responded in English; when Sama used Arabic, her mother replied in Arabic. The role of this interaction cannot be overlooked in this study. It can be assumed that Sama's communication with her mother has played a significant role in reinforcing

and accelerating her language development, specifically in the area of understanding and responding.

That is to say, although Sama's exposure to interactive cartoons (i.e., Barney and Friends, Mickey Mouse Clubhouse, and Dora the Explorer) facilitated her comprehension and response skills by requiring her to engage actively, these programs offered limited and repetitive language. On the other hand, Sama's interactions with her mother were dynamic, varied, and took place in a live, reciprocal context. Therefore, it can be concluded that Sama's development in this domain (i.e., understanding and responding) was more significantly influenced by her interactions with her mother than by watching TV. This observation supports the interactionist perspectives [3] that emphasize the importance of conversational interactions with the environment on language development alongside other contributing factors.

Additionally, the impact of the role played by Sama's mother in this study can be discussed in light of Vygotsky's social constructivist theory, particularly his emphasis on the role of Scaffolding in the learning process. Scaffolding refers to the assistance given to a child by a more knowledgeable person (e.g., mother) to learn things and tackle tasks that are beyond the child's current capabilities (i.e., the Zone of Proximal Development) [20]. Vygotsky maintained that with appropriate scaffolding/support, the child acquires skills and knowledge that enable them to accomplish similar tasks independently in the future [20]. It is safe to assume that the findings of this study correspond with Vygotsky's views. Particularly, Sama's mother's responsive behavior (e.g., addressing Sama in English when Sama speaks it) indicates that Sama received scaffolding when she needed it. This response from Sama's mother undoubtedly helped Sama in all areas of her language development, including meaning-negotiating, vocabulary use, and so on. That is to say, Sama's mother was competent in English, which represented an accurate language model for Sama to follow and to enhance and consolidate her language development.

Therefore, the overall discussion of the results suggests that language development in children can be ascribed to multiple factors (i.e., environmental input, innate ability, environmental interaction, and environmental scaffolding) that function in harmony,

each playing a role in fostering adequate language proficiency. In the case of Sama, each of these factors contributed to her overall development of a satisfactory level of English language proficiency.

The findings from Sama's case study align with the findings of Linebarger and Walker [7], Alghonaim [11], Poštič [12], Tamba [13], Trota et al. [14], and Tobias [19] that exposure to appropriate and purposefully selected educational cartoons can result in adequate language competence among children. The findings also resonate with Krashen's [5] assertion that learning under relaxing and enjoyable circumstances (such as watching cartoons) can result in natural, effortless, and improved language learning outcomes. Furthermore, the findings of this research are consistent with the study by Barr and Wyss (10), which emphasizes that conversational exchanges with the environment are essential, alongside other elements, in fostering language development in children.

Moreover, a significant discovery from this study was that the conditions provided for Sama in this case study (i.e., watching English cartoons, and interacting with her mother in English) resulted in her becoming bilingual at the age of five years old. That is to say that Sama exhibited adequate competence in both Arabic and English simultaneously. This discovery aligns with the assertions made by Krashen [5] and Savile-Troike [6] that children can acquire two languages if they are sufficiently exposed to them at an early age and at the same time.

This study adds to the literature by examining the impact of watching English cartoons on children's English language development in the Libyan context. The insights derived from this study can be used to contribute to learning and teaching English in Libya, both in home settings and in schools.

In the home environment, parents can facilitate their children's acquisition of the English language besides their Arabic language by exposing them to carefully selected educational English cartoons from an early age. In this respect, parents are advised to wisely consider the type of cartoons, ensuring their cultural themes are age-appropriate and Libyan culture-appropriate, and that they contain no violent content. This step is crucial to ensure that the cartoons do not negatively impact their children. In addition, it is recommended that parents co-view with their

children to check the content appropriateness and to engage with children in discussions related to what they view. This interaction is important for enhancing and reinforcing language development, and to avoid the child being completely immersed in the screen rather than engaged with their environment. Finally, it is important to set limits for screen time to prevent the disadvantages of excessive screen watching on children, such as harming their eyesight. It is worth noting that the same recommendation applies to older English language learners, who can seek various language learning benefits from watching English language programs.

In English language learning classrooms, whether targeting children or older learners, teachers are strongly advised to integrate purposeful English cartoons or entertaining programs/movies into their lessons. This integration can offer various advantages. To begin with, exposing students to amusing content can increase their engagement and motivation for learning [5]. Additionally, these programs can provide meaningful input for learning various aspects of the English language, such as correct pronunciation, varied contextualized vocabulary, accurate sentence structures, and so on [11], [12], [13], [14], and [19]. Respectively, teachers are advised to carefully plan their lessons to increase the benefit of this integration. The lessons should include pre-viewing activities that activate students' prior knowledge about the content and prepare them for viewing it. Also, lessons should involve follow-up interactive activities that highlight the language used, discuss, and reflect the content. These steps can elevate the benefits of incorporating English TV viewing in English language learning classrooms.

Despite offering insightful information, the study has limitations, such as a limited sample size that prevents the generalization of the results. Future research with bigger sample sizes could help validate and extend the findings of this study. Moreover, it is crucial to remember that in this study, watching cartoons has only been linked to improving oral language skills in early childhood. Respectively, it is recommended that future research address how to develop children's reading and writing skills through similar approaches. For example, future researchers can pair cartoon viewing with the same-language subtitles and investigate the impact on children's word recognition, decoding accuracy,

and reading fluency. Alternatively, future research can examine the impact of pairing cartoon segments with print-based storybooks on narrative comprehension and print awareness.

6.CONCLUSION

This case study examined the impact of watching English cartoons on a child's English language acquisition. Sama, the subject of this case study, was observed for three years, particularly from when she was two until she reached five years old. During this period, Sama was exposed to instructive and interactive English cartoons that were purposefully selected to help her develop English language competence. At the same time, Sama had the opportunity to interact occasionally in English with her mother. However, in her home, the linguistic environment remained Arabic, and she consistently communicated in Arabic with her other family members.

The case study results revealed that Sama acquired a good level of English language competence by the age of five, which was very similar to a five-year-old native speaker. Particularly, Sama demonstrated adequate English proficiency across five areas: vocabulary, grammar and sentence building, pronunciation, understanding and responding, and emotion-expressing. This achievement was mainly attributed to Sama's exposure to and engagement with English cartoons, Sama's innate abilities for language learning, her interactions with her mother, and the support she received from her mother.

The findings of this study highlight the complex nature of language development, which is influenced by several interrelated factors. It is affected by the input received from the surrounding environment. Additionally, it is guided by inherent abilities that are part of the biological nature of typical children. Moreover, the environmental input and inherent capabilities must be reinforced by active engagement and interaction with the environment to support and advance language development.

Furthermore, the provision of these factors can create a good opportunity for children to become simultaneous bilinguals, which refers to acquiring more than one native language at the same time. Language acquisition is most sensitive and effective during early childhood. Therefore, languages other than children's first can be easily acquired if children are exposed to them at an early age.

In the same respect, when exposure

to language takes place through amusing and appealing means, like cartoons, language develops more effectively and naturally. When this exposure involves two languages concurrently with a carefully considered approach, children can acquire a native-like proficiency in these languages. Sama's case study provides evidence for these observations, demonstrating that exposing children to wisely selected cartoons can significantly promote the acquisition of a second language, in addition to the first, particularly at the oral level (i.e., speaking and listening skills). The findings from Sama's case study highlight the need for further investigation into how media can complement and enrich language learning and teaching methods, both for children and older learners.

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