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## **BENEFITS OF SILENT CARTOONS FOR COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE MASTERY IN EFL CLASSROOMS**

In the context of 21st-century education, the demand for engaging and effective teaching methods has led to a re-evaluation of traditional language learning tools. Silent cartoons, which use gestures, expressions, and actions to convey meaning, provide an accessible and flexible resource for EFL teachers. These materials encourage active language use, stimulate creativity, boost students' oral and written productive and interactive skills, and foster cross-cultural understanding.

EFL classrooms often face challenges such as limited exposure to authentic language use, a lack of engaging materials, and the need to cater to diverse learning styles. From our point of view, **silent cartoons** can bridge these gaps by creating a non-intimidating and immersive environment.

*A silent cartoon* refers to an animated short film that relies on visual storytelling without the use of spoken dialogue or sound. These cartoons use *gestures, expressions, and actions* to convey meaning, allowing viewers to interpret the story through non-verbal cues. They are generally accompanied by music, which helps the viewer delve into the general atmosphere and/or particular situations

Silent cartoons' visual nature aids comprehension, while their adaptability supports differentiated instruction across various proficiency levels. Furthermore, silent cartoons align with Michael Fullan's 6 Cs of 21st-century education – critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, communication, citizenship, and character – by promoting skills that go beyond linguistic development (Fullan & Duckworth, 2015). The *primary aim of this thesis* is to explore how silent cartoons can effectively enhance learners' linguistic competence in EFL classrooms. So, specific objectives include:

- developing learners' active and passive vocabulary;
- enhancing grammatical accuracy through contextualized activities;
- fostering oral and written communication skills;
- promoting empathy, emotional intelligence, and creativity.

Moreover, silent cartoons present a range of *benefits* for EFL teaching, including:

- *focusing on visual context*, as without spoken dialogue, they encourage learners to infer meaning from visual cues such as body language, facial expressions, and actions. This helps build comprehension skills by making students more attentive to non-verbal communication.

- *stimulating active language use* since they create opportunities for students to actively engage in storytelling. This encourages vocabulary usage, sentence structure, and spontaneous language production.

- *promoting imagination and creativity*, as they allow learners to create their own dialogues or captions, stimulating creative thinking. This can help develop their speaking and writing skills by pushing them to come up with imaginative language use and varied sentence forms.

- *adaptability for different proficiency and age levels and a variety of lessons*. Beginners can focus on basic vocabulary, while more advanced learners can tackle complex descriptions, interpretations, and predictions.

- *accessibility to young learners* because, without the complexity of spoken dialogue, silent cartoons are easily understood by young or beginner EFL

learners. They can still enjoy and learn from the content without feeling overwhelmed by unfamiliar language.

- ***bringing cross-cultural insights.*** Many silent cartoons rely on universal themes or humor, making them suitable for culturally diverse classrooms.
- ***creating a non-intimidating environment*** since they remove the pressure of understanding fast or complex spoken language, making learners feel less intimidated. Silent cartoons can engage with the content at their own pace, reducing anxiety and building confidence in language learning.
- ***promoting multimodal learning,*** since silent cartoons rely heavily on visuals, appealing to visual learners. This reinforces vocabulary, grammar, and context through imagery, which aids retention and understanding of language concepts.
- ***encouraging collaboration,*** as watching silent cartoons in groups motivates learners to collaborate as they try to interpret and explain the scenes together. Group discussions around what's happening in the story promote communicative skills and teamwork.
- ***focusing on language production,*** as they give learners the freedom to create their own dialogue or narrative. This develops *speaking and writing fluency* through activities like writing scripts or performing role-play based on the cartoon.
- ***developing critical thinking*** through analyzing characters' actions and predicting outcomes, which helps develop critical thinking skills, essential in language learning and beyond.
- ***introducing story structure*** through simple presentation, following basic storytelling structures like beginning, middle, and end. Teachers can use them to teach narrative structure, sequencing, and time markers in language.
- ***promoting empathy and emotional intelligence.*** Since silent cartoons rely on non-verbal communication, learners must observe facial expressions and body language closely to understand emotions. This builds emotional intelligence and empathy, as they interpret how characters feel and react.

In conclusion, silent cartoons offer a powerful tool for enhancing linguistic competence in EFL classrooms. Their adaptability, accessibility, and multimodal nature make them an ideal resource for promoting vocabulary, grammar, and communication skills in TEFL for various student ages and proficiency levels.

### **REFERENCES**

- Fullan, M. and Duckworth, S. (2015). *21st Century Skills: 6 Cs of Education*.
- Sherman, J. (2010). *Using Authentic Video in the Language Classroom*. UK: Cambridge University Press.