

Online Cartoon in Mandarin Chinese Teaching: A Case Study of a School in Indonesia

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Abstract: This research aims to 1) describe the use of technology in Budi Utama Multi-lingual School in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2) investigate the development of students' Chinese vocabulary used in creating a story on online cartoon, and 3) identify students' attitude towards the application of collaborative learning in Mandarin language learning. The research design is based on a quasi-experiment using both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyze data. Three classes participated in this study: one class acting as the control group using text-based instruction where students work individually on a cartoon without online resources; the other two classes being the experimental groups 1 and 2. In experimental group 1, students worked individually on an online cartoon whereas in experimental group 2, students worked collaboratively to an online cartoon. All participants are Grade 5 students of Budi Utama Multi-lingual School in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The collected and analyzed data include performances on Chinese vocabulary, notes, and video recordings of lessons. It is anticipated that experimental group 2 outperforms the other two groups and that experimental group 1 performs better than the control group

Keywords: online cartoon, Mandarin Chinese, collaborative learning, computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL), technology-enhanced language learning (TELL)

1. Introduction

Presently Mandarin is an increasingly popular language to learn around the world and it has the largest number of people who speak it as their first language. In Indonesia there were more than 620 Mandarin schools during 1965-1966. However, due to the political problems, most of those schools were forced to close in 1967 (Wen, 1997). After 1998 reformation, especially under President Abdurrahman Wahid (also known as Gus Dur) a new policy in relation to Chinese Indonesians was implemented.

The trends in the period of 2012-2017 are: workplace is increasingly collaborative, driving changes in the way student projects are structured; the abundance of resources and relationship made easily accessible via internet is increasingly challenging us to revisit our roles as educators; education paradigms are shifting to include online learning and collaborative models; and there is a new emphasis in the classroom on more challenge-based and active learning (New Media Consortium (NMC) Horizon Report, 2012). Cartoon, both manual and online has positive effects on students. Cartoon engages attention and serves as entertainment; moreover it presents information in a non-threatening manner (Clark, 2000). Moreover, cartoon can also be used as stimuli to encourage thinking and discussion skills (Doring, 2002). Another research shows that students who learn using cartoon achieve higher test scores and provides examples of why they enjoy learning in this manner. By using cartoon the students engage themselves in self-motivated practice (Rule & Auge, 2005). Additionally, most of the studies are text-based or teacher-centered rather than interaction or communication-based (Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008). From the previous studies mentioned above it can be concluded that online cartoon in TELL and CSCL studies is still a potential research area.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Cartoon Online

The simplified visual representation and the recurrent plot typical of cartoons help the students to elicit their interest. Students have assessed cartoons positively as they add fun to the course, make learning easier, and provide permanence. They can reduce repetition and allow teacher to run classes without the need for textbooks. They also make remembering words easy and promote creative skills and motivate students to learn (Jylhä-Laide, 1994).

The website www.toondoo.com offers a free and payment online cartoon platform that allows students to pick up some parts of their lesson in order to create their own lesson notes and their own file as a cartoon. On that column, learners can choose the shape of the cartoon (box), the personality, the background, the caption, etc. They can also store their cartoons and then create a cartoon book. Further, learners may publish their cartoons on line or keep them private.



Figure 1. Example of cartoon using www.toondoo.com

2.2 Collaborative Learning and CSCL

Long (1990) names four advantages of group work, namely it 1) increases the quantity of language practice opportunity, 2) improves the quality of students talk in several ways, 3) helps individualize instruction, potentially allowing students to work at their own pace, probably using different materials, and 4) can help improve the affective atmosphere in the classroom, the intimacy of the small group setting often being especially valuable, without being shy or linguistically insecure students. Collaborative learning (or peer-assisted learning) can improve the cognitive activity of students (Hartup, 1992) and their reading outcomes (Greenwood, 1996; Ghaith, 2003; Slavin, 1988). Collaborative learning can also increase motivation and satisfaction (Ushioda, 1996), as well as the enthusiasm of students through the achievement of goals as a group (Nichols & Miller, 1994).

CSCL is synchronous cooperation/collaboration through shared workspaces (Baker & Lund, 1996; Plötzner et al., 1996). Yet, most of the empirical studies using innovative CSCL-specific tools (beyond windows sharing as part of video conferencing sessions, etc.) were usually based on selective experiments, often in the laboratory (Fischer & Mandl, 2001).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

Mixed between qualitative and quantitative approaches would be used to collect and analyze data. The research design would be based on quasi-experiment.

3.2 Research Participants

Students of Grade 5 were the participants of the research. There were three classes participating in this study: students in the control group were taught in text-based instruction and individually work on cartoons without online resources; those in experimental group 1 created online cartoons individually;

and those in experimental group 2 worked collaboratively to create online cartoons.

3.3 Research Procedure

The research was conducted in the early weeks of school year 2013/ 2014 (July-September, 2013). One week before the school starts, the researchers needed to make sure that computer and the internet work well. The experimental classes got 1-2 week trainings on how to operate the computer and how to access www.toondoo.com. The procedure consists of four phases.

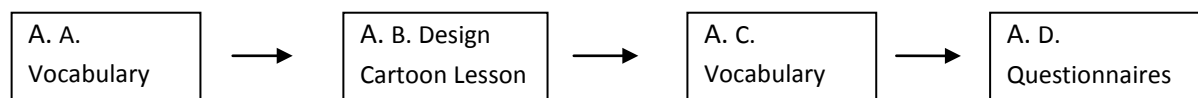


Figure 2. The Research Phases

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