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CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMMES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE ORACY SKILL OF A YOUNG SECOND LANGUAGE VIEWER

Universiti Utara Malaysia

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CHILDREN'S TELEVISION PROGRAMMES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE ORACY SKILL OF A YOUNG SECOND LANGUAGE VIEWER

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By

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2011

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this thesis is my own except for quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRAK

Program televisyen kanak-kanak telah didapati oleh kebanyakan penyelidik sebagai satu medium yang berkesan untuk meningkatkan kebolehan literasi dan bertutur di kalangan kanak-kanak. Walaupun terdapat beberapa hujah yang bertentangan tentang impak program television kanak-kanak (Wilson, 2008; Cantor, 2002), terdapat juga beberapa kajian (Anderson & Pempek, 2005; Moses, 2008; Howard & Roberts, 2002) telah membuktikan bahawa sekiranya kanak-kanak didedahkan dengan pelbagai program pendidikan di televisyen, berpandukan tunjuk ajar dan bimbingan yang berkualiti daripada para ibu bapa, mereka mampu menunjukkan kesan yang positif dalam kemahiran bertutur dan lama-kelamaan akan menonjol dalam kemahiran membaca dan menulis mereka di pra-sekolah. Kertas kerja ini melaporkan hasil kajian ke atas program televisyen kanak-kanak yang menunjukkan impak yang positif ke atas perkembangan literasi mereka yang berumur antara 3 ke 5 tahun. Persoalan kajian ini adalah bagaimana program televisyen kanak-kanak membantu meningkatkan kemahiran bertutur mereka di dalam Bahasa Inggeris? Metodologi kajian ini melibatkan kajian kes khusus, berpendekatan pemerhatian yang teliti, yang dijalankan pada dua peringkat usia yang berlainan terhadap seorang subjek, semasa beliau berumur empat tahun, dan setelah beliau meningkat usia ke lima tahun. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk melihat perbandingan dalam kemahiran berkomunikasi oleh subjek dalam Bahasa Inggeris pada dua peringkat usia yang berbeza. Data dikumpulkan dalam bentuk hasil pemerhatian, interaksi yang dirakamkan di antara subjek dengan ahli-ahli, analisa tentang kandungan program yang ditonton subjek dan beberapa nota lapangan yang berkaitan, yang direkodkan dalam dua jangka masa yang berlainan mengikut umur subjek, pertama dalam satu minggu dan kedua, dalam empat bulan dengan pemerhatian yang teliti. Hasil perbincangan akan merumuskan sejauh mana program televisyen kanak-kanak mempengaruhi perbendaharaan kata kanak-kanak di dalam Bahasa Inggeris, interaksi subjek dengan ahli-ahli keluarganya semasa menonton program sasaran, dan perkembangan komunikasi subjek di dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini juga mencadangkan beberapa cara untuk membantu para ibu bapa dan guru menggalakkan awal literasi di kalangan kanak-kanak melalui program televisyen kanak-kanak, dan membantu mereka memilih program yang sesuai dan menarik untuk ditonton oleh kanak-kanak di peringkat pra-sekolah.

ABSTRACT

Children's television programmes have been discovered by many researchers as an excellent path towards literacy and oracy among young children. Although many contrary arguments are given by certain people regarding the impact of television programmes among young viewers (Wilson, 2008; Cantor, 2002) some studies (Anderson & Pempek, 2005; Moses,2008; Howard & Roberts, 2002) have proven that if the children are exposed to a lot of educational programmes and with proper guidance from their parents and teachers, they unexpectedly reveal more positive learning in oracy skill and gradually show positive performance in reading and writing as they embark in preschool. The present paper reports on the positive impact of children's television programmes among young children between 3 and 5 portraying literacy. The research question is how do the children's television programmes help to improve the oracy skill of a second language child? The methods include two phases of case study. First, a closed and intense observation is conducted when the subject is 4 years old, and the second phase is conducted when the same subject grow older to 5 years old. This research compares the progress of communicative level in second language on the same subject in two different period of time. Data in the form of observations, recorded interactions between the boy and members of his family, content analysis of the programmes watched and field notes were collected within one intense week for the first stage, and 4 intense months for the second stage. The discussion of findings will include how far the children's television programmes affect the second language child's oracy through his vocabulary, the interaction that he does while watching the target programmes and the progress of his communicative level in second language. This study also suggests ways for parents and teachers to promote early literacy practices through children's television programmes and help them to identify the characteristics of suitable attractive programs for their preschool learners.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Television is essentially seen as a powerful teacher, presenting in a particularly effective way all kinds of lessons containing both desirable (e.g. educational / factual information or pro-social messages) and undesirable material (e.g. violence, stereotyping, consumerism) (Howard & Roberts, 2002). It is undeniably true that television programmes may affect children or young viewers in many aspects, specifically in their cognitive skills, social behaviours and achievements in later stages of development. Although some researchers such as Wilson (2008) and Cantor (2002) oppose the views of having benefits of television programmes to children, they do not agree on violence and negative aspects in certain programmes especially commercials and entertainments which are obviously not suitable for children at young age and teenagers. As Wilson (2008) adds, violent television programming contributes to children's aggressive behavior, and a growing body of work indicates that playing violent video games can have the same harmful effect. But if children spend time with educational programmes, media exposure can have more

prosocial effects by increasing children's altruism, cooperation and even tolerance for others.

What are children's television programmes?

According to Collins Italian Dictionary (1995), children's television programmes are designed for and marketed to children, normally aired during the morning and afternoon hours, mainly before and after school. The purpose of the show is mainly to entertain and sometimes to educate the young audience about basic life skills or ideals. These programmes vary in their intended age group audience and style of presentation. Some take the form of game shows, comedies, animated series, puppetry and even human characters involved with children. These educational programmes are widely viewed not only through ordinary or satellite television channels, but they can also be discovered through the Internet, or purchasing of children's educational video-compact disc (VCD) and digital-versatile disc (DVD) in mostly standard bookstores.

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1.2 Background of Study

The present study contains the case study of 4 years old boy, which involves his mother as the researcher, who aims to produce a very naturalistic observation and genuine result as much as she could get into. This study is conducted in two periods of time,: the first stage is when the subject was 4 years old, and the second stage is when he grew older to 5 and 6 years old. This comparison of time is significant in order to identify the difference in the

patterns of the child's communicative skill in English as his second language. The study focuses on how children's television programmes help to improve the oracy skill of the second language boy as he comes from a typical Malay background and uses *Bahasa Malaysia* as the first language at home. Although in this study the subject involved only watched children's educational channels from ASTRO or satellite television, other channels of television programmes that can easily be reached by parents are also useful, such as *Sesame Street* in national television channel-TV2, *Blues Clues* in TV9 channel, *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse* in TV3 channel and lots of children's educational programs which can be purchased easily in the form of VCD and DVD. Parents and educators should be a good supervisor and monitor the viewing programme if they would like to see how far children's educational programmes help to improve the literacy process and early language development of their own children. This study also provides some suggestions on how parents and educators can contribute their important roles in shaping their children's character and behavior through beneficial children's television programs.

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1.3 Statement of Problem

Most of parents nowadays disagree if their young children watch television too much. They are afraid of the strong influence of television that may affect their children's behavior, and they believe that it causes harmful effects. Thus, children should be prohibited from watching a large amount of programmes especially which demonstrates violence and immoral values. However, as Moses (2008) concludes in her several studies, children's television

programmes are significant in order to promote early literacy since their early age. The results indicate that moderate amounts of television viewing were found to be beneficial for reading, the content of programmes viewed by children matters, and the programmes that aim to promote literacy in young children have been found to positively impact specific early literacy skills. Therefore, this study aims to explore how children's television programmes may help our young children to improve their literacy and oracy skills since their early age of three, four and five years old, as these stages of age are very significant and critical time to promote early literacy. Besides, children's television programmes could be a good attractive medium of encouraging our children to master all four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking as early as they could before they start going to school, and this phenomena will contribute a major positive impact on our future generation.

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1.4 Research Objectives

The general aim of this research is to study the effect of children's television programmes on the oracy skill of a young second language child. The specific objectives of this study are to:

1. identify the vocabulary and sentence structures acquired by the subject while watching the target children's television programmes.

2. record the interaction between the subject and his family members while watching the target children's television programmes.

3. examine the patterns in second language communication as the subject grows older.

1.5 Research Questions

This research will answer these questions:

1) How do the contents of children's television programmes help to improve the English oracy skill of a young child?

2) What kind of English sentence structures are uttered by the subject while watching the children's television programmes?

3) Are there any differences between the subject's two stages of ages in the interaction between the subject and his family members while watching the target children television programmes in terms of

(i) English sentence structures and

(ii) interaction patterns?

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1.6 Research Significance

This study is considered important for a number of reasons. First, early literacy is promoted widely in today's world of advanced knowledge, and as one of our government's missions is to eradicate illiteracy among our primary children, we should find creative and interesting ways to encourage our young children to read, write and speak proficiently before they step into their preschool age. One of the creative ways is through media especially television, as it has been proved by many researchers that children are more attractive to learn by exploring the world of colors, shapes, sounds and animations. As

Kirkorian, Wartella & Anderson (2008) describe on this positive effect of educational programmes on our young children, early exposure to violent and non-educational entertainment programming was positively associated with later symptoms of attention disorder but exposure to educational television was not related to attentional problems (p. 45). Moreover, Beentjees & Van der Voort (1988, as cited in Koolstra, Van der Voort & Van der Kamp, 1997) argue that television promotes the development of children's reading skills through the practice resulting from the reading texts and subtitles displayed in television programmes.

Next, I personally believe that as a mother and an educator, I should be a good selective supervisor for my children's best education. This is my prime reason for searching a wide range of information and knowledge regarding these children's television programmes, and examining the relevant researches and studies that could help me to understand better, whether my action of agreeing with my son's interest in watching the children's television programmes is worth or not for his future achievement. Thus, it is hopefully a good model of giving our children the best way of exploring their own world through creative and fun learning, rather than we as the parents try to force them to learn without understanding their needs and interests.

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1.7 Limitations of the Study

Bias is the first issue that was raised in this study. However, practically, doing a case study was not as easy as others would think and say. As the subject's mother, and also the researcher, I needed to cope with this issue because it is natural when observing my own child, others will think that I am 'promoting' and highlighting him for many reasons. Truthfully, I just hope that this study will contribute a good different view on how our children should be given an exposure of early literacy so that they could cope with today's world of advanced learning. There were a lot of problems that I encountered in the midst of doing this case study, for example, in order to have a spontaneous interaction of my son when he watched the children's television programmes, it was not an easy task to handle his curiosity of looking at the video camera recording him. Disturbance and interruption from other family members especially the subject's younger brother, also contributed to this problem. Thus, it was a difficult process, and I do hope that bias will be considered as a minor issue when this study is reviewed.

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The short period of time of conducting this study is also another issue. A longitudinal study should be conducted in future, but due to the fact that I could not have that much time for now as this study is my requirement for Master degree, I do hope that these three years of study will reveal an excellent result that may help our parents and teachers to overcome the illiteracy issue among our children. However, the result of this study should not be

generalized to represent all children around us. It should be adapted and revised according to their level of ability and proficiency.

1.8 Definitions

There are a few definitions take place in this research:

Subject refers to the four /five years old boy who has been intensely observed in this research.

The researcher in this study refers to the mother of the subject (the boy).

The target Children's television programmes in this study refer to the English children's educational programmes that are watched regularly by the subject.

Early literacy refers to coping with skills of reading and writing at the early age of three, four and five years old.

Oracy skill in this study refers to speaking skill and communicative competence of a young child.

The first stage of the study refers to the period of time when the researcher conducted the case study at the age of four of the subject.

The second stage of the study refers to the period of time when the researcher conducted the case study at the age of five and six of the subject.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has provided an insight to the study. The following chapter will provide relevant literature review to support this study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section shall provide some underlying theories on the positive influences of children's television programmes on young children's literacy development and oracy skill in second language. Then, it will provide a conceptual framework of this research.

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2.2 Active-Viewing Model

Anderson and Lorch (1983) and Huston and Wright (1989) propose a model known as the active viewing model which sees the child as an active processor, determined to master the images and implicit messages of the medium and to decode its structure as well as its content. This model supports many researchers who believe that content of television programmes is the subject that matters and very important to enhance children's skills of development. It also views that children are cognitively engaged with television content for their own goals and reasons and therefore, they are not a passive viewer.

Moses (2008) also agrees as she explains that children actively attend to television programmes although attention depends, in part, on the comprehensibility of the programmes and the formal features involved. Thus, the content of television programmes plays a significant role in children's viewing time.

2.3 The Positive Contents of Educational Programmes

This model is also supported by the second study which posits that the content and not just the amount of programming that children view matters (Huston & Wright, 1998). They believe that different kinds of content will influence viewers in different ways, for example, educational content will likely benefit young viewers whereas non-educational content especially violence, will impose negative impact on them. Furthermore, in the case of literacy, educational content is believed to bring a lot of positive values that generate children to read and write, even speak better and faster than the children who are not directly exposed to the television content. As Zill, Davies & Daly (1994) reported, based on their collected survey information, children who watched *Sesame Street* (as one of the most famous children educational programmes which was firstly viewed in 1969), had better school-related skills in kindergarten than did non-viewers. This report is also supported by one longitudinal study conducted by Rice et.al. (1990) which revealed that viewing *Sesame Street* between ages three and five predicted improvements in receptive vocabulary at age of five. A recent study conducted by Anderson et.al. (2001) also proved the same positive feedback, when these same students were studied

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as adolescents; preschool viewers of child-audience informative programs had higher grades in high school than did nonviewers, even with controls for family characteristics. Therefore, it is the content of the educational programmes that brings greater impact in children's development.

2.4 Emergent Literacy Perspectives

The third study emphasizes on emergent literacy which the educators refer to as the children's natural development of reading and writing skills. As Beaty and Pratt (2007) explain, by the ages three to five, children are fully engaged in emerging into early literacy, involving listening, speaking and their own experimental reading and writing, especially if the adults around them support their literacy efforts by providing materials and activities for them to progress (p.5). This perspective can be tightly linked to the functions of children's television or educational programmes as a helpful mediator to promote early literacy among children. Print literacy events in the educational programmes may generate reading and writing skills among young children, even listening and speaking ability. According to Moses and Duke (2008), print literacy events in programming could include:

(a) titles and segments that appear in print on screen and are read aloud by a character or narrator;

(b) characters reading, writing or listening to print being read aloud;

(c) characters modeling different uses and types of print; and

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(d) environmental print in scenes and segments, all of which children may see in the many hours of programming they view.

Therefore, it can be concluded that exposure to print and its different functions and features also influence children's literacy development. However, parents and educators are suggested to have a consistent co-viewing with their children to have a wise selection of educational programmes that bring more progress in literacy, rather than having fun and enjoyable moments only.

In order to look further how children's television programmes help to improve literacy skill among young children between age three to five or preschoolers, we need to conduct a detailed study to obtain a genuine data and result. Bongartz and Schneider (2003) conducted a similar study of ethnography to Schneider's two sons in order to explore notions of success in second language acquisition (SLA) in terms of social interaction and linguistic inventory. The two English-speaking boys, aged 5 and 7, acquired German for one year in an immersion context. The result showed that the boys developed well both in social and linguistic plane in second language. Schneider is the participant observer in this study and this obviously indicates that in a case study, it is necessary for any family members to involve with in order to obtain the most naturalistic behavior and environment that the qualitative research need to have in this case. Children especially preschoolers, get along with their parents or familiar people very well, thus, in order to avoid any uncomfortable feelings and awkward situation, I think it is better for me, as a mother and as a

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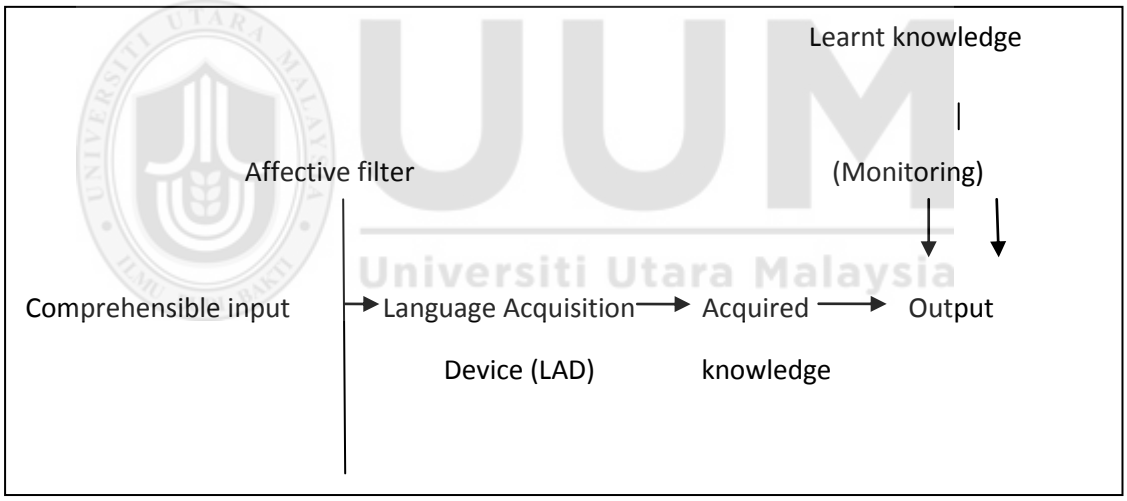
researcher to observe my four-year-old son in a specific conducive way to obtain as much as naturalistic result that we could have from the study.

2.5 Conceptual Framework on Children's Television Programmes and Oracy Skill of a Young Child in Second Language

Krashen's (1982) theoretical framework of The Input Hypothesis can be used to construct a conceptual framework for this research. Figure 1 below indicates the theoretical framework of the Input Hypothesis of Krashen's.

Figure 1: Framework of The Input Hypothesis Model from Krashen (1982)



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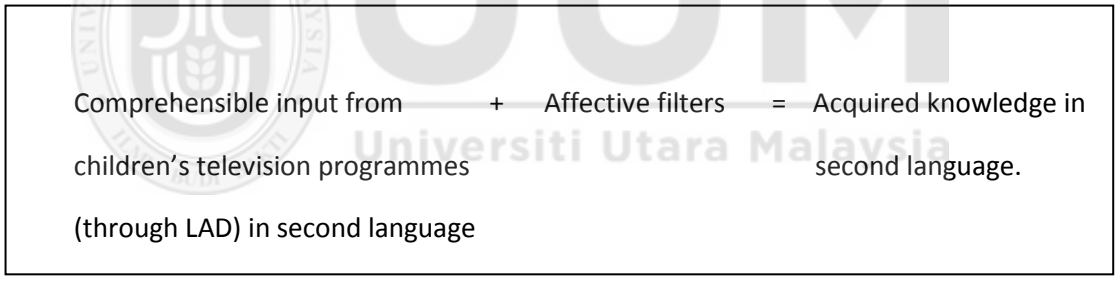
According to the above framework, as Krashen (1982) suggests, the more comprehensible input received, the greater the second language proficiency occurs. We acquire language by understanding input that is a little beyond our current level of (acquired) competence (Krashen and Terrell, 1983, cited in Fabisz, 2009). Therefore, it can clarify the nature of how a second language child acquires the language after his active exposure to that target language through watching children's educational programmes regularly on television.

The affective filter which involves in this framework is also significant. As Krashen (1982) clarifies in his Affective Filter Hypothesis, there are a number of affective variables, or attitudinal factors that are important in second language acquisition which include motivation, self-confidence and anxiety. Thus, the implication of this Affective Filter is that affective factors should be taken into account in this qualitative study as perhaps the quality of performance of the subject's oracy skill depends on his positive attitudes and high interest when watching the children's television programmes. Then, based on Krashen's framework, the conceptual framework of this study is suggested as below:

Figure 2: Conceptual framework : How a second language child acquires language through children's television programmes.



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2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the review of literature related to children's television programmes and their effect to our children. It has provided the underlying theories, the conceptual framework and relevant facts regarding this issue, and presented clearer views on the positive impact of educational programmes to our child's learning and education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Context of the Investigation

This is a case study of 4 years old boy who comes from a typical Malay family, where the main language used at home is *Bahasa Malaysia*, and the researcher lives with the subject and monitors his development since his young age. The first stage of this study was carried out when the boy was four years old, and the second stage of the study was carried out when the boy was five years old. The intense one month (the first stage) and two years of study (the second stage) took place in Kangar, Perlis, which is known as the smallest state in the northern part of Malaysia, and has a strong-cultural bonding of using certain Malay dialects. The boy did not have any formal education in nursery or kindergarten until January 2009. He then entered a preschool session from January 2010 until December 2010. He is an active boy, lives with his parents, his little brother and grandparents, and he prefers to talk in English rather than Malay even though the exposure of the native language is very strong at home. The researcher is the subject's biological mother, and this intense observation aims at achieving a very naturalistic environment where the subject could perform his ability to interact with people who he has been adapted to and get along with, in a very comfortable situation.

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The first stage of this study was carried out when the subject was four years old. This study was carried out in a month to have a specific detailed result, but the researcher had tracked the subject's ability to speak in English as a result from watching educational programmes since he was three (informal observation). The subject's parents have been monitoring his viewing and restricting the watching time in certain hours only (about 1-3 hours per day). He is very interested in watching Playhouse Disney and Cartoon Networks channels from ASTRO, and he does not prefer to watch any adulthood programs even though he has the exposure.

At the age of two, he was exposed by his parents to CERIA channel (ASTRO) and some educational English cartoons in TV9 channel, such as *Dora The Explorer, Blues Clues*, *Noddy* and *Wonderpets.* Outside his viewing time, he was actively engaged with other normal activities including drawing, coloring, playing toys with his little brother and reading storybooks with his mother. He loves books but he always uses his imagination to create his own stories when he sees attractive pictures inside the books. He would also love to tell his own imaginative stories while watching his favourite television programs and playing his toys. All interactions between the subject and his family members and also some strangers (e.g. home visitors), mostly occur in the second language (English) since he was exposed to the English educational programmes at home. Even though there are some responses and feedbacks which were uttered in English by his family members, it happens in minimal occasions within code- switching situations (mixture of languages). This

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specific information is revealed in order to obtain as much genuine result that we could get in this study. Therefore, it is important to have a detailed background of the subject to minimize the probability of being biased by the researcher as the subject's mother. The researcher also involved as a participant observer in this study to have an intense observation on how his son acquires new vocabulary and sentence structures as a result from watching the target educational programmes and how he uses the exact words and phrases that he has acquired to interact in second language with good grammatical forms and functions.

Meanwhile, the second stage of study was carried out when the boy was five years old. It was conducted in two years of period (until the boy turns to six years old), to see how far the result could be positively discovered, as the same procedure of field-notes observation and interaction- recorded was similarly used as in the first stage. This study is carried out in stages to analyse the difference patterns occur in the subject's communicative skill in the second language. In addition, the content analyses of the programmes are also aimed to be analysed.

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Participants

Throughout the study, besides the subject (the boy) and the researcher as a participant observer, it should be taken into account that the grandparents and the subject's biological father were also involved as the people who have

been directly undergoing many occasions of interaction with the subject in the second language (English). The subject's little brother only had some non-verbal interaction with the subject as he is unable to speak perfectly yet (almost three years old during the observation period). The subject's teachers and friends in his kindergarten were also involved in this study in order for the researcher to observe the degree of interaction happens between them in the second language.

3.2 Research Design

This qualitative research is categorized as a case study, and was conducted in a natural observation to produce an authentic result as much possible as it would be. As Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research, it is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case study, personal experience, introspective, life story interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts-that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. Instruments of observation forms and audio-video record are used to produce a good genuine result naturally and to see spontaneous interactions of the subject in second language.

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3.3 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study are:

a) Two types of observation forms:

1) *Observation Form A* – to list down every single word or sentence structures uttered by the subject while he was watching the target educational programmes.

2) *Observation Form B* is taken from Bentzen, (1985) – to list down the subject's language development and behaviour in his kindergarten. The teachers were asked to write down any English word or structure uttered by the subject to his friends and even to the teachers. In the second stage, this form was distributed to his teachers in pre-school as the subject had his first formal education when he reached five years old.

b) *Audio-video tapes*: to record the dialogues and interactions of the subject while watching the target children's educational programmes in order to have an authentic source.

c) *Question-answering session*: is used by the researcher in the second stage of study to get the subject's spontaneous responses while watching the target educational programmes. Questions was in the form of *who, which, where, why* and *how*, which was posed by the researcher to view the difference occurs in her son's second language interaction. This conversation was audio-taped in order to have naturalistic and spontaneous answers (video tape was inappropriate because if the subject had been aware that he was being video-recorded, he may have acted in different way).

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3.4 Reliability and Validity

The instrument of Observation Form B taken from Bentzen (1985) has been used in his study before to see the interaction happens among children in their pre-school environment. Thus, the reliability of this form has been approved by Bentzen's study. The validity of this research was revealed from the comparison of the two different stages of this study to see the different patterns in second language interaction of the subject. Although bias and the short period of time of conducting the study may be the factors that will affect the validity, the significance of the result (of this study) in our today's world of promoting early literacy should be considered as a small contribution, or at least, as a supportive ideas for the parents and teachers to encourage their children to speak, read and write in English through an interesting medium of children's educational programmes on television.

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3.5 Data Collection Procedure

For the first stage of this study, data were collected from multiple sources in varying context to have different perspectives of this specific study. Ten audiotapes and five videotapes with accompanying field notes and transcriptions (within one week), of structured activities and interactions have been collected. The researcher also used two types of observation forms:

1) Observation Form A – to list down every single word or sentence structures uttered by the subject while watching the target educational programmes.

2) Observation Form B taken from Bentzen (1985) – to list down the subject's language development and behaviour in his kindergarten. The teachers were asked to write down any interaction happens between the subject and his friends even the teachers themselves in second language.

Furthermore, content analyses of the target educational programmes also have been reviewed in order to have some specific information regarding the appropriateness of the viewing programs to improve children's literacy skills. In this study, thirteen educational programmes which were always being watched by the subject were analyzed.

Next, in the second stage of this study (when the subject was five years old), the same instruments were used and the same procedure was conducted in order to identify the difference occur in pattern of subject's communicative skill in English. In addition, question-answering session was conducted by the researcher to get spontaneous response of the subject. By that time, the content of the educational programmes may also vary as the subject grows older, perhaps his favour to certain programmes will decrease, or his interest of watching certain programmes is changing gradually.

1.6 Conclusion

Hence, a thorough yet detailed methodology has been revealed in this chapter and the findings are discussed in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The data involved in this section were analyzed in the first stage of the study. However, in the second stage of the study which was conducted when the subject was five years old, the data varied in term of the program selection as the subject's interest may have changed gradually as he grew older.

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4.2 Content Analysis

Program selection

The sample of this study included 13 educational programmes most watched by the subject from two ASTRO channels (Playhouse Disney and Cartoon Networks). The researcher has directly involved in monitoring and selecting these thirteen programmes by considering the subject's favors and the suitability of the programmes that should be watched. However, when the subject reached the second stage of the study, there were a few educational programmes from these thirteen programmes which were considered as less interesting to be watched.

This content analysis is significant in order to answer the first research question of this study, which argues that the contents of children's television programmes help to improve the English oracy skill of a young child. Discussing on literacy and English speaking skills aspects, the researcher discovered that those programmes are helpful to enhance our young children's interest by stimulating them to talk, write, draw and move along with the characters inside the programmes. For example, in *Wordworld*, there are characters such as a bee, an ant, a sheep and a bear which in every episode, they teach on how to spell certain words and invite our viewers to follow them letter-by-letter, then say it loudly, and the letters then emerge to be the things that they spelt. For instance, if the thing is a barn, they spell as B-A-R-N, and then they emerge exactly like a barn. This way is very fun and interesting, as our children may understand faster on how to say an English word correctly and at the same time, grab the exact picture of what the thing that they are learning should be look like.

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While in *Imagination Movers*, the characters are a group of adults who play some music on how to educate our young children to be a civic-minded person and also invite the viewers to sing along with them. The researcher found out the lyrics were very helpful in order to teach our children to be a good person and there were some lyrics which stimulated the subject to talk a lot on how to respect parents. The researcher believed that the stimulation of those programmes is very important in order to make the subject to talk more in English. However, parents should be directly involved in this process of

stimulation in order to ensure only good and selected ones will be accepted by our children. The researcher suggests that parents should talk more with their children in English while watching the target educational programmes, such as posing some questions on the characters and let them answer specifically in English. As Moses (2008) stated, early childhood educators as well as families can be on the lookout for positive messages, which they can talk about and extend to children's own lives. The researcher believes that oracy or speaking skill could be enhanced among our young children if they are stimulated and encouraged positively by their parents. Television educational programmes are supposed to be functioned as a medium of stimulation only, not a full dependable utility which may in turn leads to negative feedback if unattended well and uncontrollable.

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Moreover, it is also useful in order to provide some guidelines to parents and educators to select some appropriate and beneficial educational programmes that are suitable for our young children. In this study, the researcher studied the contents of all programmes watched by the subject by watching them intensely and analyzed the details from the target websites. The purpose of having these targeted ones was to encourage the subject to interact in second language naturally while viewing his most favourite programmes. The selected programmes were:

A) PLAYHOUSE DISNEY CHANNEL (ASTRO 613)

1) Little Einsteins
2) Handy Manny
3) Jojo's Circus
4) Wordworld
5) Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
6) My Friends Tigger and Pooh
7) Elmo's World
8) Imagination Movers
9) Johnny & The Sprites
10) The Mighty Jungle
11) Harry & his Pocketful of Dinosaurs

B) CARTOON NETWORK CHANNEL (ASTRO 616)

1) The Pink Panther Show
2) Tom & Jerry Show

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All programmes on the list were aired in weekdays and were watched by the subject after his school hours, normally in the evening and early night. The subject's parents restrict his viewing time within 3 hours per- day, thus, the programmes listed were watched in different times and days within one week of study. Most programmes were aired in the duration of 20-30 minutes, and these programmes on list were the most attended by the subject in a good concentration as the researcher was able to record the interactions occurred and some new words and sentence structures uttered by him while watching. The researcher used the Observation Form A to list down some new words that the subject acquired (*please refer to Appendix A for the format of the form*). Table 1 provides additional information about each of the programmes on list.

Table 1

Information on the Thirteen Educational Programs Viewed by the Subject during the Period of Observations (First Stage)

PROGRAMME TITLE	CHANNEL	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Little Einsteins	Playhouse Disney	Animated series	Preschoolers	It features 4 children-Leo,June,Quincy & Annie along with their intelligent spaceship(Rocket) embark on adventures to solve some problems.
Handy Manny	Playhouse Disney	Animated series	Preschoolers	The titular character,Manny owns a repair shop along with his anthropomorphic tools.
Jojo's Circus	Playhouse Disney	Comedy musical	Preschoolers	Jojo Tickle-a six year old female clown & her fellow residents of Circus Town,in a musical comedy series stresses simple everyday lessons e.g. hygiene, safety & responsibility.

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Table 1 *(continued)*

Information on the Thirteen Educational Programs Viewed by the Subject during the Period of Observations (First Stage)

PROGRAMME TITLE	CHANNEL	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Wordworld	Playhouse Disney	Animated cartoon	2-5 yrs old	This 30 mnts comedy cartoon revolves around words & focuses more on literacy-how to spell and say the words correctly. It's a colorful version of spelling & pronouncing the words & build it into pictures.
Mickey Mouse	Playhouse Disney	Animated series	Preschoolers	Each 25-mnts episode has the characters-Mickey & friends, who help viewers to solve a specific age-appropriate problem.
My Friends Tigger & Pooh	Playhouse Disney	Animated series	Preschoolers	A computer animation tv series features Winnie The Pooh & his friends to solve
Elmo's World	Playhouse Disney	Human characters&	Preschoolers	Elmo,a small red monster who speaks in 3rd person. There are series of skits & interviews.
Imagination Movers	Playhouse Disney	Children's music	Preschoolers	This is an American music group caters children's songs & learning activities.

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Table 1 ***(continued)***

Information on the Thirteen Educational Programs Viewed by the Subject during the Period of Observations (First Stage)

PROGRAMME TITLE	CHANNEL	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Johnny & The Sprites	Playhouse Disney	Human character & Puppetry	Preschoolers	A musical tv show that teaches children important lessons through songs & dance. Interactions between Johnny & the puppets called Sprites teach about being together & helping each other.
The Mighty Jungle	Playhouse Disney	Action puppet series	Preschoolers	Babu The Meerkat, along with his friends Bruce The Gorilla & Rhonda The Rhino capture the spirit of friendship.
Harry & His Pocketful of Dinosaurs	Playhouse Disney	Animated Series	Preschoolers	A 5-yr-old boy named Harry, who has a bucketful of dinosaurs & they interact with each other in Harry's storybooks.
The Pink Panther Show	Cartoon Network	Comedy cartoon	Children	This comedy animated series with the cool pink cat's entertaining tricky moves and actions.
Tom & Jerry Show	Cartoon Network	Comedy cartoon	Children	Series of animated theatrical shorts usually center Tom the cat attempts to capture Jerry the mouse in a tricky entertaining way.

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These thirteen educational programmes are wisely suggested by the researcher to be chosen by the parents for their young children's viewing. If we looked at the brief descriptions of those programmes, most of them contain elements of young age basic education, such as identifying letters and words in *Wordworld*, social skills such as how to get along with friends in *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse*, basic surviving skills such as how and when to dial 911 emergency and how to wash hands correctly in *Elmo's World*, and being a junior scientist with some interesting simple experiments in *Little Einsteins*.

4.3 Transcription of data

Next, the detailed transcriptions of 20 comparison audiotapes were compiled by the researcher to obtain the exact words and structures uttered by the subject while watching the target educational programmes.

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4.4 Field notes in Observation Form A

The researcher also recorded specifically the words or vocabulary and sentence structures acquired by the subject while viewing the target educational programmes within one week.

4.5 Field notes in Observation Form B

Another technique that the researcher used in this study was the involvement of the subject's teachers in his kindergarten to investigate further interactions which happened between the subject and his friends in the second language, and whether the subject contextually used some new words that he had gained from the educational programs that he had watched. The Observation Form B that the researcher used was taken from Bentzen (1985) (*please refer to Appendix B for a review).* The details were also recorded within a week (the same week that the researcher conducted her observation at home regarding the television programmes).

4.6 Preliminary Study and Findings

The researcher conducted the first stage of this study in one intense month when the subject was four years old. This section reports the findings of this preliminary study in order to make a good comparison and reference for the future research which would be carried out when the subject reached five and six years old.

1) Transcription of data

The detailed transcriptions of 20 comparison audiotapes were compiled by the researcher to obtain the exact words and structures uttered by the subject while watching the target educational programmes. For example, Excerpt 1 illustrates the acquisition of new words by the subject while viewing the programme entitled WORDWORLD.

Excerpt 1

Mother : Danish dear…

Subject: Yes..

Mother: What is that? (pointing fingers to the characters)

Subject: L.I.K.E (he wants to pronounce L.I.G.H.T but incorrectly say L.I.K.E)

Mother: No, L.I.G.H.T (giving corrective feedback)

Subject: Oh..L.I.G.H.T (correctly say the word)

Mother: What is that for? For what? (tries to elicit response)

Subject: N.I.G.H.T for Night! (the subject refers light is for night)

Mother: Good boy!! (giggling)

(22/3/2009)

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In Excerpt 1, the interaction between the subject and his mother occurred in full version of the second language (English). Code-switching did not involve in this situation, and it is good to take into account that parental supervision and co-viewing with children is an excellent way of promoting literacy and language development. In a recent study conducted by Vandewater and Bickham (2004), they found that characteristics at home environment mediated both what two-to-five-years olds watched and the influence that viewing had on their literacy development. Reiser et.al. (1988) had earlier conducted their study in the same context, having an adult interact with three- and four-year-olds led to significantly higher post-test scores about

the letters and numbers in pre-selected *Sesame Street* episodes. Active interactions between children and parents such as describing the events and situations happen while watching the target educational programmes will be helpful to promote literacy and enhance English speaking skill among young children.

2) Field notes in Observation Form A

The researcher also recorded specifically the words or vocabulary and sentence structures acquired by the subject while viewing the target educational programmes within one week. Examples of words and structures that he mentioned are included in the Table 2:

Table 2: Observation Form A

PROGRAM TITLE	WORDS ACQUIRED	SENTENCE STRUCTURES
Little Einsteins	Rocket, spaceship, Musical instruments, A drum, a flute.	Rocket has come home! Good idea! Our mission begins..
Handy Manny	Forklift, tool box, A big house.	What a great idea! Come and fix it.
Imagination Movers	Socks, Cool!, a bee, A flower.	What a mess! Pick it up now.
Wordworld	h.o.r.n (spelling)rock star, g.u.i.t.a.r, d.r.u.m, t.u.b.a	Let's build the word!
Mickey Mouse Clubhouse	Picnic basket, Roller skates	This soup makes me feeling better! I'm feeling better too.

My Friends Tigger & Pooh	Caterpillar, butterflies,	Open up the window. I'm baking pies.
Harry & his Pocketful of Dinosaurs	Thirsty, waves, giant fish, surf board.	Look! It's a cloud.

In order to answer the second research question of this study, based on the information in Table 2, the researcher found that the English structures uttered by the subject in this first stage were more simple and unorganized. He was able to say the words in a clear pronunciation and context, even when he uttered the sentences that he followed from the characters' dialogue, he managed to say them in a correct grammatical forms. For example, when he said "I'm baking pies" from *My Friends Tigger and Pooh* program, he clearly mentioned the auxiliary verb *'am'* in *I'm* (in short form of 'I am'), not 'I baking pies'. Another example is from the sentence "rocket has come home" from *Little Einsteins.* The subject was able to mention 'has' for the rocket, and he just not simply said "rocket come home". This situation leads us to understand the benefits that children especially preschoolers could gain as a basic knowledge of grammatical forms and function in their early literacy process.

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Vygotsky's theory of learning and development (1934) provides an explanation of learning and instruction principles of scaffolding or setting up instructional situations that allow learners to succeed as they advance toward higher levels of understanding, and working with the learners' *zone of proximal development (ZPD)*, which means to provide instruction that spans the region in which a learner can advance both with and without help. Children's television programmes are good examples of scaffolding approach to develop early literacy as they can provide a good and correct way of giving instruction and guidance for children to imitate them especially in speaking skill. As Beaty and Pratt (2007) explain further, brain research has shown evidences that circuits in the brain are set up for infants, toddlers and preschoolers to emerge naturally into speaking the language they hear spoken around them. Musical activities which are always blended together to attract young viewers also play significant roles towards literacy. Children learn best about the sounds of spoken language through sound and word games, nursery rhymes, chants, songs, fingerplays and rhythmic activities.

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In my intense observation on the thirteen educational programmes that my son was watching, all of them contained musical elements and phonemic awareness which can encourage children to understand words, syllables and sounds in a fun learning way. *Wordworld* is one example of the creative programmes which encourage children's learning through musical entertaining, spelling, pronouncing and building the words in pictures and meaning. It also enhances reading and writing skills as it helps children to

visualize the words and provides many segments of print literacy in a colorful and meaningful way. Therefore, children may get their own benefit from their educational programmes if they are well-attended and have excellent guidance from the adults.

4.7 Results and Findings

This section provides some significant findings of a latter study and observation carried out by the researcher as the subjects reached five and six years old. These findings will answer the third research question of this study and revealed a relevant comparison in term of structures and patterns of communication uttered by the subject when he was four, five and six.

Content Analysis

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The researcher discovered that when the subject turned five years old, there were a few additional programmes listed as the subject's favourite ones and there were a few others from the previous thirteen programmes which are considered as less interesting viewing programmes. Perhaps, due to his age and maturity, he was capable to choose his own favourite programmes which suited his interest very well. Below is the list of the subject's favourite programmes when he reached five years old:

A) <u>CARTOON NETWORK CHANNEL (ASTRO 616)</u>

1) The Pink Panther Show

2) Tom & Jerry Show

3) Mr. Bean

4) Garfield and Friends

B) PLAYHOUSE DISNEY CHANNEL (ASTRO 613)

1) Fish Hooks
2) Phineas and Ferb
3) Cars Toons : Mater's Tall Tales
4) Disney Movies (e.g : Cars, Tarzan, Bolt, Garfield The Movie etc.)
5) Dive Olly Dive

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Meanwhile, the Table 3 describes explicitly the programmes which became favourable when the subject turned five years old.

Table 3

Information on the Educational Programs Viewed by the Subject during the Period of Observations (Second Stage)

PROGRAMME TITLE	CHANNEL	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	BRIEF DES.
The Pink Panther Show	Cartoon Network	Comedy Cartoon	Children	This comedy animated series present the cool pink cat's entertaining tricky moves.
Tom & Jerry Show	Cartoon Network	Comedy Cartoon	Children	Classic enemies; Tom the cat attempts to capture Jerry in a tricky fun way.

Table 3

Information on the Educational Programs Viewed by the Subject during the Period of Observations (Second Stage) *(cont'd)*

PROGRAMME TITLE	CHANNEL	TYPE OF PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	BRIEF DES.
Mr. Bean	Cartoon Network	Comedy Cartoon	Children	Adapted from the Mr. Bean series, with his fun hilarious actions.
Garfield and Friends	Cartoon Network	Comedy Cartoon	Children	Garfield the lazy cat always tormentingOdie.
Fish Hooks	Playhouse Disney	Animation Comedy	Children	Milo the fish, and his shy brother Oscar deal with a challenging aquarium life.
Cars Toons : Mater's	Playhouse Disney	Cartoon miniseries	Children	Mater the tow truck and his colorful adventures.
Phineas and Ferb	Playhouse Disney	Musical slapstick cartoon	Children	Adventures of stepbrothers Phineas and Ferb.
Dive Olly Dive	Playhouse Disney	Comedy Cartoon	Children	The funny adventures of Olly.

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Based on the Table 3, an obvious comparison could be made between the selection of programmes made by the subject when he was four and five years old. Previously, he loved to watch different kinds of programmes of animated cartoons, puppetry or musical play. However, when he turned five years old, his interest was more on the comedy cartoons, mostly without any dialogue included such as Mr. Bean, Tom & Jerry and Pink Panther. The researcher

discovered that even the subject was watching a non-dialogue cartoon; he was capable to interact in English with the researcher while watching the programme together. The interaction was mainly about the scenes happening inside the cartoon such as describing the events or the characters. *Excerpt 2* indicates the situation:

Excerpt 2

(This interaction was recorded between the subject and his mother while they were watching one of the animated series of Mr. Bean)

Mother : Ha, there Mr. Bean!

Danish : ha…there!

Mother : What is he doing?

Danish : just want to race

Mother : Race?

Danish : ha la…

Mother : What race?

Danish : Running race

Mother : Ha? running race? (giggling)

Danish : two p.m.

Mother : at two p.m.?

Danish : at two p.m. la the race

Mother : he wants to enter the race..

Danish : he said today, this year lah..today lah..

Mother : Where? Where did you..

Danish : ha! There the race..emm..he wears the running shirt before he starts the race. But he sticks the number first. If there no number how he going to race? Ha..he puts the number first..the race.. Mr. Bean is 33.

Mother : thirty-three? (repeating)

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Danish : the fat one..the fat boy is 99…

Mother : oh…who is that fat boy?

Danish : that one ! (pointing his finger to the character in the programme)

Mother : oh…

Danish : he ran just like that

Mother : his friend? The fat boy is his friend?

Danish : Ya…oh! *They going to pi kot nu pulak! Oh..dia lupa pulak..99 tu laju..Mr. Bean tak laju sangat!* (Malay accent : interference)

Mother : Mr. Bean is tired right?

Danish : Right, later he run again.

Mother : wait, where did the fat boy go?

Danish : nothing. I think he going somewhere else. Ha..he ran to the taxi…..

(20/10/2010)

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In *Excerpt 2*, the researcher discovered that the subject was eager to talk more on what *Mr. Bean* (the character) was doing, who involved in the race and how the race ended was specifically described by the subject mostly in English. As far as the researcher concerned, *Mr. Bean* is an animated cartoon series without any dialogue involved, but with only actions and movements of the characters. This programme is a good example of giving the parents some guidelines that our young children have a great potential of English speaking skill if they are well-guided, even when they watch any non-dialogue programme, they still can talk about it in their own creative way. This proved that not only a verbal programme which concentrates on saying loudly words and sentences affects our child's speaking skill, but action or non-verbal ones do, too. If we look again at the Excerpt 3, when the researcher started the

conversation with the subject by asking him *'what is Mr. Bean doing?'*, the subject answered spontaneously *'running race'* just by looking at the scene that Mr. Bean was wearing a running race's shirt which had a number on it. The situation described by the subject on Mr. Bean was participating a running contest while there was no dialogue involved but only actions of Mr. Bean was preparing to start a running race, made the researcher believed that our young child's thinking could be stimulated not only with verbal cues, but also non-verbal ones. As Rice & Woodsmall (1988) suggested in their study, one possibility of young children could learn about language when viewing television is they 'fast map' new words when viewing. Perhaps, the subject may have a prior knowledge or certain words which describing a running contest such as a particular running race shirt should have a number on it. According to Carey (1978, cited in Rice & Woodsmall, 1988), fast mapping consists of a quick, initial partial understanding of a word's meaning, involving a restructuring of the underlying conceptual domain, that can be accomplished on the basis of a single exposure. Thus, our young children have a good potential of exploring verbal an non-verbal cues in their own way, and parents and educators should always be there with them, stimulating and encouraging them to talk in English in a correct way so that they can learn more and adapt to this language easily since they were young.

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Transcription of Data

Next, the researcher recorded the interactions between her and the subject while watching the target educational programmes. During that one year of observation (second stage), the researcher managed to compile a lot of

audio recording of the interactions, however only a few have been selected as a meaningful version of transcription which are relevant to the context of investigation.

Excerpt 3

(This interaction was recorded between the subject and his mother while they were watching one of the cartoons – Dive Olly Dive)

Danish : Aaa… Olly the submarine..and Ally the submarine dive into the water with her girl.

Mother : With her girl? Who is her girl?

Danish: That one!

Mother : Oh, that one. So, Olly is a boy?

Danish: Aa.. so, the girl is doing…ahh..he is a little animal…what that? What that thing?

Mother : Otter.

Danish: Ha, that's an otter. He meets his friend and dive into the water..and then…ha, there! The birds are there…

(15/5/2010)

Excerpt 4

(This interaction was recorded between the subject and his mother when they were watching one of the Disney Movie - Bolt)

Danish : Yesterday…emm..Bolt…superbug!

Mother : Superbug?

Danish: Superbug! The superbug hit the road and the road is already break..

Mother : Oh..that's Bolt ha..

Danish : Bolt..

Mother : Ha, his name is Bolt. He is a brave dog or what?

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Danish: Emm… he is a bad dog!

Mother : Bad dog? Bolt is a bad dog?

Danish : Ya..

Mother : How do you know?

Danish : I know! He's superbug! But he is also brave..

Mother : Oh, what does he do?

Danish : He do..

Mother : Not he do..he does…

Danish : He does everything.

Mother : everything? Like…

Danish : Ha..and then…and the green eyed man..

Mother : What he is doing now?

Danish : He hit the wall..and the planet…

(13/12/2010)

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Based on these excerpts, it can be concluded that the pattern of words and structures used by the subject was significantly different from the one of his previous younger age. If we looked at the structures uttered when he was four years old, there were more simple sentences and less of expressions given (affective context). But as he grew older, he managed to construct more spontaneous sentences, quite complex and full of expressions and emotions. This significant result shows that age and maturity play important roles for young children to construct more complex structures.

If the data collected by the researcher in Observation Form A (Table 2) are compared, with the excerpts from the transcriptions, it is found that the subject was capable to construct more complex sentences than before. For example, when he was four years old watching *Handy Manny*, he probably just followed what the character was saying such as ‘what a mess!. However, when he was five and watching one Disney movie – *The Bolt* (Excerpt 4), the subject was able to talk spontaneously by himself describing what was happening to the dog which called Bolt to the researcher, and his description was filled with actions and great emotions. Thus, the researcher believed that age plays as a great factor, if we expose a good setting to our children of English-spoken surrounding since they were at the young age, the motivation is there for them to keep on conversing in the second language.

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4.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided the details of the study. The findings of this study can lead to a greater understanding of how far do educational television programmes may help our young children to speak in English.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Discussion

This paper aims to study and discuss the effect of children's television programmes on the oracy skill of a young second language child. In this study, the researcher identified the English vocabulary and sentence structures acquired by the subject while watching the target children's television programmes. The researcher also recorded the interaction between the subject and his family members and examined the patterns in second language communication as the subject grows older. The observations took place in two different stages of the subject's ages from four to six years old. During that observation, the researcher found out that the subject's new words and sentence structures have increased and he managed to use certain words in a good contextual reality event. For example, when he saw a picture of a house in *Jojo's Circus,* he said *"mama, that is our house, a big house!*. He was also able to utter his own dialogue when he watched *The Pink Panther Show* and *Tom & Jerry*, as we had already known that these two comedy cartoons were full in actions but less conversation. In one episode of Tom& Jerry, when he saw Tom the cat chasing Jerry the mouse, the subject said "*run Jerry run, save your life!"*.

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Based on the researcher's personal view, these two classical cartoons may attract children excellently (and even adults!) and almost every moment of its hilarious actions conveys certain meaning of how reality life could be. For example, although there was a bad picture of a cat chasing a mouse in *Tom & Jerry*, in this case, parents can play their significant role to explain to their children that in reality, if they have siblings, they should take care of each other and even if they quarrel, they need to be reconciled as soon as they can because they are perfectly bonded as brothers and sisters. These cartoons could be positively interpreted if parents do not let their children 'accept' totally of what they are viewing, but in a wise manner, they could try to explain the reality situation which reflects what happen in the programmes. This is supported by Schmidt and Vandewater (2008) who believe that active mediation from parental involvement is important when they have a co-viewing the programs with their children. Anderson and Collins (1988) have also concluded in their earlier study that when parents watch television with their children and talk about the content viewed, children demonstrate improved comprehension of content and television production techniques.

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On the other hands, the researcher also observed that although the subject prefers to watch educational programmes very well, he paid attention to the content of the programs about one to three hours only. It is primely because of the restriction of viewing time that his parents impose. However, even in that duration of viewing time, the researcher found out that sometimes the subject did not attentively watch the programs and make it as a 'background

companion'. He was actively doing other activities such as building a 'house' using some pillows, arranging some toys and playing 'with them', coloring pictures even drawing, and he has his own 'interaction' with his imaginary world in second language (English).This situation is similar to Vygotsky's theory (1987) who objected strongly Piaget's view on egocentric speech, as he contended that private speech (when young children often talk to themselves as they go about their daily activities), occurs when young children encounter obstacles and difficulties, and that it represents their efforts at self-guidance. Vygotsky felt that this early use of language helps young children reflects on their own behavior, and that it plays a key role in cognitive development. The result of many studies has also confirmed his views (e.g. Bivens & Berk, 1990).

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In addition, regarding the interaction between the subject and his family members, the researcher observed that he was actively telling 'a story' to his grandparents, his father and mother (whoever was available during the viewing time), and mostly the event occurred in second language (English). For example, while watching one episode of *Imagination Movers* with his grandmother, he kept on telling a sad story related to one character of that program, *Nina* who lost her dog. The transcription of one of the audiotapes obviously tells us the situation as in Excerpt 5:

Excerpt 5

Grandmother: Hmm…what are they doing? (pointing to the characters in the program)

Subject: To get a picture (the characters are having a photograph session)

Grandmother: Oh, to take a picture..ha what shape is that? (pointing at an item in the scene)

Subject: It's a rectangle! And there's a dog..They want to build a dog house.

Grandmother: Ooo..really? Who's that?

Subject: Nina

Grandmother: Why? What happens to her?

Subject: 'He' really misses 'his' dog..it's uncle Nina's dog..It lost..(in a sad face).

Grandmother: Not 'he'..she… She misses her dog..poor Nina.

Subject: Yes…(sighed)

(15/7/2009)

In Excerpt 5, we can clearly see the interaction between the subject and his grandmother when he was watching the scene. The interaction originally happened in the second language without any code-switching of other language (even Malay) involved. Discussing on the differences between the

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subject's two stages of ages in the interaction between him and his family members, this recorded dialogue which occurred when the subject was five years old indicated quite good English structures but with 'missing' certain grammatical items uttered by him. For example, when the grandmother asked him,"*Why? What happens to her?",* and the subject spontaneously answered "*'He' really misses 'his' dog.. it's uncle Nina's dog..It lost..".* This piece of dialogue showed us that the subject may not be aware of grammatical items of Pronouns as he referred to Nina as *He* and not *She.* But the grandmother has spontaneously corrected him by saying "*Not 'he'..she… She misses her dog..poor Nina".* Corrective feedback on grammar is a good way to encourage our young children to talk in a correct version of English structures. According to Chaudron (1988, as cited in El-Tatawy,2002) corrective feedback allows the learners to confirm, disconfirm and possibly modify the hypothetical, transitional rules of their developing grammars.

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Moreover, this situation obviously indicates that there is a need of positive interaction in second language among family members, not necessarily only the parents, but whoever familiar people that children might get adapted with, if a positive environment of second language acquisition is to be provided since they are young. In this case, mostly all subject's family members could talk in English but not seriously practicing the talking. However, when the subject asks for anything or talks in English, each member has adapted with his situation and given responses in English. Perhaps this way of interacting could be encouraged in every family especially in a strongly Malay-spoken

family in Malaysia, at least for those who have some efforts of exposing their children in a good environment of English as a second language. This effort is not aiming at learning English as a superior language, as it is well-understood that in a strong culturally-bonding community where *Bahasa Malaysia* has its nobility as a national language, certain people may go against with this practice. From the researcher point of view, it is important to give a good exposure of learning English as a second language in our Malay society as nowadays, it has been a vital medium of interaction throughout the world, and we need to encourage our children to learn variety of other languages for their own benefit in the future. Practicing the second language does not mean we need to diminish our own culture and native language. However, it depends on the awareness of the importance learning English or other languages in our society and how far we need the change to become a highly-developed generation. As Wilson (2008) adds in, children develop their emotional and social capabilities through a complex process, and they must acquire the norms, rules and values that will enable them to form connections and function in families, peer groups and the broader society. Therefore, it is up to their adults especially parents to guide which path is the best for their children to go through.

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Another important finding that needs to be discussed in this study is the well-interaction that the subject had with his friends and teachers in his kindergarten. In a one-week study which the researcher kindly asked the teachers to jot down any word or sentence structure in second language uttered

by the subject, they managed to see the difference among other students after the subject continuously talked in English, even some of them may not capture the words quite well. Some details were recorded in the Observation Form B, and through a few informal conversations between the researcher and the teachers. One of the teachers mentioned that since the subject came to the kindergarten (in January 2009), there were a few students who attempt to converse in English just in simple sentences, even they did not speak in that language before. For example, one of them could say "Let's play outside!" after the subject said the word *playground.* It is indeed a good improvement in the oracy skill of the subject, and also nurturing a good environment of learning the second language in his school. This situation could be supported by a longitudinal study conducted by Wright et.al.(2001) which explains further on the relationship between a meaningful educational television viewing and great achievement in school. An earlier study also revealed that children whose parents were encouraged by the researchers to have them watch Sesame Street improved more than a non-encouraged control group on such academic and cognitive skills as letter recognition, numerical skills and classification (Ball & Bogatz,1970; Bogatz & Ball, 1971). Future research could investigate more about this relationship of watching educational programs and later language development and academic achievement in school as it needs a longitudinal study to prove it. Eventhough this particular section did not involved any educational television programmes viewing, the researcher provided Observation Form B in order to observe whether the subject uttered a few words that he learnt from the programme when interacting with his friends. Certain structures such as "*Let's play like Mickey*

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Mouse in the playground" and *"I want to brush my teeth with Jojo"* obviously indicated that those programmes at certain point have encouraged the subject to talk and to be 'like' the characters in the educational programmes that he watched.

5.2 Future directions

Future study may involve a longitudinal one in order to obtain validity and reliability of the result later. Besides, having only one participant in the study may not generalize the result to every child in the range age of preschoolers. However, the result can be a useful guideline to parents and educators who may get benefit from the children's educational programmes in their community. Therefore, with respect to television, more work and study is needed.

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The current body of research also needs a change in perspective looking at media and literacy. Leu et.al.(2004) have suggested the importance of considering the changing nature of literacy as a result of technological advances and the ever-changing media landscape surrounding children. Thus, future study may include this context of specific interplay between media and literacy process among preschoolers.

With respect to the content of current children's educational programs, the researcher faced some limitations in determining the exact contents which generate reading and writing skills of her son or the subject involved. Future study may focus more on the content of other programmes that could enhance not only the oracy skill of our children but also other important skills of literacy development. Future researchers should continue to look at the connections between children's visual attention, comprehension of content and other variables that play a role in their viewing and understanding of programs (Moses,2008).

5.3 Suggestions and Recommendations to Parents and Teachers

Undoubtedly, significant roles of parents and teachers or educators are needed in order to be good mediators while the television viewing with their children. In order to promote early literacy among preschoolers, children's television programmes could be wisely selected by parents and teachers and creatively adapted their contents in a meaningful way of interaction especially in second language. Parents at home may elicit questions such as *what happens*, *why it happens and how it happens* while watching, to encourage their children actively talking of the events occur in their favourite programmes. Besides, these are some suggestions to promote preschoolers cognitive development provided by Morrison (2008) which could be used by parents and teachers by creatively adapting the content in the educational programs on television:

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1) Scaffolding appropriate tasks and behaviours by selecting educational programmes which the content obviously demonstrates some good attitudes to be followed. For example, in *Jojo's Circus*, there are segments showing *Jojo* is brushing her teeth before going to bed; and there is one scene in *Elmo's World* viewing *Elmo* is happily reading a storybook and telling the story to the viewers. These kind of positive contents are very helpful to make children understand the importance of doing certain routines independently and encouraging the nature of book-lovers in their life.

2) Guiding children in problem-solving skills in Mathematics and Science by choosing certain programs which teaching our children to actively engaged in these skills. For example, *Mickey Mouse Clubhouse* programme which always demonstrates variety issues of numbers and concepts, and showing clear hints and steps to solve the simple quizzes for preschoolers.

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3) Using hand-on activities that give children opportunities for active involvement in their learning by viewing specific programs which encourage them to manipulate and interact with the world around them. For example, in Disney channel, there are lots of creative segments are viewed during the gap minutes of each programme. These segments teach our children variety of *do-it-yourself (D.I.Y)* activities, such as making a simple sandwich (with a help of an adult), collage, building things using recycle items and showing step-by-step of artistic movements of dancing and exercising. These creative segments will expose our children to the reality of the world they are living and stimulating their senses in a meaningful way.

Therefore, television programmes are not deteriorating our children's behavior and development if they are monitored and selected by adults for viewing. Beside children's educational programmes which contain animated and cartoon elements, as a researcher in this in-depth study, I also suggest that parents and educators should involve in selecting other meaningful programs that are suitable to be viewed by our children. For example, the parents may invite their young children to watch together some beneficial programmes such as National Geographic, certain suitable documentaries or loving animals programmes which may enhance their thinking skills and acquired knowledge.We need to ensure that our children especially preschoolers are exposed to the reality world through positive programmes, as they are cognitively advanced with today's technological gadgets and environment such as unlimited version of the Internet and wireless applications that may be harmful if we just let them exploring without any control and supervision. Discipline is also important especially restriction of viewing time and negative content since children are at their young age so that they will get used with it when they grow up. As Jordan et.al. (2006) revealed their result in a study of the impact of reducing children's television viewing time, they concluded that parents who imposed restrictions on the child's amount of viewing and on the material watched have been found to reduce the time children spent on watching television.

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5.4 Conclusion

Significant findings in this study revealed some insights on how do children's television programmes affect the oracy skill of a second language child. It is essential for parents and educators to monitor the television content their children view and specifically choose which programmes bring more benefit to their learning process. Therefore, this piece of knowledge is hopefully helpful in order to guide our society to collaborate in enhancing our children's literacy skills and cognitive development for their own future.

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APPENDIX A

OBSERVATION FORM A

Vocabulary / Sentence Structures Acquired by the Subject from Children's Television Programmes

DATE/DAY : _____

OBSERVER'S NAME : _____

NO.	NAME OF THE CHILDREN'S TV PROGRAMMES	TIME ON AIR	VOCABULARY/SENTENCE STRUCTURES UTTERED BY THE SUBJECT

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APPENDIX B

Observation Exercise 18-4 (Bentzen, 1985)

OBSERVATION FORM B: ON LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

Observer's Name : _____

Child's Name : DANISH HAKIMI BIN YUS HAFIZI

Child's Age : 4 YEARS OLD

Child's Sex : MALE

Observation context : HOME / PRESCHOOL

Date of Observation : _____

Time Begun : _____ Time Ended:_____

Brief Description of Situation :

OBJECTIVE EVENT DESCRIPTION/ INTERPRETATIONS (including vocabulary and speech aspects)

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