

Original Paper

Investigating the Effect of the Language of Cartoon Films on Children's Acquisition of Their Mother Tongue: A Case Study of Three Children

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of the language of cartoon films on children's acquisition of their mother tongue. The language used in the cartoon films under study is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) while that of the parents and of the environment is Urban Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic (UNIA). The informants of the study consist of three Children who are native speakers of Arabic and whose ages are aged 5, 6 and 7 at the beginning of collecting the data of this study. The data collection continues for three years in that it includes the preschool and some school stages. The data collection tool, which is done by the parents from the children, is by means of recordings and daily observation. The children are exposed to the cartoon films for about four to five hours in their daily watching. The methodological procedure consists of describing the language uttered by the informants to prove or refute the hypotheses of the study including that the exposure to the cartoon films has an effect on the informants' use of MSA, the cartoon films have more effect on the type of dialect used by children compared to parents' and environment's dialect, which is UNIA and the theories of informal learning of Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2006) are applicable to acquisition. The study accepts all the hypotheses including that words and sentences used by the informants prove that the dialect used by the informants is MSA, and that the dialect used is affected by the cartoons' dialect, MSA, to which the children are exposed rather than their parents' dialect, UNIA.

Keywords

Cartoon Films, Acquisition, Mother Tongue, MSA, UNIA.

1. Introduction

Language acquisition is the manner of learning a language by immersion. Language acquisition is a product of subconscious process which is informal or natural way of gaining the knowledge of the language. Here, language is not taught to children. A child just picks up his native or first language or mother tongue just being around his parents, siblings and other people in his environment. The child acquires the language without any conscious thought, effort or study. The child acquires his mother tongue through imitation and interaction with his parents and the environment that surrounds him. His need to communicate paves the way for language acquisition to take place (Igiri, et al., 2020, p. 28).

The speech of the children, who represent the informants of this study and who are native speakers of Arabic, is characteristic of some phonetic processes like assimilation, elision, gemination, nasalization and tafxiim, and the main ones are sound shift and metathesis (See: Betti & Igaab, 2019, p. 229).

In this study, the informants watch Spacetoon and Majid Channels which include some cartoon films during frequent periods of time during the day.

Watching cartoons may help develop our kids' cognitive skills, logic and reasoning ability, visual and auditory processing, and sustained and selective attention of a kid. They may help children acquire the Arabic dialect used in the cartoon films, MSA at the expense of the dialect used by the parents and other kids of the children's environment, UNIA. In this regard, Nasiriya different varieties used in Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic are MSA, the standardized Baghdadi Arabic; UNIA, and Rural Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic. These varieties are borrowed and used in Nasiriya as a sort of dialect or variety mixture cases (Betti, 2003, p. 32).

1.1 Research Questions

- 1). Does children's exposure to cartoon films affect their acquiring of MSA?
- 2). Does that exposure to cartoon films, all of which are spoken with MSA, have more effect compared to their environment in which UNIA is spoken?
- 3). Can what is said by Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2006) be applicable to this study which is concerned with language acquisition?

1.2 Research Aims

The study aims at studying whether the exposure to MSA available in the cartoon films being watched by the informants of the study has an effect on the informants' use of MSA, rather than the UNIA used by their parents and by the kids in their environment; and investigating that what is said by Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2006) is applicable to this study.

1.3 Research Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

- 1). The exposure to the cartoon films has an effect on the informants' use of MSA.
- 2). The cartoon films have more effect on the type of dialect used by children compared to parents' and environment's dialect, which is UNIA.

3). The theories of informal learning of Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2006) are applicable to acquisition.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Incidental Learning and Acquisition*

Incidental or informal learning sounds like a natural and straightforward process when children or adults could learn something from unintentional actions (Marsick & Watkins, 1990) in contrary to formal learning which is a traditional institutionally-sponsored, classroom-based, and structured process and which do not emphasize informal and incidental learning. Informal learning can occur at anytime and anywhere, yet it is not typically classroom-based. Incidental learning could be a byproduct of unrelated activity, including personal interaction, communication activities, or task accomplishment (Marsick & Watkins, 1990). Informal learning could be used by the teacher, parents, or organizations as a deliberate method of incidental learning, even if it could sound like mutually exclusive actions (Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, & Volpe, 2006). However, according to this theory, incidental learning could be pre-planned. Incidental learning, however, could happen when learners are not conscious of it (Rosales, 2019; cited in Singer, 2019). do not emphasize informal and incidental learning. As informal learning is unplanned, strategies for improving informal learning are urgently always needed (Marsick & Watkins, 1990, p. 1; and Marsick, Watkins, Scully-Russ, & Nicolaides, 2017, p. 32).

Children could learn better in their environment: every child's environment is individual and different, relying on individual behavior and psychological force, including drives, tensions, thoughts, and specific contexts. This is closely connected to incidental learning, as it allows understanding how a child would learn by the incident and how this process could be re-constructed (Lewin, 1951; Singer, 2022, p. 233).

2.2 *Cartoons: Features and as an Incidental Learning Tool*

2.2.1 Features of Cartoons

Animation bridges the gap from reality to the realm of imagination. With fantastic adventures, fairy tales being brought to life, humor, engaging imagery (Ellwood-Hughes, 2022). For some, animated kids films offer a nostalgic moment, reminiscent of childhood memories, for others it provides a restful family moment or a fun way for messages to be portrayed (Ellwood-Hughes, 2022).

Challenging imagination, telling engaging and even enriching tales and offering exposure to different cultures, family dynamics and countries, they are a wonderful form of entertainment. Although designed to entertain kids, they are enjoyed by adults throughout the world as well (Ellwood-Hughes, 2022).

2.2.2 Cartoons as Incidental Learning Tools

Exposure to the media of children could generate positive learning effects if this practice is used in an effective manner and concerning the children's developmental milestones, the time of exposure, and their attention span. This is because cartoons are considered as a means of motivating and encouraging thinking processes, discussion and the development of communication skills (Fleischer, 2010; cited in

Singer, 2022, p. 231). Most animated films have a message. They are not just created to provide viewing pleasure, they have messages, lessons and can aid in children's development.

Cartoons come in varied languages and subjects. The dynamic programs in cartoons allow a child's natural interests to be important in that children can choose the program they want to follow and when they want to follow it. Thus, children learn language by themselves (Muiruri, 2022, p. 1).

The multimedia properties of sounds and images help to develop children's cognitive efficacy in listening and observation. Cartoons give children simple ways to enrich their languages, their favourite characters in the cartoons make a child easily imitate them making language a natural sequence of life. They offer a cultural extension to children especially those growing far away from contacts with their native language speakers. They incorporate characters that impress the mind of a child which is advantageous since knowledge comes to us through impressions made to us by natural objects. This is because learning should be based on children learning interest and curiosity. In addition, parental guidance is paramount on the quality of contents of children's daily cartoon watch bucket list (Piaget, 1952; Muiruri, 2022, p. 1).

Likewise, cartoons offer the best Iconic representations to 1-6 years children. Images, diagrams or illustrations accompany verbal information which are crucial in the process of a child's discovery learning.

Thus, a child exposed to cartoons can learn any language. This is because according to Chomsky's theory human beings are born with a set of rules about language called Universal Grammar and is the basis which all languages build upon. With minimum exposure to external outputs, a child can learn their native languages as well as foreign languages regardless of their location. Listening to cartoons can be a weapon for understanding fast speech and developing a natural speaking style. Children are good at picking characters, identify with them and mimicking their pronunciations. This way, they unconsciously learn vocabularies and grammar structures. As children recount the events in the cartoons, they perfect their speaking skills and become familiar with words and expressions. Their tongue gets used to articulating the words and ears get used to the intonations and sound of the language. Before you know it, children are fluent and eloquent in a language despite the absence of the native speakers.

From the above discussions, it is clear that the relationship between language and cartoons is an emerging center of interest and worthy of further studies. This is because cartoons play a very critical role in cognitive development. They affect cognitive through informational transmission to children and defining their intellectual adaptation. This can be summed up by Lev Vygotsky (1986) elementary mental functions of Attention, Sensation, Perception and Memory. That is, cartoons attract children's attention, build their sensation and improve their memories (Muiruri, 2022, p. 3). In addition, there is evidence showing that when you are emotionally invested, you are more inclined to retain information and remember the lesson for longer. This is what makes teaching through cartoon films so different to previous textbook forms of learning. Animation can be used, and is used, to aid teaching. Cartoons could be used for students' learning of new words in the classroom or outside of it (Chen, 2021).

2.3 *Modern Standard Arabic*

There are two main types of varieties of Arabic in each Arab country which are Standard Arabic (later on and with the passage of time developed into MSA) and non-standard Arabic (represented by the regional dialects and varieties used to the degree that inside any Arabic city in any country, there are tens of dialects). In Iraq, nearly for every city in Iraq, there is a number of varieties. For example, in Basrah, there are Basrah Urban Dialect, and Baghdadi Iraqi Arabic (Alsiraih, 2021, p. 1).

The status of MSA is the official language of the Arab countries and is, therefore, superior (prestigious) over Non-Standard Arabic. As far as the context of learning is concerned, MSA may be learned in a formal classroom situation (Mahmoud, 2000, pp. 129-130) or in an informal situation.

MSA has two manifestations which are a written manifestation and a spoken manifestation. MSA or Modern Written Arabic is defined as the variety of standardized, literary Arabic which was developed in the Arab world in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. MSA also indicates spoken Arabic which is close to the written standard. It is the language that is used in literature, academia, print and mass media, law and legislation (Cowan, 2006).

Many linguists make a difference between MSA and Classical Arabic but generally native speakers of Arabic do not differentiate between them as separate languages; they are referred to both as “the eloquent Arabic”. Many linguists consider MSA to be distinct from Classical Arabic—the written language prior to the mid-19th century—“There is no chronological point at which Classical Arabic turned into MSA, still less any agreed set of linguistic criteria that could differentiate the two”. MSA is merely a handy label used in western scholarship to denote the written language from about the middle of the nineteenth century, when concerted efforts began to modernize it lexically and phraseologically. Most western scholars refer to the formal written language before that date, and par excellence before the eclipse of Arab political power in the fifteenth century, as “Classical Arabic” (Holes & Allen, 2004, p. 5).

Native speakers of Arabic generally do not distinguish between “Modern Standard Arabic” and “Classical Arabic” as separate languages; they refer to both as al-ʿArabīyah al-Fuṣḥā meaning “the eloquent Arabic”. They consider the two forms to be two registers of one language. When the distinction is made, they are referred to as (Fuṣḥā al-ʿAṣr) (MSA) and ‘Fuṣḥā at-Turāth’ (Classical Arabic) (Elgibali & Badawi, 1996, p. 105).

There are also no agreed set of linguistic criteria which distinguish CA from MSA, however MSA differs most markedly in that it either synthesizes words from Arabic roots such as sayyaara (car) or baakhira (steamship) or adapts words from foreign languages (warsha (workshop) or interniet (Internet)) to describe industrial and post-industrial life (Holes & Allen, 2004, p. 5).

2.4 *Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic*

Nasiriya is a governorate in south of Iraq. It is situated 350 KMs south of Baghdad and 110 KMs from Samawa. It contains a number of cities, towns and rural. It geographically contains some deserts, marshes and Euphrates passes within the city. No mountains exist in this governorate. Nasiriya is a town in this governorate places (Betti, 1998, p. 78).

In Iraq, Arabic is one language, amongst the other four languages in Iraq (Turkumani, Assyrian, Kurdish and Armenian). The situation in Iraq is diglossic. It has a High dialect (Classical Arabic or MSA) which is the highly codified superposed variety. It is used for formal spoken and writing purposes (See: Ferguson, 1959), and is learnt at school. The Low variety is the one used as a mother tongue (Abdulla, 1969, pp. 49-50), and it is the one, which includes so many regional colloquials in all the parts of the Arab homeland. The IA dialectal difference in the middle and south of Iraq belongs to this continuum. These regional varieties have some common similarities and differences. It is the high dialect, which stands as a nationalistic bond among Arabs, and the low one shares many features with the high one. The different varieties used in Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic are: MSA, standardized Baghdadi Arabic, the Urban Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic, and Rural Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic (Betti, 2003, p. 32).

2.5 Children-Directed Speech

In many societies, adults and older children use a non-standard form of speech when talking to toddlers and infants. This form of speech is called Child-directed speech (CDS). It is also referred to as infant-directed speech or motherese. It can be defined as a clear and simplified way of communicating to younger children used by adults and older children. In CDS, many of the same words used in adult conversation are used. However, such a speech is thought to appeal more to babies and that they pay more attention when they are spoken to in this manner. It helps the baby to grasp the emotional intentions of speech. Many researchers believe that CDS is a species-specific behaviour that evolved to enhance communication between human babies and their caregivers because of its features such as melody and wide use (Anonymous, 2016).

When communicating with very young children, adults often systematically alter how they talk, using specialized CDS that draws children's attention and highlights the sounds in words, supporting vocabulary and other language outcomes. CDS is characterized by unusual auditory features such as high pitch, slow pace, exaggerated prosody, and distinct timbre; as well as sparse word volume and frequent repetition of words, focus on concrete ideas, and simple syntactic structure. Adults' CDS changes begin to talk and respond on their own using one-, two-, or three-word phrases (i.e., telegraphic speech) undergirded by basic syntax and grammar. However, despite all we know about CDS, most research targets parents and families, with far less work examining interactions between teachers and young children, especially toddlers (Hindman, et al., 2021).

2.6 Previous Studies

Ulfa, Salim, and Permana (2017) aims to know whether or not cartoon movie is effective in teaching vocabulary at the fifth grade students of SDN Bunklotok Batujai Lombok Tengah. It shows that Cartoon Movie is effective toward students' vocabulary mastery at the fifth grade of SDN Bunklotok Batujai Lombok Tengah in academic year 2016/2017.

A study by Rawan, Dar, and Siraj (2018) experimented on Pakistani children by using Japanese Hindi-dubbed cartoons as the tool for Hindi language acquisition. The results determined the connection between the frequency of the use of Hindi words in cartoons and the expanded frequency of vocabulary

acquisition by participants (Rawan et al., 2018). Rawan et al. (2018) confirmed the efficacy of cartoons as the means of learning new words among children who have just started learning the language. This research was conducted among young children who learn their native language (Singer, 2019).

A study concerned with EFL was conducted by Mousavia and Gholami (2014) which compared the children's performance in English vocabulary acquisition when they watched the stories with the task they had only to read the subtitles. According to the findings, children were more prone to retain new words when watching the flash stories with subtitles (Mousavia & Gholami, 2014). Children may be prone to learn through cartoons or other visual media, as they use two means of perceiving information (visual and auditory).

The results of a study by Munir (2016) show a significant increase of retained words by EL in the classroom when the cartoon is used as a tool in learning new vocabulary among EL when the teacher particularly is using it as a primary method to stimulate vocabulary acquisition among students.

Not only could young children learn through cartoons, but all age groups could also retain vocabulary. Of course, the choice of the cartoons or animated series has to be connected to children's interests and comply with their developmental milestones (Torralba & Mazra, 2015; cited in Singer, 2022, pp. 330-333).

3. Methodology of Research

3.1 Research Method Type

This study is qualitative which takes the data from three children relying on a number of cartoon films. The children are exposed to the cartoon films, which speak MSA. The data of the study are collected from some recordings and daily observation of the children's words, phrases and sentences which are uttered by the informants of the study as a result of being exposed to cartoon films for about four to five hours in their daily watching at the preschool stage and one and a half to two hours at the school stage.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

The paper depends on some cartoon films presented by two TV channels which are Spacetoon and Majid in order to investigate their effect in so far as their language, which is MSA. The children were so affected by the colors, music and stories of those films. Even they kept the songs of the introduction and the end of the cartoon films. Those songs were characterized of being enthusiastic, so the children were dancing and singing with them all the time.

In choosing the type of cartoon film to be seen by the informants, there is a correspondence between the age of the child and the nature of the film. There is something attractive for those children to watch those films, which is the story of the good and the evil. In a number of the films, the good heroes achieve the victory and defeat the evil and the bad people. For example, 'Fire Sword', 'Nobel Fighter', 'Land Eagles', 'Captain Khalfan', 'adnan and Lina adventures', 'Hazim al-Ra'ad'. Other cartoon films show the sacrifice of the son or the daughter towards his or her parents. This pushes the children to be sympathetic with them. How a little son or daughter behaves patiently facing many troubles only to find his father or

his mother, for example, 'Hunter', 'The Miserable'. Other cartoon films are sport. Football or handball is shown in those films. Such films will attract those children because they are sons. For example, 'flaming throw', 'Captain Majid'. All the above mentioned cartoon films are Japanese and translated into Arabic. So, their language is Modern Standard Arabic.

The informants of the study are Iraqi, so they are enthusiastic and try to be against the evil. Our children followed all the instructions and devices presented by the characters particularly the heroes of the cartoon films without any hesitation. Thus, they imitated their movements, voices and words verbatim.

Their acquisition of the language vocabulary is based on unconsciousness and no prior teaching.

3.3 Description of Informants

The children, who represent the informants of this study, are aged 5, 6 and 7 at the beginning of collecting the data of this study and the data collection continued for three years so that it includes the preschool and some school stages. At the beginning of this study, they were all preschool children. The language the children of the environment use is Nasiriya Iraqi Arabic since they are Iraqis living in Thi-Qar province (Nasiriya) and their parents use UNIA since they are of educated parents.

4. Data Description, Analysis and Discussion

The data taken from the three children consist of some recordings and daily observation of a number of words, phrases and sentences and uttering such language components depends on children's ages: When they were preschool, they uttered words and phrases, but when they became school children, they began using sentences.

The words and phrases used by the three children at the preschool stage are characteristic of either being single words, or part of sentences or as ellipted sentences:

- a. single words: For example, hayya (come on) (Appendix A &B); ?ayşan (too); 9ulba (a tin).
- b. part of sentences: For example, wallah Tayyib (I swear it is delicious); muxtalif 9an (different from); ladayya fikra (I have an idea.)
- c. ellipted sentences: For example, ?aHaqqan (really); ?a9taDir. (I apologize); Saddiqny (believe me.)
- d. Phrases: marra 9aniya (once again); ra?iHataha zakiya (It smells good); bisur9atin fa?iqatin (super fast).

Hide and seek game	lu9bat ?alğumayşa
Really?	?aHaqqan
Once again	marra 9aniya
welcome	9ala ? alraHb walsi9a
I swear it is delicious.	wallah Tayab
dub	du9billa
Believe me.	Saddiqny

They will be surprised.	sayatafaja?uun. sayatafaja?uun.
Different from	muxtalif 9an
I have an idea.	ladayya fikra
Come on.	hayya
Because it is beautiful.	li?annaha jamiila
too	?ayşan
So	hakaDa
a tin	9ulba
Forgive me.	samiHny
I apologize.	?a9taDir.
It smells good.	ra?iHataha zakiya
super fast	bisur9a fa?iqa
an important thing	şay?an muhiman
stop	tawaqqafu.
later on	laHiqan
stop	tawaqqaf

After being 7 years old, they began using sentences. These sentences and the like are grammatical. They are taken from the MSA used in the cartoon films. Those sentences follow the grammar rules of Arabic language without studying them. For example,

How crazy you are!	ya leka min majnoon.
Why did you finish?	Lima intehayt.
Come on, be ready.	Hayya ista9id.
Rinsing is a wonderful thing.	?almaşmaşa şay?un ra?i9un.
You mean toothbrush?	taqSidiina firşat ?al?asnan.
Be away from me.	?ibte9idy 9eny.
You will not find any human being here.	len tajida başaran huna.
I'll do.	Sawfa ?af9al.
It Beams	taSdur şu9a9an
This is the truth.	haDihi ?alHaqiqa.
Say the truth.	Qul ?alHaqiqa.

This fruit is a healthy food.	haDihi ?alfakiha ?aklun SiHiyun.
I am your son.	Bal ?ana waladak
I am the strongest.	?ana ?al?aqwa.
I have a bigger power.	9indy quwwa kubra.
There is candy.	Tujad Halwa.
We have a delicious dessert.	Ladayna Halwa laDiDa.
This is a wise boy.	haDa waladun Hakiim.
They all don't do their mother's saying.	Kuluhum la yunafiDuun kalam ?umahatahum.
This is fun.	haDa šay?un mumti9.
And what happened here?	Wama ?alaDy yaHduΘ huna.
what happened?	wamaDa jara
Is this impossible?	Hal haDa mustaHiil
My eye is well.	9ayny bixayr
I was looking for 9aboudy in all the house.	Kunta ?abHaΘ 9an 9aboudy fi kuly ?amanzil.
He jumped on him from the pool of water.	qafaza 9alayhi min burkat ?lma?.
I'm just kidding you.	?inny umazuHika faqaT.
I actually forgot about it.	?ana fi ?alwaqi9 nasaytahu.
You are exposed to us.	uktišifa ?amrak.
Abbas is a good man.	9abas rajulun Tayab.
Your words are run out.	Laqad nafaDtu kalimatak.
I want another book.	uridu kitaban ?axar.
What do you think of this nestle?	ma ra?yuka bihaDihi ?alnastala.
It is my turn.	laqad Haana dawry.
I can't stand it.	la ?astaTii9 ?an ? aHtamil.
Give it to me at once.	?a9Tiny fi ?al Haal.
Hit him with a knife.	?iřrubhu bilsikin.
These little ones are called insects.	haDihi ?alSiğar tud9a Hašarat.
I want to achieve my goal.	?uridu ?an ?uHaqiq hadafy.
Try this.	jarrub haDa.
I can't carry it.	ma ?agdar ?aHmilha.

Go from here.	ruuH min huna
As the hero said.	Kama qala ?albaTal.
This is a strange book.	haDa kitabun ġaribun.
He has a lot of cute colors.	9indahu ?alkaΘiir min ?alalwan ?alHilwa.
It is a wonderful tiger.	?innahu fahdun ra?i9un
Calm down.	hadi? min raw9ak.
Don't give in to despair.	la tastaslim lilya?s.
I have an idea.	ladaya fikra
I want some delicious fruit.	?uridu ba9šan min ?alfakiha ?alaDiDa.
I want some chocolate.	?uridu ba9šan min ?lšukalata.
I want some vegetables.	?uridu ba9šan min ?alxușar.
I want a nice book.	?uridu kitaban jamiilan.
I want a nice bed.	?uridu firašan jamilan.
Did the cat swallow your tongue? (Why did you stop talking?)	hal ?alquT ?ibtala9a lisaanak
Something stuck in my teeth.	șay?un 9aliquun bi?asnany
I have a history with him.	li sabiqa ma9ahu
The talk is directed at me, not at you.	?inalkalama muwajjahun lii walaysa laka

All the above words and sentences follow the Arabic rules of grammar. For example, “Arab grammarians pay attention to the role of concord in the sentence and deal with it in different grammatical topics” (Igaab, & Altai, 2018, p. 288). In the following sentence,

How crazy you are!	ya leka min majnoon.
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There is concord between the “kaaf” used for the masculine and the noun coming after the preposition which is also masculine. Likewise, “concerning the occurrence of pronouns, they are divided into explicit (al-Dhahira) and implicit (al-mustatira). The explicit pronouns consist of three types which are attached (al-mutaSila), detached (al-munfaSila) and reflexive (al-?ishariyat)” (Igaab & Tarrad, 2019, pp. 57-80).

Be away from me.	?ibte9idy 9enny.	an attached pronoun.
Say the truth.	Qul ?alHaqiqa.	an implicit pronoun.

This fruit is a healthy food.	haDihi ?alfakiha ?aklun SiHiyyun.	a detached pronoun.
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In addition, case is important and it is related to the use of diacritics (harakat): “The idiomatic definition of case is the change that occurs at the end of the word as a result to the change of the element”:

This is fun.	haDa šay?un mumti9.	al-dhamma.
You will not find any human being here.	len tajida bašaran huna.	al-fatha.
Put the book on the table.	ša9 ?al kitaba 9ala ?aminšadati.	al-kasra.

If the diacritics that refer to the types of case of nouns are presented in the sentence, the case is called verbal and if they are not presented in the sentence, the case is called maHalli (in the same place) (Igaab & Al-Manhalawey, 2010, p. 16). Likewise, the vocabulary belongs to MSA. All the above results prove hypothesis 1 which states: “The exposure to the cartoon films has an effect on the informants’ use of MSA”.

In some sentences, there is a mixture between MSA and their Nasiriya dialect:

I can’t carry it.	ma ?agdar ?aHmilha.
Go from here.	ruuH min huna

There are some sentences which are similar in their structure:

I want some delicious fruit.	?uridu ba9šan min ?alfakiha ?alaDiDa.
I want some chocolate.	?uridu ba9šan min ?lšukalata.
I want some vegetables.	?uridu ba9šan min ?alxušar.
I want a nice book.	?uridu kitaban jamilan.
I want a nice bed.	?uridu firašan jamilan.

Some sentences and phrases indicate the children’s following the doctors’ instructions as they are shown in the cartoon films.

Rinsing is a wonderful thing.	?almašmaša šay?un ra?i9un.
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You mean toothbrush?	taqSidiina firšat ?l?asnan.
This fruit is a healthy food.	haDihi ?alfakiha ?aklun SiHiyun.

The children also use some idiomatic expressions which are not easy to utter by such children in that age and they do not exist in the vocabulary of the UNIA. The children's parents tend to use very simple and easy words and expressions with their children because they are directed to the children. So, the effect of cartoon films on them is rather than that of their parents. This proves hypothesis 2 which states: "The cartoon films have more effect on the type of dialect used by children compared to parents' and environment's dialect, which is UNIA".

He came back empty handed.	raja9a xaaly ?alwifaş
I'm fed up.	laqad şıqtu Dar9an
Did the cat swallow your tongue? (Why did you stop talking?)	hal ?alquT ?ibtala9a lisanak

All the examples drawn above and are available in the data are words in MSA.

Pragmatically, what was said by the children was used in appropriate situations, for example, ?inal-kalama muwajjahun lii walaysa laka. (The talk is directed at me, not at you.). "This sentence was used when the child was in a discussion with his brothers."

Another example is: len tajida başaran huna. (You will not find any human being here.): "Someone knocked at the door and one of the three children said that sentence."

Semantically, the children have knowledge of the meaning of every word uttered since they use this word not another one in the situation.

Grammatically, their sentences are either nominal or verbal as in Arabic language. For instance, ?innahu fahdun ra?i9un. (It is a wonderful tiger.);

la tastaslim lilya?s. (Don't give in to despair.).

Verbal sentences are of different types. They are:

a. Compound: For example, ?ijlib lii 9aSiir ?al tuffaH walaysa 9aSiir ?al burtuqal. (Bring me apple juice, not orange juice.)

b. Imperative: For example, ?iTlaq saraHahu. (release him.);

?irkil ?alkura ?ila ?alamam. (Kick the ball forward.);

şa9 ?al kitaba 9alal minşadati. (Put the book on the table.).

Thus, informal learning can be applied to language acquisition. The process of language acquisition is not planned and unintentional and it occurs because of unprogrammed exposure to language. Thus,

informal learning refers to learning any science and any foreign or native language in school or outside while informal acquisition is by nature unintended, unprogrammed and can be applied to any native language. Thus, informal acquisition is restricted to language acquisition for native languages and language learning if it is not native. Thus, hypothesis 3 is accepted: The theories of informal learning of “Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2006) are applicable to the acquisition”. This is done unintentionally and with directing it to children.

5. Conclusions

As a result of the theoretical and practical aspects of the study, the following conclusions are arrived at:

- 1). There are several types of sentences used by the children like simple, compound, nominal and verbal sentences, and the verbs are in the past, present, future and in the command. All of the previous types belong to MSA.
- 2). All the sentences in the data are grammatical in that they follow the rules of MSA.
- 3). The types of vocabulary used exist in MSA and do not exist in UNIA.
- 4). The words and sentences used by the informants are phonetically, phonologically, morphologically, syntactically, semantically and pragmatically are well-formed and meaningfully acceptable.
- 5). All the words and sentences used by the informants prove that the dialect used by the children as a result of their exposure to the language of cartoon films is MSA. Thus, it is proved that there is a connection between the use of cartoon films spoken in MSA in cartoons and the expanded frequency of language acquisition by participants.
- 6). The theories of informal learning of Marsick and Watkins (1990) and Marsick, Watkins, Callahan, and Volpe (2006) are applicable to the language acquisition in this study. This is done for two reasons: one, because, by definition, language acquisition is done without formality and without programming. Second, throughout this paper and as clear from points 1-5 above, the children used MSA rather than UNIA.
- 7). Before being 7 years old, the informants of the study used words and phrases as single words or as ellipted sentences of MSA, or as part of sentences the other part of which is in UNIA, but after being 7 years old, they used full MSA sentences when they became school ones.
- 8). At the beginning of this study, i.e., at their preschool stage, metathesis and sound shift were characteristic of their speech at stage, but starting from their school stage, these sound symptoms disappeared gradually. (See Betti & Igaab, 2019, p. 219).
- 9). The children are so much affected by what they see and hear in the cartoon films.
- 10). Cartoon films can be considered as a source for educating children from a variety of sciences.
- 11). Although the informants are children living with their parents, with their neighbors and relatives kids who speak UNIA in the same house and in the same environment all the time, the dialect used is affected by the cartoons' dialect, MSA, to which the children are exposed to for four to five hours in their daily watching rather than by their parents' dialect which is UNIA.

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Appendix A

List of Iraqi Arabic Phonemic Inventory

1). The Consonants

Symbol	Description	Example
/f/	Voiceless labio-dental fricative	fiil (elephant)

/θ/	Voiceless interdental fricative	Θa9lab (fox)
/D/	Voiced interdental fricative	Dabha (he threw it)
/S/	Voiceless dental emphatic fricative	Sabur (patience)
/ş/	Voiced interdental emphatic fricative	şabuT (an officer)
/T/	Voiceless dental emphatic stop	TamaTa (tomato)
/t̤/	Voiced dental emphatic stop	taal (staying)
/s/	Voiceless dental fricative	suug (market)
/z/	Voiced dental fricative	zrar (button)
/š/	Voiceless palatal fricative	šmalak (what is wrong with you?)
/č/	Voiceless palatal affricate	čaly (bank of the river)
/x/	Voiceless velar fricative	xubuz (bread)
/ġ/	Voiceless velar fricative	ġrab (crow)
/h/	Voiceless glottal fricative	hna (here)
/H/	Voiceless pharyngeal fricative	Hariim (women)
/b/	Voiced bilabial stop	bab (door)
/t/	Voiceless dental stop	timman (rice)
/k/	Voiceless velar stop	ka9ak (cake)
/g/	Voiced velar stop	ga9ad (he sat down)
/q/	Voiceless uvular stop	qadiim (old)
/ʔ/	Glottal stop	ʔamis (yesterday)
/j/	Voiced palatal affricate	jamal (beauty)
/p/	Voiceless bilabial stop	parda (curtain)
/d/	Voiced dental stop	tdanna (be nearby)
/9/	Voiced pharyngeal fricative	9aly (high)
/m/	Voiced bilabial nasal	minhu (who is it?)
/n/	Voiced dental nasal	nibaH (barked)
/l/	Voiced alveolar lateral	limna (gather us)
/r/	Voiced alveolar flap	ramul (sand)
/w/	High back rounded semi-vowel	wayyana (with us)
/y/	High front unrounded semi-vowel	yamta (when)

2). The Vowels

Vowels	Description	Example
I	Short half-close front with lip spreadin	mi9da (stomach)
ii	Long close front with lip spreading	biina (in us)
a	Short half –open central neutral	saliim (healthy)
aa	Long open- central neutral	saalim (safe)

u	Short half –close back rounded	ummii (my mother)
uu	Long close back rounded	9uud (stick)
oo	Long half-close to half- open back rounded	tilifoon (telephone)

Note. They are taken from Betti (2007, pp. 409-10) and Greenlee (1980, pp. 3-4).

Appendix B

The Data Collected from the Children

Examples in Arabic	Translated into English	Transliterated
يا لك من مجنون	How you are crazy!	ya leka min majnoon.
لم إنتهيت	Why did you finish?	lima intehayt.
هيا إستعد	Come on, be ready.	hayya ista9id.
المضمضة شيء رائع	Rinsing is a wonderful thing.	?almaşmaşa şay?un ra?i9un.
تقصدين فرشاة الاسنان	You mean toothbrush?	taqSidiina firşat ?al?asnan.
إبتعدي عني	Be away from me.	?ibte9idy 9enny.
لن تجد بشرا هنا	You will not find any human being here.	len tajida başaran huna.
لعبة الغمضة	Hide and seek game	lu9bat ?alğumayşa
أحقا	Really?	?aHaqqan
ايضا	too	?ayşan
هكذا	It is so.	hakaDa
ماكو داعي للشكر	Do not mention it.	Maku da9y lilşukur
سوف أفعل	I'll do.	sawfa ?af9al.
توقفوا	Stop.	Tawaqqafu.
تصدر شعاعا	Beam	taSdur šu9a9an
هذه الحقيقة	This is the truth.	haDihi ?alHaqiqa.
قل الحقيقة	Say the truth.	Qul ?alHaqiqa.
هذه الفاكهة اكل صحي	This fruit is a healthy food.	haDihi ?alfakiha ?aklun SiHiyyun.
بل انا ولدك	I am your son.	Bal ?ana waladak
انا الاقوى	I am the strongest.	?ana ?al?aqwa.
عندي قوة كبرى	I have bigger power.	9indy quwwa kubra.
توجد حلوى	There is candy.	Tujad Halwa.
لدينا حلوى لذيذة	We have a delicious dessert.	Ladayna Halwa laDiDa.

هذا ولد حكيم	This is a wise boy.	haDa waladun Hakiim.
كلهم لا ينفذون كلام امهاتهم	They don't do what their mother says.	Kuluhum la yunafiDuun kalam ?umahatahum.
هذا شيء ممتع	This is fun.	haDa šay?un mumti9.
وما الذي يحدث هنا	And what happened here?	Wama ?alaDy yaHduΘ huna.
وماذا جرى	what was going on?	wamaDa jara
هل هذا مستحيل ؟	Is this impossible?	Hal haDa mustaHiil
عيني بخير	My eye is well.	9ayny bixayr
كنت ابحث عن عبودي في كل المنزل	I was looking for Uboudy in every place of the house.	Kunta ?abHaΘ 9an 9aboudy fi kul ?lamanzil.
انه شيء مذهل	It is an amazing thing.	?innahu šay?un muDhilun
علبه	A tin	9ulba
دُعبله	dub	du9bila
من بركة الماء قفز عليه	He jumped on him from the pool of water.	Min burkat ?lma? qafaza 9alayhi.
صدقني	Believe me.	Saddiqny
مرة ثانية	Once again	marra Θaniya
اني امازحك فقط	I'm just kidding you.	?inny umazuHika faqaT.
سامحيني	Forgive me.	samiHiiny
انا في الواقع نسيتته	I actually forgot about it.	?ana fi ?alwaqi9 nasaytahu.
اعتذر	I apologize.	?a9taDir.
اكتشف امرك	You are exposed to us.	uktišifa ?amrak.
عباس رجل طيب	Abbas is a good man.	9abas rajulun Tayyib.
لقد نفذت كلماتك	Your words are finished.	Laqad naffaDtu kalimatak.
اريد كتابا اخر	I want another book.	uridu kitaban ?axar.
ما رأيك بهذه النستله؟	What do you think of this nestle?	ma ra?yuka bihaDihi ?alnastala.
لقد حان دوري	It is my turn.	laqad Hana dawry.
لا استطيع ان احتمل	I can't stand it.	la ?astaTii9 ?an ? aHtamil.
اعطيني في الحال	Give it to me at once.	?a9Tiny fi ?al Haal.
بسرعه فائقة	Super-fast	bisur9a fa?iqa
سيتفاجئون	They will be surprised.	Sayatafa-ja?uun.
مختلف عن	It is different from...	muxtali9 9an
اضربه بالسكين	Hit him with a knife.	?iřrubhu bilsikin.
هذه الصغار تُدعى حشرات	These little ones are called insects.	haDihi ?alSiğar tud9a Hašarat.

شيئا مهما	An important thing	šayʔan muhimman
اريد ان احقق هدفي	I want to achieve my goal.	?uridu ʔan ʔuHaqqiq hadafy.
لاحقا	Later on	laHiqan
لأنها جميلة	Because it is beautiful.	liʔannaha jamila
جرب هذا	Try this.	jarrub haDa.
ما اقدر احملها	I can't carry it.	ma ʔagdar ʔaHmilha.
روح من هنا	Go from here.	ruuH min huna
هيا	Come on	hayya
رائحتها زكية	It smells good.	raʔiHataha zakiya
كما قال البطل	As the hero said.	Kama qala ʔalbaTal.
هذا كتاب غريب	This is a strange book.	haDa kitabun ġaribun.
عنده الكثير من الالوان الحلوة	He has a lot of cute colours.	9indahu ʔalkaθiir min ʔalalwan ʔalHilwa.
انه فهد رائع	It is a wonderful tiger.	?inahu fahdun raʔi9un.
هديء من روعك	Calm down.	hadiʔ min raw9ak.
لا تستسلم لليأس	Don't give in to despair.	la tastaslim lilyaʔs.
لدي فكرة	I have an idea.	ladayya fikra
والله طيب	I swear it is delicious.	wallah Tayib
على الرحب والسعة	Welcome	9ala ʔ alraHb walsi9a
اريد بعضا من الفاكهة اللذيذة	I want some delicious fruit.	?uridu ba9šan min ʔalfakiha ʔalaDiDa.
الغرفة في فوضى	The room is a mess.	?alġurfa fi fawša
اريد بعضا من الشكولاتة	I want some chocolate.	?uridu ba9šan min?lšukalata.
اريد بعضا من الخضار	I want some vegetables.	?uridu ba9šan min ʔalxušar.
اريد كتابا جميلا	I want a nice book.	?uridu kitaban jamilan.
اريد فراشا جميلا	I want a nice bed.	?uridu firašan jamilan.
هل القط ابتلع لسانك	Did the cat swallow your tongue?	hal ʔalquT ʔibtala9a lisanak
شيء عالق بأسناني	Something stuck in my teeth.	šayʔun 9aliqun biʔasnany
لي سابقه معه	I have a history with him.	li sabiqa ma9ahu
ان الكلام موجه لي وليس لك	The talk is directed at me, not at you.	?inal-kalama muwajjahun lii walaysa laka
رجع خالي الوفاض	come back empty handed.	raja9a xaalay ʔalwifaš
لقد ضعفت ذرعا	I'm fed up.	laqad šiqtu Dar9an

انا لا اتحدث اليك بل اتحدث الى الذي وراءك	I'm not talking to you, I'm talking to those behind you.	?ana la ?ataHadaΘ ?ilayk bal ?ataHadaΘ ?ila ?allaDy wara?ika.
اطلق سراحه	release him,	?iTlaq saraHahu.
اركل الكرة الى الامام	Kick the ball forward	?irkil ?alkura ?ila ?alamam.
ضع الكتاب على المنضدة	Put the book on the table.	ša9 ?al kitaba 9ala ?aminšadati.
اجلب لي عصير التفاح وليس عصير البرتقال	Bring me apple juice, not orange juice.	?ijlib lii 9aSiir ?al tuffaH walaysa 9aSiir ?al burtuqal
اكتب الدرس الان وليس غداً	Write the lesson now, not tomorrow.	?uktub ?aldarsa ?al?an walaysa ġadan.