

THE EFFECTS OF CLOSED-CAPTIONED TELEVISION ON
THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF INTERMEDIATE
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of closed-captioned TV (CCTV) on the listening comprehension of intermediate English as a second language (ESL) students. Thirty students with intermediate levels of ESL proficiency participated in this study. Since vocabulary/phrase acquisition and comprehension are main factors that influence the success/failure of listening comprehension, this research also examined the effects of CCTV on these two subscales. The correlations between the listening comprehension and other factors—starting age of ESL instruction, length of time in the United States, length of ESL instruction, length of time in private language schools, length of time with tutors, and length of time traveling in English speaking countries—were inspected as well. Subjects' perceptions of the effects of CCTV on ESL learning were also covered in the study. The results of the research showed that CCTV helped ESL students' general comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and listening comprehension. However, all other factors examined in the study, such as age of starting ESL instruction, length of ESL instruction, etc., did not correlate with the listening comprehension test.

Closed captioning technology was originally devised for the benefit of the hearing impaired. However, the marketing studies of the National Captioning Institute in 1989 suggest that *over half* of the decoders are sold to the hearing population, and among the purchasers many are immigrant families. Hofmeister et al. [1] also claim that at least 40 percent of the decoders are purchased for persons other than

the hearing impaired. They reported one informal survey of decoder sales by the sales staff in a college town which suggested that 80 percent of decoders were purchased by foreign students for the purposes of strengthening comprehension of specific television programs and sharpening English language skills generally.

Being an ESL learner and teacher for many years, the researcher believes that CCTV is a promising method to facilitate L2 acquisition. As Newman and Koskinen stated [2], students might establish the relationship between words and meanings through TV's combination of pictures and sounds. TV's entertaining qualities make it an easier medium to access than text, and it also minimizes fear of failure in learning. Students can engage in making meaningful predictions of new vocabulary and content as they watch TV for entertainment. Therefore, viewing TV can be a cognitively active experience, when appropriate content is used.

Bean and Wilson [3] also noted that hearing elaborate language from CCTV has positive effects on the language and communication skills of the listeners. "It turns TV into a moving story book, a steady stream of reading material, which allows students to read spoken language and have vocabulary augmented by video content" [3]; and, in terms of motivation, students are especially interested in soap operas with closed captioning. "The almost addictive style of these audiovisual materials with the added reinforcement of captions help them comprehend realistic English conversation more easily" [4].

THE KRASHEN MODEL

The belief that CCTV is an effective educational tool for L2 learners is partly based on the second language acquisition hypotheses of Steven Krashen.

Krashen's Monitor Model (acquisition/learning) hypothesis is one of the best-known [5] among the forty to sixty theories of second language acquisition (SLA) that have been introduced [6]. He claims that instruction results in learning, a conscious process, which plays a minor role only in performance by polishing the use of acquired rules. In other words, our conscious rules only act as an editor, or Monitor. In contrast, acquisition, a sub/unconscious process, plays a major role in L2 development and in performance. Children develop ability in their first language through acquisition, without formal instruction in reading or grammar. "When we talk about grammar, or rules, we are referring to learning, not acquisition." Krashen further points out that learning does not become acquisition and our ability to use second languages comes mostly from what we have acquired, not from what we have learned [7].

The Input Hypothesis

This hypothesis states that only when the learner receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input—which Krashen defines as messages that the learner

can understand—can acquisition occur. Krashen argues that when enough input of consistent high quality/interest is delivered, “comprehensible input automatically contains all the grammatical structures the acquirer is ready to acquire, in the right order and right quantity” [7]. In other words, production emerges on its own as a result of obtaining comprehensible input.

Fossilization

Fossilization refers to the stage at which the L2 learner’s progress ceases in the L2 development process [8]. Krashen [9] suggests that fossilization is due to insufficient quantity and inappropriate quality of input for some L2 learners. For example, L2 learners may stop progressing if they have little access to authentic books, native speakers, etc.

Sheltered Subject Matter Teaching (SSMT) Class

SSMT was inspired by the success of Canadian immersion programs [10]. In these classes, subjects such as math, history, etc. are taught in the target language. The focus is on subject matter, not language. Krashen [11] maintains that since the focus is on meaning (subject matter), not form (language) when SSMT in a second language is comprehensible, it is language teaching because it provides comprehensible input.

The Extensive/Pleasure Reading Hypothesis

Krashen refers to the reading hypothesis as “a special case of the input hypothesis.” He claims that “comprehensible input in the form of reading also stimulates language acquisition” [12]. Self-selected or voluntary reading is an especially good way to acquire L2 and improve literacy in L2 [13]. While L2 learners read books, they can understand the socio-cultural aspects of the target language by encountering a variety of contexts that are found in the target culture.

Similarly, Wilkins [14] argues that: “Through reading, the learner . . . is exposed to the lexical items embedded in natural linguistic context, and as a result they begin slowly to have the same meaningfulness for him that they have for the native speaker”; and Nuttall [15] maintains that the best way of acquiring L2 proficiency, next to going to live among native speakers, is to read extensively in the target language.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

The Affective Filter is a barrier that can prevent input from reaching the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), the internal language processor [16]. In this hypothesis, Krashen claims that low motivation, high anxiety, and low self-esteem cause a high filter [17]. According to Stevick [18], many students consider language classes to be a place where their weaknesses will be revealed, instead of

a place where they will grow in competence. Therefore, they are “on the defensive” in language class, and this causes a high Affective Filter. When the filter, a mental block that prevents learners from fully using the comprehensible input, is up, the comprehensible input cannot pass to reach the LAD, and thus acquisition cannot occur. Many studies support these hypotheses.

Elley and Mangubhai [19] conducted a twenty-month project with 380 rural Fijian children to compare the results obtained from book-based programs to those from the normal program, The Tate program, a typical audio-lingual program. Eight months after the project began, the results showed that the former programs, in which English as a second language (ESL) pupils were exposed to a rich variety of high-interest illustrated story books, were superior in reading and listening comprehension; they made gains at twice the normal rate. After twenty months, these gains had increased further and spread to the related language skills of vocabulary knowledge, structure, and written composition. Elley and Mangubhai thus confirmed the hypothesis that high-interest story reading can play an important role in SLA.

Hafiz and Tudor [20] created a relaxed, tension-free environment in which the ESL children in the experimental group were able to develop and maintain a pleasure-driven and interest-driven attitude to the reading material available. After twelve weeks, the results showed that extensive reading for pleasure affected reading and writing remarkably. Janopoulous [21] found a positive relationship between heavy pleasure reading and L2 writing proficiency for foreign graduate students studying in the United States. Gradman and Hanania [22] compared various variables— affective, sociocultural, age, language practice, and learning strategies for SLA—and concluded that extracurricular reading exposure was the most important factor influencing the three subtests of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): listening comprehension, grammar, and vocabulary/reading comprehension.

Krashen’s L2 acquisition hypotheses serve as strong theoretical justification for this study. The input hypothesis indicates that extensive L2 input in a tension-free environment is a source of comprehensible input which causes language acquisition and therefore can contribute significantly to the enhancement of learners’ language skills. In a tension-free situation, the affective filter goes down for the comprehensible input to reach the LAD; thus, learners subconsciously acquire the language while they are absorbed in watching CCTV. Furthermore, CCTV “provides a semantically enriched context where the visual and the audio lend meaning to the printed words on the screen” [23]. Therefore, watching CCTV is both a form of listening and a form of reading, and combining the skills required for these two kinds of language processing increases comprehension of both the spoken and written forms of the text.

CCTV also “provides a presentation of information that includes opportunities to view the video action, hear the spoken word, and see the printed text. This multisensory presentation is appealing to students” [23]. Hence, watching CCTV

is pleasure reading as well as pleasure listening. CCTV decreases the difficulty of learning new words, and it is also a medium with which students feel confident [24]. In addition, many students spend much time watching television [25]. If they watch CCTV, then they will acquire sufficient quantity and appropriate quality of comprehensible input in a low-anxiety and interest-driven situation. CCTV, therefore, diminishes their problems with the affective filter and fossilization. Moreover, when viewing documentaries and news, L2 learners acquire L2 in the way they acquire it in SSMT class.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Will the subjects who watch the episode of CCTV outperform those who watch traditional TV on a listening test based on this episode?
2. Will CCTV improve ESL students' vocabulary and phrase acquisition?
3. Will CCTV increase ESL students' general comprehension of the program?
4. Do factors such as starting age of ESL instruction, length of time in the United States, length of ESL instruction, time in private language schools, time with tutors and time traveling in English speaking countries correlate with the listening comprehension?

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

A group of thirty ESL students enrolled in The Language Academy at the University of Southern California (USC) for the summer session B, 1998, participated in this study. This group of students has been placed in an intermediate level of speaking and listening, level 3, according to their performance on the International Student English (ISE) test. The ISE test, an ESL placement test administered by American Language Institute (ALI) at USC, includes three parts—essay, vocabulary and grammar, and an oral interview.

Materials

Family Album U.S.A. (FAU), an interesting and innovative television series designed for ESL classroom teaching, was used for this study. This series was developed by Maxwell Macmillan International Publishing Group, U.S.A. in 1992. The scripts were written by native Americans and the actors and actresses were also native Americans. The series contains twenty-six episodes, each of which consists of three seven-minute acts. Each episode tells a complete story and it centers around one important event, such as a holiday celebration, a job interview, a wedding, or the birth of a baby. The language level in the dramas follows a sequence. Grammar and vocabulary are simpler in the earlier episodes;

in the later episodes, the language is more advanced. The series was first introduced to Taiwan in late 1992. The authentic and entertaining quality of the material soon gained popularity in many university English classrooms in Taiwan.

The episode used was chosen by three English teachers at The Language Academy at USC. The following criteria were used to evaluate the episode:

1. Is the language appropriate for the situation portrayed in the episode?
2. Is the language (grammatical and lexical complexity) of the segment appropriate for the intermediate level of study?

Krashen's Natural Order Hypothesis [26] claims that learners make progress along the natural order by understanding input and the next stage, which is formulated as "i + 1"; "i" represents the learner's current level of competence. Therefore, the appropriate input should be a little beyond the students' present English level in order to intrigue the students and to induce them to use context, knowledge of the world, and extra-linguistic information in addition to their current linguistic competence to understand the episode.

3. Is the drama relevant and of interest to the average student in this age group?
4. Does the language illustrate a variety of salient speech functions?

Procedures

The research was conducted during the subjects' regularly scheduled class hours in the Media lab for about an hour for each group. Each participant was given a test booklet and asked to provide a short list of background information, including their student ID numbers, age, nationality, educational background, starting year and last year of receiving ESL instruction in formal schooling in their home countries, and extracurricular ESL learning experience/special ESL learning background other than formal schooling of ESL classes; the booklet also contained instructions pertaining to the study, and an answer sheet. Since the subjects were at the same (intermediate) level, the data of their length of studying ESL and extracurricular ESL learning experience/special ESL learning background were collected for the purpose of further analyzing the correlation between the listening test and these variables.

After the subjects had watched the program, they were asked to explain their perceptions of CCTV on ESL learning. Their answers were later analyzed for the correlation between the listening test and these variables.

Participants were equally, randomly assigned to one of the two treatment groups:

- Group #1 watched traditional TV (without captions) twice; or
- Group #2 watched CCTV twice.

The two groups of students watched the same episode of FAU and then took the same listening test. Subjects viewed the episode twice consecutively, each time for fourteen minutes, prior to taking the listening test.

INSTRUMENT

The listening test, ten minutes long, uses the same format as the Listening Comprehension subtest of The Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL), which consists of spoken statements and short conversations. Sixteen multiple-choice test items, with three possible answers, are derived from the video segment. Each question contains language that actually occurs somewhere in the episode (please refer to Appendix A for the script). In addition to testing the general comprehension of the episode, the focus of the test is also on the new vocabulary/phrases/idioms.

In the listening comprehension test, rather than reading the questions, students listened to them. They were told to mark only those answers which they were sure of; those they were unsure of were left blank.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE TEST

In order to decide if the test items are appropriate, three experienced American teachers of ESL at ALI at the University of Southern California conducted an item analysis of the listening comprehension test. The following Likert scale were used: (1) Very Inappropriate, (2) Inappropriate, (3) Undecided, (4) Appropriate, and (5) Very Appropriate. Only test items that scored on or above the Appropriate level by at least two raters were used.

RESULTS

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures were utilized in the study to examine the effects of the CCTV/traditional TV on the listening comprehension of the subjects. The level of significance was set at 0.05 (Table 1).

Table 2 presents the results of the analyses of variance on the listening test.

The results of ANOVA showed that the group with captioning scored significantly better on the listening comprehension test than the group without captioning, $F(1,28) = 13.519, p = .001$.

Levene's test of homogeneity of variances is not significant ($p = .607$) so the two groups are similar in variance and can be compared using one-way ANOVA (Table 3).

Table 4 presents the descriptives of the first subscale, vocabulary/phrase acquisition of the test.

Table 5 presents the descriptives of the second subscales, the comprehension of the test.

Table 1. Descriptives of the Listening Test

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard Error |
|-----------------|----------|-------|--------------------|----------------|
| Without Caption | 15 | 7.67 | 2.44 | .63 |
| With Caption | 15 | 10.87 | 2.33 | .60 |
| Total | 30 | 9.27 | 2.85 | .52 |

Table 2. Results of the Listening Test

| | ANOVA | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|--------------|
| | Sum of Squares | <i>df</i> | Mean Square | <i>F</i> | Significance |
| Between groups | 76.800 | 1 | 76.800 | 13.519 | .001 |
| Within groups | 159.067 | 28 | 5.681 | | |
| Total | 235.867 | 29 | | | |

Table 3. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

| Levene Statistic | <i>df</i> 1 | <i>df</i> 2 | Significance |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| .271 | 1 | 28 | .607 |

Table 4. Descriptives of Vocabulary/Phrase Acquisition Subscale

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard Error |
|-----------------|----------|------|--------------------|----------------|
| Without Caption | 15 | 3.47 | 1.41 | .36 |
| With Caption | 15 | 5.07 | 1.67 | .43 |
| Total | 30 | 4.27 | 1.72 | .31 |

Levene's test of homogeneity of variances for both subscales are not significant ($p = .591$ for vocabulary and phrase; $p = .055$ for comprehension). Therefore the groups are similar in variance and can be compared using one-way ANOVA (Table 6).

The results of ANOVA showed that the group with captioning scored significantly better on both subscales of the listening comprehension test than the group without captioning. Vocabulary and Phrase, $F(1,28) = 8.064$, $p = .008$; Comprehension, $F(1,28) = 13.176$, $p = .001$ (Table 7).

According to the subjects' answers on the questionnaire, the following factors: time in the United States, age of starting ESL instruction, length of ESL instruction, time in private language school, time with tutor, and time traveled in English speaking countries were examined to determine their correlation with the listening comprehension (Table 8).

Please refer to Appendix B for the questionnaire.

Tables 9 and 10 indicate that all the factors shown in Table 8 are not correlated with the listening comprehension test. The two groups were compared on the six factors and no significant differences were found.

Based on all the subjects' responses on the questionnaire about the effects of closed-captioning, a t -test was conducted to analyze the responses. Significant results were found (see Tables 11 and 12):

CCTV helped the students understand the story better

$$t(29) = 5.835, p < .001$$

CCTV helped the students with their vocabulary/phrase acquisition

$$t(29) = 4.287, p < .001$$

CCTV improved the students' listening skill

$$t(26) = 2.360, p = .026$$

Watching TV was an enjoyable way to learn English

$$t(29) = 7.616, p < .001$$

Reliability analysis of the listening test indicates that the subscale for vocabulary/phrase, which are questions 3, 5, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, is quite high (Alpha = .6519):

Table 5. Descriptives of Comprehension Subscale

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard Error |
|-----------------|----------|------|--------------------|----------------|
| Without Caption | 15 | 4.20 | 1.47 | .38 |
| With Caption | 15 | 5.80 | .86 | .22 |
| Total | 30 | 5.00 | 1.44 | .26 |

Table 6. Test of Homogeneity of Variances

| | Levene Statistic | df1 | df2 | Significance |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-----|-----|--------------|
| Vocabulary and Phrase | .295 | 1 | 28 | .591 |
| Comprehension | 3.998 | 1 | 28 | .055 |

Table 7. Results of Subsclaes

| | ANOVA | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|----|----------------|--------|--------------|
| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Significance |
| Vocabulary & Phrase | | | | | |
| Between groups | 19.200 | 1 | 19.200 | 8.064 | .008 |
| Within groups | 66.667 | 28 | 2.381 | | |
| Total | 85.867 | 29 | | | |
| Comprehension | | | | | |
| Between groups | 19.200 | 1 | 19.200 | 13.176 | .001 |
| Within groups | 40.800 | 28 | 1.457 | | |
| Total | 60.000 | 29 | | | |

Table 8. Descriptives of Starting Age/Time in the United States and Other Factors*

| | Mean | Standard Deviation | N |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----------------------|----|
| Time in US (weeks) | 13.05 | 20.05 | 30 |
| Starting age of ESL | 12.43 | 1.99 | 30 |
| Length of ESL (years) | 7.60 | 2.21 | 30 |
| Time in private school (years) | 1.3619 | 1.8827 | 13 |
| Time with tutor (years) | .9750 | 1.1806 | 5 |
| Time traveling (months) | 4.5417 | 4.5618 | 6 |
| Total correct | 9.27 | 2.85 | 30 |

*All $p > .05$

Table 9. Correlations between Other Factors and the Listening Test (I)

| | Time in U.S. | Starting Age of ESL | Length of ESL |
|---------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Total | $r_{30} = .303$ | $r_{30} = -.173$ | $r_{30} = .105$ |
| Correct | $p = .103$ | $p = .362$ | $p = .580$ |

Table 10. Correlations between Other Factors and the Listening Test (II)

| | Time in Private School | Time with Tutor | Time Traveling |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Total | $r_{13} = .276$ | $r_5 = .192$ | $r_6 = -.135$ |
| Correct | $p = .361$ | $p = .758$ | $p = .798$ |

Table 11. Statistics of the Subjects' Perceptions of CCTV

| | <i>N</i> | Mean | Standard Deviation | Standard Error Mean |
|--------------------------------|----------|------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Understand story better | 30 | 2.60 | .56 | .10 |
| Vocabulary learning | 30 | 2.53 | .68 | .12 |
| Listening skills | 27 | 2.33 | .73 | .14 |
| Enjoyable way to learn English | 30 | 2.67 | .48 | 8.75E-02 |

Table 12. Results of the Subjects' Perceptions of CCTV

| | <i>t</i> | <i>df</i> | Significance (2-tailed) | Mean Difference |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Understand story better | 5.835 | 29 | .000 | .60 |
| Vocabulary learning | 4.287 | 29 | .000 | .53 |
| Listening skills | 2.360 | 29 | .026 | .33 |
| Enjoyable way to learn English | 7.616 | 29 | .000 | .67 |

Reliability Coefficients

N of cases = 30.0

N of items = 8

Alpha = .6519

Also, subscale for comprehension, which are questions 1, 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 13, is also high (Alpha = .6267):

Reliability coefficients

N of cases = 30.0

N of items = 8

Alpha = .6267

Please refer to Appendix C for the listening test questions.

DISCUSSION

This research provides strong evidence that CCTV has beneficial effects on the listening comprehension of intermediate level ESL students.

The significant outcome of the effects of CCTV on the subscales—vocabulary/phrase acquisition and general comprehension—is clearly consistent with the results of previous studies, such as the work of Newman and Koskinen [2], Adler [27], and Goldman and Goldman [28].

Subjects' favorable attitude toward L2 learning by CCTV also is consistent with the previous research of Koskinen [29], Koskinen et al. [24], and Ellsworth [30].

Other factors which were examined in the study—starting age of ESL instruction, length of time in the USA, length of ESL instruction, length of time in private language schools, length of time with tutors, and length of time traveling in the English speaking countries—showed no correlation with the listening comprehension test. The small experimental population might have influenced the outcome.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO RESEARCHERS AND EDUCATORS

Much of the research that has been done on CCTV for L2 learning has focused on its impact on motivation, reading, and vocabulary gain. Although there are several studies on the effects of captioned movies on listening comprehension in Japan, very limited research has been conducted in the United States.

This research identified a positive gain of the effects of CCTV on listening comprehension of intermediate level ESL students. For future studies, advanced/basic levels of population could be taken into consideration for further examination. A larger population might produce new correlations between the use of CCTV and other factors.

Subscales other than vocabulary/phrase acquisition and general comprehension, such as clustering, redundancy, and reduced forms, could be included in the future research.

Since CCTV has proved to be a highly motivating and effective tool for L2 acquisition, educators should incorporate captioned media into L2 curriculum. More interesting and innovative materials such as *Family Album U.S.A.* are called for.

APPENDIX A SCRIPT

Family Album U.S.A.

Episode 7: "Mans' Best Friend"

Act I

IN THE STEWARTS' HOME. ROBBIE STEWART AND HIS FRIEND ALEXANDRA PAPPAS ARE LISTENING TO MUSIC IN THE LIVING ROOM.

A: Alexandra

R: Robbie

A: Robbie, this new Walkman is absolutely wonderful.

R: Richard and Marilyn bought it for me for my birthday.

A: They're so thoughtful. You are very lucky, Robbie, to have such a nice family.

R: Is something wrong, Alexandra?

A: No, nothing.

R: Yes, there is. I can tell. What's the matter? Come on, you can tell me. What's up?

A: I don't know. Something's wrong.

R: OK, let's talk.

A: I received a letter from my parents this morning.

R: Did they write some bad news?

A: No.

R: Well, then why are you so sad?

A: I miss them. I miss them very much.

R: I'm sorry, Alexandra. But I understand.

A: The Molinas treat me so nicely, and I love being with your family so much . . . but when I received the letter with photographs of my family, I cried. I cried because I miss them all.

R: You really miss your family, don't you?

A: Yes. I know I must seem silly. It's not like I have nobody. I like the Molinas very much, and they're so kind to me.

- R: Hey, why don't we go out for a cheeseburger and french fries? That'll cheer you up. And you can use my Walkman.
- A: That's a good idea. But if we go out, please don't complain about your math teacher or your math homework. I want to have fun.
- R: So do I. I have to turn off the lights, or else my father will get really angry. He says I never turn them out when I leave. If they come home and they're on . . . (He moves his index finger across his throat to show that his father will be angry.)
- (There is a sound at the patio door.)
- R: Do you hear something?
- A: Yes. What was that?
- R: It sounded like a dog barking.
- A: It sounded like a dog barking right here.
- R: Yeah. (He opens the door. A dog is standing there.)
- A: A dog!
- R: A springer spaniel! (to the dog) come on in! Make yourself at home.
- A: Oh, you poor little thing. Come here.
- R: Come on.
- A: Poor baby.
- R: Where did you come from?
- A: (She looks at the dog's identification tag.)
Her name's Gemma, and she belongs to Mr. and Mrs. Levinson. There's a phone number—five five five . . . eight four four eight. Robbie, maybe you should call them and tell the Levinsons we have their cute little spaniel.
- R: I've always wanted a springer spaniel. She's so cute. (He goes to the telephone and dials the Levinsons' number.)
- Operator: The number you are calling—555-8448—is no longer in service.
- R: (He hangs up the phone.) The number's no longer in service.
- A: (to the dog) Oh, you poor, poor baby. You've lost your family.
- R: We'll find them. Don't worry, Alexandra.

Act II

A LITTLE LATER. ROBBIE AND ALEXANDRA ARE IN THE KITCHEN. THEY ARE FEEDING THE DOG.

- L: Linda
- R: Don't worry, Alexandra. We'll find the owner.
- A: How, Robbie?
- R: Let me think.
- A: (to the dog) Gemma, sit. Good Gemma. Give me your paw. Good Gemma. This dog is well trained.
- R: She likes you, too.
- A: So how are we going to find the owners?

- R: With a little help from the ASPCA, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. They're the ones. We once found a cat. She was caught in the branches of our tree. And Dad called the ASPCA. They came and solved the problem.
- A: Robbie, let's call them.
(Robbie looks up the number in the telephone book.)
- R: Let me see—ASPCA . . . Here it is. ASPCA Animal Shelter. 555-7700.
(He calls.)
- L: Hello, ASPCA.
- R: Hello, my name is Robbie Stewart. I have a lost dog I'd like to bring to you. How late are you open?
- L: We're open till nine p.m.
- R: Thank you. I'll bring the dog over by nine.
- L: Thanks. Bye.
- R: Thanks. Good-bye. (He hangs up the phone.)
- A: They're still open?
- R: They're open until nine o'clock. We have two and a half hours. Let's take Gemma by there now. They'll find the owner.
- A: I hope so. I'm so sad to see this little dog without her family.
- R: I'm sure they'll find the owner. But if they don't, I'll adopt her. She's so cute. Look at those eyes. She's hard to resist. Don't you just love her?
- A: I'd like to keep her, too. But I'll be going home to Greece at the end of the semester. She just wants love and affection. Come on, Robbie. Let's get her to the animal shelter, so they can find her owners quickly. (To the dog) Don't worry, Gemma. We'll get you home. It's not easy being away from home. I'd like to adopt her.
- L: It's not difficult.

Act III

AT THE ANIMAL SHELTER LATER THAT DAY. ROBBIE AND ALEXANDRA ARE STILL TALKING WITH LINDA ABORN.

- L: OK. If you want to adopt an animal. First we need to know some references.
- R: References? People we know?
- L: Friends, teachers . . . We need to talk to some people about you. We want to be sure that you're responsible and that you can take good care of an animal. Then you have to fill out this form about your family background.
- R: Is that it?
- L: No, there's more. We need to know about your history with animals. Have you ever owned an animal?
- R: Yes. We had a cat when I was eight years old. I love cats.
- L: Do you have any animals now?
- R: Unfortunately, no.
- A: Anything else?

- L: We also like to know your reasons for wanting an animal.
A: Just to hold it and cuddle with it. Just to have as a pet. I love animals.
R: To have a friend—a pal. You know, man’s best friend is his dog.
L: And one thing more. If you’re under twenty-one years of age . . .
R: That’s me.
L: Then an adult must sign for you.
A: Uh-uh.
R: No problem. My parents will think it’s a good idea. I’ll be back with them.
A: If the real owners don’t come to claim Gemma . . .
L: After forty-eight hours. But please call first.
R: Thanks for your information and for being so helpful.
L: It’s my pleasure. Nice talking to both of you. (They start to leave)
R: Thanks again. Bye.
A: Maybe the real owner will come to claim her.
R: Her eyes look so sad. She must really miss them.
L: I see you’re both animal lovers.
R: We are.
A: Good-bye, Miss Aborn. We’ll call in a couple of days.
L: Good-bye, and thanks for bringing Gemma in.
R: Bye.

APPENDIX B
Questionnaire & Instructions

Questionnaire (Before Viewing TV)

student ID# _____, age _____, nationality _____, group _____

- I. How long have you been living in the USA? _____
- II. What’s your educational background? _____ (high school, BA/BS, MA/MS . . .)
- III. At what age did you start receiving English instruction in formal schooling in your home country? _____ for how many years have you studied English? _____
- IV. Besides the English courses you are taking now at the language Academy and those you had in formal schooling before, have you ever
 1. attended a private language/English school to improve your English?
NO ____ YES ____ For How Long? ____
 2. had lessons with an English tutor? (tutor: private teacher)
NO ____ YES ____ For How Long? ____
 3. taken English courses in an English speaking country?
NO ____ YES ____ Where? ____ For How Long? ____
 4. had any other English learning experience? _____

Instructions

You will watch a 14-minute TV program twice. And then you will take a listening test. The test will include several short dialogues/statements which are based on the TV program. You may take notes while you are watching the program, but please **DO NOT LOOK AT YOUR NOTES** once we start the listening test. Listen to the questions carefully and then choose the best answer; there is only **ONE** answer per question.

Please leave your answer sheet blank (DO NOT WRITE ANYTHING) if you are unsure of the answer!!

QUESTIONNAIRE (AFTER VIEWING TV)

GROUP 1, WITHOUT CAPTIONS

Based on your experience of having watched the program twice and then having taken a listening test which is based on the program, do you think that if you had watched the program with closed-captioning (words you see on the screen) it would have

| | NO | SOME | A LOT |
|--|-----|------|-------|
| 1. helped you understand the story better? | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. increased your vocabulary learning? | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. increased your listening ability? | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Do you think learning English through watching TV is fun? | ___ | ___ | ___ |

GROUP 2, WITH CAPTIONS

Based on your experience of having watched the program twice and then having taken a listening test which is based on the program, do you think watching TV with closed-captioning (words you see on the screen)

| | NO | SOME | A LOT |
|--|-----|------|-------|
| 1. helped you understand the story better? | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. increased your vocabulary learning? | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. increased your listening skill? | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. Do you think learning English through watching TV is fun? | ___ | ___ | ___ |

APPENDIX C
LISTENING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

W: woman

M: man

1. (W) Question #1: How did Robbie get his walkman?

- A. He borrowed it from Alexandra.
- B. Richard and Marilyn bought it for him for his birthday.
- C. His parents bought it for him for his birthday.

(M) Question #2:

2. (W) "I know I must seem silly. It's not like I have nobody. The Molinas treat me so nicely, and I love being with your family so much. . . . but when I received the letter with photographs of my family, I cried. I cried because I miss them all."

(M) Why did the woman cry?

- A. The Molinas don't treat her well.
- B. She didn't receive letters or photos of her family.
- C. She missed her family very much.

3. (W) Question #3: Why don't you go out for something to eat? like a cheese-burger and French fries?

(W):

- A. Why can't I go out?
- B. That's a good idea.
- C. Let me go or else I won't help you with your math homework.

4. (M) Question #4: What does Robbie have to do before he leaves the house so that his father won't get angry?

- A. Turn off the lights
- B. Close the windows
- C. Feed the dogs.

5. (W) Question #5:

(M): Jane looks so sad. I'll have to think of something to cheer her up.

(W)

- A. Oh, you are so thoughtful, John.
- B. I can tell you don't like her.
- C. Is something wrong, John? What's up? Come on, you can tell me.

6. (M) Question #6: Robbie called the # on the lost dog's collar and
 - A. The dog's owner, Mr. Levinson answered the phone.
 - B. Gemma picked up the phone.
 - C. He found that the number was no longer in service.

7. (W) Question #7: What is a PAW?
 - A. A temporary home or place for protection.
 - B. The foot of an animal with four feet.
 - C. A small radio and tape player with earphones.

8. (M) Question #8: Poochie is
 - A. A leather band for a dog's neck.
 - B. An animal shelter
 - C. An informal word for Dog.

9. (W) Question #9: Which statement is not true?
 - A. Gemma is well trained.
 - B. The reason Alexandra wants to have an animal is to have a pal.
 - C. The American society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, once helped a cat who was caught in the branches of a tree.

10. (W) Question #10:

(M) Hey, Jane, I saw a lost Springer Spaniel down the street. Too bad, there's no address or phone # on her tag. It's so sad to see her without a family. What should we do?

(W):

 - A. I don't know. I don't like cats.
 - B. Make yourself at home.
 - C. Let me call ASPCA

11. (M) Question #11: Which of the following sentences is true?
 - A. Robbie is 21 years old
 - B. Robbie must wait two full days to see if Gemma's owners claim her before he can adopt her.
 - C. It costs \$20 to adopt an animal.

12. (M) Question #12: When do we say "Atta girl!"?
 - A. When we see a girl who is hard to resist.
 - B. When we see an ugly girl.
 - C. We use this expression with animals to show that they are doing something well.

13. (W) Question #13: Which of the following statements is NOT true?
 A. Robbie likes Gemma's eyes.
 B. Alexandra thinks that Gemma wants love and affection.
 C. Alexandra will be going home to New York at the end of the semester.
14. (M) Question #14: If Robbie wants to adopt an animal, he'll need to give Linda some references, which means
 A. books on animals.
 B. his history with animals.
 C. people he knows, such as friends, teachers who can give information about him.
15. (M) Question #15: Hey, Jane, the cat you gave me yesterday has been crying all night. I've been giving her canned food, water, milk, I mean I've tried everything. . . . Gee, anything else I can do?
 (W)
 A. Well, you know man's best friend is his cat. Don't worry, she'll stop.
 B. Just holding her and cuddling with her will do. I know her.
 C. Where did you find the cat?
16. (M) Please write down this number: 555-66 hundred.

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