Text type: Cartoons

Functions

General functions

To categorize cartoons, there are the paper-print ones and the animated ones. In paper-print cartoons, they usually lampoon politicians on the burning issues in newspapers or magazines. There are also some cartoon sequences telling a story which are mainly for entertainment. Cartoons can also appear in many kinds of books, such as textbooks, science fictions or novels. They can greatly enhance the illustrations of the passages or articles and help readers visualize the context.

As far as animated cartoons are concerned, they are aimed to entertain children and youngsters. Japanese-produced animated cartoons are somehow monitored by the government authorities, as the Japanese Government wants to ensure that their cartoons have educational use to a certain extent.

Pedagogical functions

Teachers can make use of both types of cartoons in designing various classroom activities. Cartoons are motivating materials which attract learners’ attention. For example, teachers may ask students to use the cartoons in the textbooks to predict what the passage is about or they can adapt the animated cartoons for learners to engage in speaking and listening practices.

Context of use

For paper-print cartoons, they may appear in newspapers, magazines, textbooks, novels, science fictions, love stories, etc. Cartoons lampooning politicians always come out in editorials, while cartoon sequences telling a story mostly appear in entertainment.
On TV, one can often view animated cartoon programs from 4:00-6:00pm, as this period targets children and youngsters. There are also a lot of animated cartoons being shown in cinemas, such as ‘Ice Age’ and ‘Peter Pan’.

**Linguistic Characteristics**

*Paper-print cartoons*

Every single word is a deliberate choice in cartoons which lampoons politicians. Full sentences are not required while sometimes there can be no words at all. At times, it just provides a single word, a few words, a statement or even a question. There is no strict rules governing the number of words used in cartoons. Mostly, vocabulary is simple and the register is formal. It usually involves a great deal of spoken and colloquial language. Most of the sentences are short. Cartoons in the Young Post in the SCMP target youngsters, so the number of words used is comparatively less than cartoons in diversions targeting adults.

Sequence of cartoons telling a story involves plenty of dialogues, as there is often more than one character. It results in a great use of spoken and colloquial language. There is a great variety in using different tenses. The use of language is mostly authentic.

*Animated cartoons*

Like paper-print cartoons, they involve plenty of spoken and colloquial language. Sometimes, subtitles are provided. The salient difference between paper-print cartoons and the animated ones is that the latter provides audience with sounds and movements so that they can watch and listen at the same time. American produced cartoons can be dubbed into Japanese or Cantonese so that they can be localized. The use of language is also authentic and it involves a lot of dialogues.
Format and layout

Paper-print cartoons are always put into frames, such as squares and rectangles. Words or numbers are mostly written inside frames or bubbles, but sometimes words outside frames and bubbles are also adapted. Some of the cartoons are coloured while some of them are only in black and white. Animated cartoons appear in a series of gradually changing drawings and most of them are coloured.

Way of organizing information

Some of them are in sequence.