

**Research Article****THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING VIDEO IN TEACHING ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION: A SURVEY OF USING YOUTUBE AS SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL WITH UNIVERSITY EFL STUDENTS IN JAPAN****\*LI Terence**

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**Abstract**

The use of information technology is not new in the field of education. In recent years, a great tendency towards the use of technology and its integration into the curriculum has given prominence to language teaching. The young generations of today are different from the previous generations because of the rapid changes and exposure to information technology so computers have become more and more indispensable for language teaching and learning. This paper aims to explore the use of video as an audio-visual material in language teaching and learning and review the applicability of using video for English language teaching in Japan. Surveys were conducted in the 2022 Spring semester in two Freshmen English classes (n=39). Students rated the use of YouTube to study English pronunciation favourably with regard to it being more entertaining, relevant and comprehensible. In general, students gave positive feedback regarding the use of this technology, though students indicated that they do not usually study English through YouTube. Pedagogical considerations for enhancing learning outcomes through the use of YouTube as supplementary materials in EFL classrooms are also provided.

**Keywords:** Information technology, Digital, Video, Pronunciation.

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**INTRODUCTION****Using YouTube in ELT Class**

Adolescents who grew up with digital technology have been classified into different categories – digital natives, homo digitals, digital youth, generation Z, cyber citizens, and netizens (Hockly, 2011). The young generations of today are different from the previous generations due to the rapid changes and exposure to information technology and they are presumably more familiar with digital technology. YouTube, TikTok and many more similar platforms offer a wide range of quality videos that can be viewed instantly and shared among a vast group of people without any cost. The popularity of online video largely contributed by YouTube can be seen in many statistical reports since its creation in 2005. According to the recent data from Semrush (2021), YouTube, the pioneer video sharing platform and the second largest search engine, experienced a 4.9% growth rate in 2021 while the number of YouTube viewers is expected to hit 210 million in the US in 2022. Another official figures from Statista (2022) indicated that YouTube has 2.6 billion users and the 2021 Pew Research reported that 95% of 18–29-year-olds and 91% of 30–49-year-olds in the U.S. use YouTube (Auxier and Anderson, 2022). These statistics on the number of YouTube viewers and age distribution have suggested that video clips can be used in positive manners in improvising the teaching and learning process. With the advent of broadband network, YouTube and other video websites have become very accessible especially among young learners. These sites provide English learners with authentic examples of everyday English used by people in real life. According to Mayer (2002), has defined video as a kind of multimedia material consisting of verbal and non-verbal presentations displaying simultaneous images, narration and on-screen text.

Multimedia researchers have also found that the use of videos can enhance the teaching of English as videos can provide great visual stimulus through its combination of illustrations, sounds, graphics; text and mixture of sound, pictures, mental images, perceptions, figures, text and others can facilitate students' engagement and improve learning process (Muniandy and Veloo 2011). Another large-scale survey by Canning-Wilson (2000) also revealed that students like learning through the use of video. Furthermore, considering what happened during the Covid-19 pandemic, most primary schools, colleges and universities have changed their lessons from face-to-face to remote (online) classes which has also resulted in the increasing use of online videos as supplementary resources for teaching and learning. Therefore, it is worth noting that audio-visual materials have played a more significant role in stimulating and facilitating the learning of a foreign language. Most English teachers believe that using video in their English classes helps boost students' motivation in learning when they are attracted to the "real-life" nature of the videos. McKinnon (2011) acknowledged that video clips can portray settings, actions, emotions and gestures that can provide important visual stimulus for language practice and learning. Katchen (2002) stated that a great advantage of video is that it provides authentic language input since movies and TV programmes are made for native speakers. In light of the abundant educational video clips on YouTube, English teachers can make their lessons more engaging and enjoyable by bringing them into the classrooms. In some cases, difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary can make a simple task too demanding for students, thus discourages students to learn. Video can make meaning clearer because they enable learners to concentrate in details on visual clues to meaning such as facial expression, dress, gesture, posture and on details of the environment. Arthur (1999) also claimed that video can give students realistic models to imitate for role-play and can increase awareness of other cultures by teaching appropriateness and suitability. Video can also enhance the teaching effectiveness in a speaking lesson. A language teacher

wants to deliver a lecture on pronunciation and intonation, the conventional “mechanic drilling” approach where the teacher demonstrates the pronunciation followed by students’ repetition of the same word proves to be rather ineffective and monotonous. The criticism of this approach is that there is a lack of interaction and interest in the classroom. Studying phonetic symbols and transcriptions on the teaching notes (paper medium) further discourages active participation as students get bored easily. In traditional speaking classes, students are told to read aloud the model dialogues in their textbooks and this is often regarded as learning an “educational or artificial” language. According to Cakir (2006), most students who have taken English courses formally remain insufficient in the ability to use the language and to understand its use in natural communication, whether in the spoken or written form. River (1981:399) also claimed that during the language learning and teaching process, learners use their eyes as well as their ears; but the eyes are basic in learning and it clearly contributes to the understanding of another culture by providing vicarious contact with speakers of the language, through both audio and visual means. It is worth noting that when people converse, non-verbal interactions such as gestures, back-channeling behaviour of nodding and eye-contact are essential elements in a natural form of communication (Butler, 2022). Therefore it is suggested that teachers adopt relevant video clips from YouTube as they effectively demonstrate how people speak (including but not limited to intonation, stress, pausing and other non-verbal communication elements) in a real life context. On the other hand, English is a world language with around 1.5 billion speakers and they speak English in different accents. It is of vital importance for students to be exposed to a variety of English accents such as the American accent, British accent, Australian accent and Singaporean accent by using relevant audio-visual resources. Apart from speaking, English teachers can also make use of YouTube for delivering the reading lessons.

Teaching vocabulary is one of the indispensable areas in English Language Teaching. Traditionally, teachers will follow the course book and go through new vocabulary with students. However, it is often found that this way of learning is neither effective nor exhaustive. First, students will just learn new words by rote memory without associating them with real life situation and thus rarely do they apply what they have learnt from textbooks into their everyday context. Moreover, students are deprived of the opportunity to learn a wider range of vocabulary in the topic. An obvious advantage of using YouTube in the classroom is that not only can the students know how native speakers use the word or phrase in real life, but also it enables them to expand their vocabulary such as idioms and slangs much further than those appear in their textbooks.

### **Effectiveness of using YouTube for teaching and learning**

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of using YouTube in teaching and learning English, a questionnaire was designed, piloted on a test group and then distributed to 39 Freshmen (1<sup>st</sup> year university students) from Asia University in Japan. Before filling out the questionnaires, students were asked to watch three short video clips on YouTube (4-12 minutes each) related to English pronunciation. After watching the video clips, students were asked to fill out the questionnaires and the results were then analysed by computer to categorize responses.

Students’ Background: 1<sup>st</sup> year university students, major in Business Administration and International Relations.

1<sup>st</sup> Video: Differences between Voiced and Voiceless Consonants (~4 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=okpCYD3fS9Y>

2<sup>nd</sup> Video: Common Mistakes in English Pronunciation (~7 minutes)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dasuQ9u8i0>

3<sup>rd</sup> Video: Differences between the British and American Accents (~12 minutes)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71HZyrjx\\_jI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71HZyrjx_jI)

### **Questionnaire**

Questions 1 – 5 are comments regarding the three video clips.

1. **Do you think the video clips provide useful guidance on English pronunciation?**  
A. Strongly agree    B. Agree    C. Neutral    D. Disagree    E. Strongly disagree
2. **Do you think the video clips help you better understand English pronunciation?**  
A. Strongly agree    B. Agree    C. Neutral    D. Disagree    E. Strongly disagree
3. **Do you think the video clips raise your awareness in English pronunciation?**  
A. Strongly agree    B. Agree    C. Neutral    D. Disagree    E. Strongly disagree
4. **Do you think the video clips can increase your motivation in the lesson?**  
A. Strongly agree    B. Agree    C. Neutral    D. Disagree    E. Strongly disagree
5. **What do you think about the quality of the video clips?**  
A. Excellent    B. Good    C. Average    D. Below average    E. Poor
6. **Do you think YouTube provides a good platform for independent learning?**  
A. Strongly agree    B. Agree    C. Neutral    D. Disagree    E. Strongly disagree
7. **How often do you watch videos on YouTube for learning English?**  
A. Always    B. Usually    C. Often    D. Sometimes    E. Never
8. **Do you think teachers should use video clips on YouTube for their teaching?**  
A. Strongly agree    B. Agree    C. Neutral    D. Disagree    E. Strongly disagree

## FINDINGS

The findings from the survey were in general positive and were consistent with our assumption that video clips help increase students' motivation and understanding in the lesson. More than three quarters of the students agreed that the video clips provide useful guidance and help them better understand English pronunciation. Over 90% students agreed that the video clips help increase their motivation and make the lesson more interesting. Nearly two-thirds of students agreed that YouTube is a good platform for independent learning. A very promising response is indicated in Question 8 where over 80% students suggested video clips be used for teaching in the English lesson. However, fewer than 20% students indicated that they just occasionally or never watch YouTube for learning English.

## DISCUSSION

Considering the positive feedback from students, it is worth noting that YouTube plays an important role in a language classroom. We can never deny the prominent role of teachers, however, YouTube can undoubtedly further enhance the effectiveness of a lesson. According to Mckinnon (2001), "video as a listening tool can enhance the listening experience for our students. We can add a whole new dimension to aural practice in the classroom by using video. The setting, action, emotions, gestures, etc, that our students can observe in a video clip, provide an important visual stimulus for language production and practice. It is necessary to challenge them to listen when dealing with features of pronunciation and movies provide a good source of authentic listening materials for the practice of pronunciation". Grover (2007) also claimed that "video in e-learning stimulates better brainstorming, knowledge sharing and information gathering. Students learn about cultural differences so that they are able to interact with other students and adults who may be very different from themselves". In fact, it is not easy for teachers to teach the difference between the British and American accents using a textbook (paper medium). Authentic materials are more beneficial to students since they can perceive the significant differences between the two accents by active watching and listening to the video. Students can also see the mouth and tongue movement of the native English teacher in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> videos and help them better understand how to pronounce the vowels and consonants more accurately. These elements are abstract in written form so video plays a significant role in demonstrating the problematic area more clearly and effectively. In order to maximize the benefits of incorporating YouTube in the classroom, relevant video should be used as a "lead-in" or "pre-task" so as to arouse students' attention and motivation in the lesson. For example, if teachers want to conduct a lesson on business writing, instead of going deep to those sentence structures and expressions in the first lesson, teachers are recommended to search for some interesting video clips on YouTube and show them to students as a "pre-task" activity. A short, yet interesting video from YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybCxN86n61k> illustrates how people deal with difficult customers in real-life. Despite the fact that this video might seem exaggerating the real situation, it contains a lot of hilarious elements. Students can do a brief discussion about how they would deal with a difficult customer in the same situation. The brainstorming process is of paramount importance as it facilitates students to think of the purpose of writing an adjustment letter and the appropriate tone and language they need for their writing.

## Conclusion

Language learning is a complex process and during this process, language teachers cannot be far away from the technology. YouTube, as one of the readily available resources of authentic materials, motivates students to further develop their language skills and encourages them to learn independently. While it is difficult to isolate the factors contributing to second language learning, motivation has been found to be one of the integral components determining success in learning a second language. A successful lesson can be delivered when students are actively engaged in the lesson so they can gain the most benefits. Keeping this in mind, teachers need to constantly evaluate their teaching methodology and a wise selection of materials from YouTube or other sources is of vital importance to facilitate students' learning and motivation.

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