

THE USE OF YOUTUBE VIDEOS IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE SKILLS AT TERTIARY LEVEL IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

YouTube videos are immensely used for English language learning at tertiary level both by the language learners and teachers in Bangladesh. Incorporation of new media tool like YouTube has inspired learners and teachers to make English language teaching-learning more fruitful. The aim of the current study is to investigate the use of YouTube in enhancing learners' English language proficiency. Qualitative research method is used in the study. Data was collected through six Focus Group Discussions with 30 students from tertiary level. Each FGD consisted of five informants from tertiary level. The collected data was analysed through coding and presenting the emerged broad themes under key headings. The result of the study shows that students of tertiary level find YouTube as a motivating medium through which they are able to enhance their speech delivery, pronunciation, intonation, grammatical skills, listening skills, and elucidate personal language problems. However, the study also indicates that the language learning videos accessible in YouTube sometimes comprise of culturally unsuited dress-up and attitude of the speaker which give the learners cultural shock. The study recommends learners and teachers choose culturally appropriate language learning videos for active and fruitful learning.

Keywords:

YouTube, Entertainment, Motivation, English Language Learning, Tertiary Education, Bangladesh

INTRODUCTION

YouTube is considered as web 2.0 where the viewers do not only upload videos, they can also provide feedback through asynchronous interaction to other video contents (Jones & Cuthrell, 2011). In another study led by Grigoryan (2018) clinched that students learn language effortlessly with enthusiasm, collaboration and motivation when they use new media tools. Balbay and Kilis (2017) found that learners benefited to a large degree from the videos on the playlist of YouTube channels in learning language. Wagner (2017) found that new technologies help language learning. The researcher asserted on contextual instructions which can engage a wider audience. Moreover, students of tertiary level find learning entertaining, engaging and stress-free through new media tools, and they need more audio-visual materials to learn English language skills faster (Hasan & Ibrahim, 2017). In Bangladesh, the L2 learners use YouTube and other new media tools for enhancing their language skills (Hasan *et al.*, 2016).

Language learning videos become available with the advent of YouTube. Learners and teachers of English language now have on-demand videos and they do not have to be fully dependant on out-dated language classrooms because they do get massive numbers of videos on YouTube related to English language teaching-learning (Faizi, 2018). Learners now learn practically from the YouTube videos at any time of the day. Even learners can see the body language and know paralinguistic information which aid them to comprehend easily (York, 2011). Thus, YouTube videos help develop learners' cognitive faculty. Learners at tertiary level are abundantly using YouTube videos for enhancing their English language skills. However, the use of YouTube videos is not clearly defined

yet in Bangladeshi context. This study aims at identifying the use of YouTube videos in enhancing tertiary level learners' English language proficiency.

Research Question

What are the usages of YouTube videos in learning English language skills at tertiary level in Bangladesh?

Research Objective

To identify the usages of YouTube videos in learning English language skills at tertiary level in Bangladesh.

LITERATURE REVIEW

YouTube in Learning English

YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>) is a Web 2.0 site that is primarily based around video sharing, commenting, and viewing. The viewers can upload their own videos, make comments, and create appropriate tags related to the uploaded videos. The author of the videos can add a title and a description to the videos. The viewers and authors of the videos can make criticisms on other videos and their own videos as well. There is an option for everyone to create their own video channel on specific issue and they can upload enormous number of videos in the channels. The creator of the channel can share the link of the channel in social media too for facilitating other viewers to watch the uploaded videos in the channel. Even learners feel motivated when they learn through YouTube videos, and while they listen to YouTube videos their affective filter goes down and cognitive loads lessen, and, therefore, learning occurs faster (Dinh, 2018, & York, 2011). The educative value of YouTube videos is immense in the current context (Bakar *et al.*, 2019).

YouTube Videos Lower Affective Filter and Arouse Motivation

The studies (Brook, 2011; Metekohy, 2010; & Malhiwsky, 2010) that support the use of YouTube videos in English language learning also support that YouTube videos help learn language quicker and learners feel motivated in the learning process. It is also found that the weaker learners feel interested and motivated to interact and learn when audio-visual aids are used in the classroom (June *et al.*, 2014, & Oddone, 2011). Metekohy (2010) found that learners watch and listen to YouTube videos as the video contents allow them to listen and watch at a time. Therefore, the learners learn the language without much cognitive load and in the learning process they have lots of fun. They have scope to get interesting videos related to English language from the YouTube.Com. They get authentic (Malhiwsky, 2010, & Pong, 2010) English from the YouTube videos as many of the videos are produced by the native speakers of English language. Teachers get scope to ask learners to speak about the videos they watch in or outside the classroom. Using YouTube both inside and outside the class help enhance conversation, listening and pronunciation skills. YouTube videos can also be utilized as realia to encourage cultural lessons, heighten exposure to "World Englishes", and fasten authentic vocabulary development (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011).

Authenticity and Learning-Centred Ecology

YouTube is a good platform for authenticity and learning-centred ecology regarding English language teaching and learning. Brook (2011) examined YouTube video regarding authentic language and the learner-centred learning ecology of the videos in EFL and ESL context. Brook (2011) found that videos increase learner participation in the classroom. However, the teachers have to choose appropriate videos related to the learners' schemata and level of understanding. Jones and Cuthrell (2011) found that educators at all levels of instruction are using sites like YouTube to "disseminate information, enhance learning either by incorporating material from the sites in daily instruction, or

by displaying student-produced projects and comments on the sites. Another study (Pong, 2010) found that throughout peer-to-peer feedback, learners tremendously improve their writing skill.

YouTube for Collaboration

Collaborative learning is possible with the usage of YouTube. Terantino (2011) concluded that YouTube videos facilitate collaborative language learning. When learners of English language produce a video project in collaboration with their friends, then they have the scope to think, design, and produce videos collaboratively which they present before the class or upload in youtube.com. When they share the created video in youtube.com, the viewers from all over the world can watch the video and leave their feedback. There are options in YouTube where learners or viewers can 'like' or 'dislike' the video they watch. This opportunity allows learners of a country to learn from the learners of another country and generate knowledge based on YouTube videos. Another study conducted by Kabooaha and Elyas (2018) concluded that collaborative learning through YouTube videos help the students enhance their vocabulary skills. They get the chance to watch interesting videos on vocabulary and many more, and remember the vocabulary for long time as the learning is interesting.

Drawbacks of Using YouTube Videos in Language Learning

Though the studies mentioned earlier found the advantages of YouTube videos in language learning regarding authenticity, interaction, heightened motivation and learner autonomy, however there are some drawbacks of using YouTube videos in language learning. Oddone (2011) found that sometimes the learners do not comprehend the pronunciations of the speakers in the videos as the videos are made mostly for the native speakers. In the YouTube videos, there are some elements or terms from the native culture and learners of other cultures find it difficult to understand the terms and cultural issues sometimes.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection Method-Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

The qualitative data for the study is collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A Focus Group Discussion or interview is the process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people, typically four to six (Creswell, 2015). FGD is advantageous when the interaction among interviewees likely yield the best information and when interviewees are similar to and cooperative to each other (Creswell, 2015). There are some specific areas related to the qualitative questions in the FGD questionnaire. The areas of discussion for FGD are adopted from the reviewed literature. To collect qualitative data for this study, six FGDs are conducted with the tertiary level learners. In each FGD, there are four to six students (Creswell, 2015) from tertiary level.

Participants for FGD

The participants for FGD were from tertiary level in Bangladeshi universities. Convenience sampling technique was used to collect the best information. As there were six FGD conducted for the collection of the qualitative data, so the participants were questioned on the area of four qualitative questions posed in the first chapter of the study. There were 30 participants for six FGD. The participants were taken from eight universities. In each FGD, there were five students.

FGD Questions or Themes Design

The FGD questions contains both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The advantage of this type of questioning is that the predetermined closed-ended responses can get useful information to support theories and concepts in the literature. On the other hand, the open-ended questions permit the

researcher to explore reasons for the closed-ended responses and identify any comments the participants might have that are beyond the responses to the closed-ended questions (Creswell & Clark, 2007). The researcher asked a main question (usually open-ended) followed by follow-up questions, probing questions and prompted questions.

The interviewees in the FGD were encouraged to provide more information and the researcher will take notes in addition to audiotaping (Creswell, 2015). Each FGD lasted for minimum 42 minutes to maximum 1 hour and 6 minutes. The total duration of FGD-1 is 1 hour six minutes, FGD-2 was 1 hour 2 minutes, FGD-3 was 1 hour and four minutes, FGD-4 was 56 minutes, FGD-5 was 42 minutes, and finally FGD-6 was 42 minutes. The discussions are audiotaped in recording device so no points of discussions are missed later.

Coding and Analysis of the Data

Coding and analyzing the FGD interviews are important. The objective of the coding process is to make sense out of text or audiotaped data, divide it into text or image segments, label the segments with codes, examine codes for overlap and redundancy, and collapse these codes into broad themes (Creswell, 2015). Thus this an inductive process of narrowing data into few themes. The researcher for this study followed the steps of coding the qualitative data recommended by Creswell (2003).

RESULTS

Motivation from YouTube Videos

In learning English language skills, motivation is necessary. When language contents are presented as audio-visual materials, the contents become more attractive to the learners. The attractive language contents presented in YouTube videos become comprehensible and motivating. The fruitful practices of new media-based motivation on personal language development is supported by the previous studies (Humaira, 2018; Fethi, 2018; & Chugh & Ruhi, 2018). The informants opined that they can see the textual thing in the videos and listen to audios and they do not feel bored in and out of the classroom. The informants stated that,

We watched the English movie on the book Robinson Crusoe before our class lecture on the text. We have found the text comprehensible in the classroom later. [F414]

I find the video contents hugely motivating for learning English. For example, I watch videos on English language skills produced by different persons and institutes in YouTube. I learn with full motivation and that's why it doesn't seem to me stressful. [F115]

Moreover, when the teacher gives the informants tasks on the texts, they feel less motivated to work on it. However, when the teacher assigns them to tasks based on audio-visual aids, then they feel more motivated to accomplish it. They love working on the entertaining issues which are presented on different new media channels as audio-visual materials. The informants stated that,

We were given a quiz (multiple choice) which we had to answer from watching a video from TED TALKS. And we find that more interesting and motivational. [F614]

In our first semester, our English teacher assigned us to watch an English movie. Our task was to watch the movie write 100 English phrases from the movie which may seem new to us. Later we presented our learning from the movie in front of the class. [F115]

Entertaining Learning

Audio-visual materials in YouTube are entertaining to learn English. They usually visit English language learning related YouTube channels like Ten Minutes School, Learn English - British Council, engVid, English Idioms, English-American Pronunciation, English Language School, BBC Learning English, Learn English, Real English, Pronunciation English, English Teacher Melanie, Learn English Vocabulary, Learn English Conversation, American English at State, American English for Educators, and Learn English with Pictures and many more. They also visit some additional YouTube channels namely Search English, Learn English.Com, Learn English: We are Hungry for English, Learn American English, Real British and American English and many more. They try to improve their pronunciation, presentation skills, vocabulary, phrase and idioms, prepositions, articles, grammar for perfect writing and many more. In the FGD, the informants stated that,

The YouTube channels serve a lot to improve our language skills. We don't spoil our time always; rather we spend time to learn from YouTube by using our smartphone connected to internet. [F6I3]

I have subscribed few YouTube channels that constantly upload new videos on English language. This exposure in YouTube improves my English language skills. [F2I2]

Stress-Free Learning

In the YouTube, they watch video lectures by numerous Native English teachers. They get the feeling of a real teacher even in watching YouTube videos or videos in the blogs sometimes. The benefit of learning from YouTube is that they do not find the real teacher in front of them. As a result, they do not feel any stress in learning. Moreover, as the learning in YouTube is not time bound, so they have the autonomy of learning English at any time they want. In the FGD, the informants added that,

Stress-free and context-free language learning is possible in YouTube. The teacher is ready in YouTube for twenty-four hours. We are just one click away from learning English through YouTube. [F5I1]

Enhancement of Speaking Skills

As a new media tool, YouTube is full of learning. The dialogs of the movie videos are presented in an entertaining and comprehensible way. In the written texts, they do not get the speaking skills in practice. However, in the English movies from YouTube they get the English usages in the oral form and in the written form in the subtitles. This benefits them to enhance their presentation skills including delivery of speech, accent, intonation, pitch and stress. One of the informants stated that,

We watch English movies to enhance our English and we can learn better as the inputs are comprehensible there. Even our classroom teacher suggests us to watch English movies to enhance our English and knowledge of the world. [F5I2]

Comprehensible Language Inputs

Presentation of audio-visual language inputs in multimedia and PowerPoint in the class also makes the English language inputs more comprehensible. The language inputs in audio-visual version are user-friendly and interesting they added. The reasons are that the contents are presented in a more colourful way and there is a blending of both audios and videos within the same contents. They also added that they are more fascinated to inventiveness of teaching with the integration of YouTube videos. During the FGD, the informants stated that,

When our teacher shows us the pictures related to the topic and let us watch short videos in the beginning of the class, we find the rest of the class easier. [F4I3]

In every semester, we have to give presentations in PowerPoint in the class. Therefore, we make slides to present in the class. The presentation is in English language. Such multimedia presentations improve our presentation skills. [F512]

However, some of the informants stated that when the teacher uses more videos or more contents in multimedia, they feel uninterested and due to this sometimes they miss the main objectives of the class. They prefer language contents in multimedia and PowerPoint for a short time in the classroom. They pointed out the reason for multimedia and PowerPoint for short duration in the class is as they have enough time outside the classroom to explore their own from YouTube. In the FGD, the informants stated that,

Using excessive video is not always good for us. We want short videos or pictures in the PowerPoint. We want to learn more from the teacher during the class hour. Outside the class we can explore more in the new media channels. [F215]

Solving Individual Language Problems

Listening and speaking are the two basic skills of English language. These two skills are inter-related and can be enhanced in an integrative way. In the FGD, the informants stated that, they solve their problems related to speaking and listening from the new media tools. To solve the problems, they use YouTube videos, English movies and songs, pronunciation dictionaries, online tutorials in English, and recording devices. This finding is supported by a previous study (Cheon *et al.*, 2012). The informants repeatedly opined that they do not understand the English spoken by the Native speakers sometimes as the Native speakers speak fast; their accent is unknown, use of difficult words, and not knowing the overall techniques of listening. Sometimes, the informants do not understand the class lecture delivered by their teachers as the informants are not trained about the listening techniques. As a result, they fail to take class notes during the class lectures. In the FGD, the informants stated that,

Our class lectures are in English. Nevertheless, sometimes we miss some of the words or phrases. Therefore, we fail to take notes on the lecture. But understanding Native speakers' English is the toughest. [F211]

When the native speakers of English speak fast, then I find it difficult to catch the pronunciation. But my regular listening in YouTube has assisted me to recover most of the problems related to listening skills. [F612]

Free Online Test

There are various YouTube resources for listening skills enrichment for the tertiary level learners. They get free access and give test of different levels to check their listening skill. Such tests make the informants skilled in listening skill. Informants opined that the better side of online listening test is they do not have to write in paper rather they can click on online options. Therefore, this is easy for them. The informants get access to these online sites for listening enhancement through their laptop or smartphone. In the FGD, the informants opined that,

I often give listening test in online and my smartphone and laptop help me to accomplish my purpose of improving listening skills. [F412]

Almost all YouTube channels provide the facility to learn freely. These channels allow free online listening test. The answer scripts are also given there and I can assess my own performance. [F314]

DISCUSSION

Language learners highly need motivation which comes from the entertaining techniques of language learning. YouTube videos on English language learning motivate tertiary level learners in Bangladesh. From the findings of the study, it can be asserted that attractive audio-visual language contents motivate learners in learning English as second language. Learners find the language contents comprehensible and motivating in YouTube videos. The use of YouTube videos is more motivating when the learners find their teacher playing a video in English in the classroom, and they can watch the same video going back home from YouTube.

The students can watch English movies on various texts from their text found available in YouTube, and therefore their classroom learning becomes more comprehensible. Teachers' use of TED TALKS videos in motivating learners is found useful in arousing motivation among learners. Moreover, learners found it more motivating when the teacher assigns them to watch a great English movie and note down hundred new phrases they find for them. This process of language learning is an unceasing process as the learners find it motivating and inspiring for them. In contrast, the teacher gives language learning contents as text materials, they feel less motivated to work on those. To the learners of tertiary level, audio-visual materials presented in YouTube are motivating.

Language can be learnt better and faster if the learning process is entertaining to the learners. Audio-visual materials are found to be entertaining to the learners due to the visual presentation of the language contents. Different sources like Learn English - British Council, engVid, English Idioms, English-American Pronunciation, English Language School, BBC Learning English, Learn English, Real English, Pronunciation English, English Teacher Melanie, Learn English Vocabulary, Learn English Conversation, American English at State, American English for Educators, and Learn English with Pictures and many more such audio-visual contents freely accessible through YouTube attract tertiary level learners. They find the videos on English language learning entertaining and interesting than those presented in the text materials. They can enhance their speaking and listening skills of English language from watching the YouTube videos recurrently. Learners can augment their vocabulary repository, phrase and idioms bank, pronunciation, grammar and many more from the audio-visual materials they find in YouTube videos.

The advent of new media tools has transformed way language learning used to take place before. Learning becomes stress-free when language contents are offered in an entertaining way. In YouTube, the presented audio-visual materials do not put any stress on the learners as they watch the visuals while listening to the audios. The combination of photos and videos along with the subtitles eliminate their stress which they feel in face-to-face communication sometimes. Throughout this process of learning, learners become used to pronounce words and expressions accurately in face-to-face communication. They can learn from the audio-visual materials at any time which makes the learning context free and hour of learning can be freely chosen by them as well.

Among the four language skills; speaking, reading, writing and listening, learners immensely enhance their speaking and listening skill throughout audio-visual materials presented in YouTube. From the dialogs of the movies, they learn both verbal and nonverbal expressions which, in turn, make them fluent speakers of English language. Using this learning, they become efficient presenters throughout the semesters. Teachers of English also suggest them to watch the audio-visual materials in English so that they can improve their language competencies. Learners find YouTube as a source to solve their individual language problems. They usually solve their pronunciation skill, listening skill and speech delivery from watching the videos.

On the contrary, in face-to-face classroom teaching, they cannot always solve their individual problems due to the shortage of time in the class sessions at the university. YouTube videos in English is the leading source for the learners to listen from the native speakers and practice that in their real life. However, sometimes they do find the native speakers' English pronunciation difficult to understand. This is overcome by repetitively listening the same audio-visual content. On the other

hand, reading and writing skills are not massively developed by watching and listening the videos. Still some of the learners believe that they can use the sentence structures and vocabularies they learn from watching videos in their writing. Most of the learners prefer reading blogs and google docs for mounting their reading skills and writing one page on a selected topic every day for improving their writing skills.

The language inputs presented in audio-visual materials are comprehensible and user-friendly. The reason is that the contents are presented in more colourful and interactive ways. The integration of new media tools like YouTube makes language inputs portable and fruitful in enhancing language skills. The use of multimedia for watching videos in the classroom makes the class more engaging and learner-centred at tertiary level. Tertiary level learners prefer learning to happen in an easy and goal oriented way. YouTube videos help that occur abundantly. However, when the teacher uses disproportionate amount of videos in the class the objective of the class may be ignored as well. Learners can explore audio-visual language contents outside the class and the job of the teacher is to show the path to the learners.

Moreover, there are a number of YouTube videos where the language instructors have embedded language tests for the learners. These tests are designed in such a way that learners can become self-assessor of their performance in any skill of the English language. Online listening test allows them to test their competencies in listening skill. Likewise, they can test their speaking skills by recording and uploading their speeches and presentations in YouTube. Public feedback and peer feedback can help them get an idea of their performance in speaking skills.

CONCLUSION

YouTube videos work as a tool for motivation, and entertaining and engaging way of learning for the tertiary level English language learners in Bangladesh. English language learners are able to enhance pronunciation, intonation, speech delivery, grammatical skills, listening skills, and solve personal language problems through YouTube. Learning through YouTube videos are context free, stress-free and not time-bound. They can learn anywhere outside the classroom and learning hour can be chosen by themselves. However, the study also shows that the language learning videos available in YouTube sometimes contain culturally inappropriate dress-up and attitude of the speaker which give the learners cultural shock. The study recommends learners and teachers choose culturally appropriate language learning videos for target oriented learning. A future investigation can be conducted on determining cultural appropriateness of the YouTube videos in learning English language skills at tertiary level. The limitation of the study includes the one context where the study is conducted and therefore the findings of this study may not be fully applicable in other contexts in learning English language skills by using YouTube videos.

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