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YouTube in Kindergarten teaching: Using Online Videos in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

Using videos in teaching is a novel teaching technique which has been widely applied by educators all over the world. YouTube consists a teaching tool which has been in our lives almost a decade. Evidently, it has penetrated almost every domain of both personal and professional aspects of human nature. This paper explores the use of the YouTube platform as a tool in kindergarten English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching. Secondly, the effects of visuals and video technology on pre-school students are going to be discussed. Additionally, this analysis reflects on possible drawbacks and limitations that the use of YouTube effectuates in the EFL classroom and whether the students are positively or negatively motivated towards the foreign language. Finally, pedagogical implications and suggestions will be recommended for effective teaching implementation of the aforementioned platform based on the writer's personal experience.

Keywords: YouTube, Video Technology (VT), English as a Foreign Language, Kindergarten students

Introduction

Video Technology in Education

The increasing prevalence of technology in education is driving the viability and availability of online teaching and open academic resources and video-based technology is playing a role in facilitating these developments (Bates, 2019; Fokides & Arvaniti, 2020). Woolfitt (2015), for example, believes that, "Education is undergoing a major shift" and that "brick-and-mortar classrooms are opening up to rich media content, subject matter experts, and to one another" (p. 5). This swift change has largely been influenced by technological trends and enthusiasm of people of all cultures, as well as the rise of the use of videos and widespread access to the internet. As video becomes increasingly available, the impact within the classroom continues to influence the educational process and changing education (Woolfitt, 2015). The use of videos currently dominates internet bandwidth. Therefore, the increasing prevalence of videos in everyday life is reflected in how it is used within the educational environment (Ajloni, 2019), and how the knowledge invested in such an application is now being used within the classroom. A number of studies (e.g., Voogt et al., 2013) have conceptualized this knowledge of integrating technology in teaching and learning including how teachers respond to the use of video technology (VT), which is defined as "digitally recorded content[s] containing sound and motion that can be streamed, stored or delivered live" (Woolfitt, 2015, p. 4), in their teaching practice. Ajloni (2019) explored different pedagogical responses involved in the use of VT in teaching in relation to the roles they play in classroom settings. These responses are attitudes that shape how teacher use VT in their teaching practice. Attitudes are generally the way one consistently responds to things or class of objects and the processes that influence life's practices (Ostrom, 1969; Poulou & Norwich, 2002). Ajloni (2020)

identified five video-based pedagogical responses (VPBRs), which include the selection of appropriate video content by the teachers as part of their behaviour response (video selection), choosing a conducive learning environment or classroom for playing educational videos, which is also a behavioural response (video environment-fit) and the cognitive response involving the recognition of the role of teachers in using VT within the classroom (role awareness). These first three processes are likely to lead to another two aspects: a cognitive response that involves the exploration of other innovative ways of teaching using VT (creative) and the affective response in which teachers ascribe value and emotionally attached to using VT for educational purposes (value attribution) (Ajloni, 2019). The video selection process involves engaging in activities that combine online video tools with other applications such as live streaming instructional videos and using social media platforms to engage a community of students interested in a particular content (Tamim, 2013). Such activities enable teachers to compare selected learning videos across different cross-cultural contexts in order to enrich the learning experience of students. This can be an exhausting activity that involves comparing a wide-range of educational videos across multiple platforms. As for the environment-fit response, teachers are responsible for finding a conducive classroom environment that is adequate for integrating VT. A well-fitted classroom environment for the use of VT should be built in such a way that it incorporates most of the technological tools and resources needed to make video-based learning effective (Stempleski & Arcario, 1992). The production and use of educational videos involve equipping the classroom with the appropriate technological resources and requires learners to adopt more active roles (Engin, 2014). In addition to the selection and environment-fit responses, the role awareness response is an important pedagogical response in video-based learning, which involves the role of the teacher when using or creating videos for classroom use. This could also include moderating the time and controlling and creating educational videos (Szpunar et al., 2013). The creative response is an extension of the role-awareness response whereby teachers explore alternative roles of teaching leaders.

Video is a potential audio-visual medium that has been used to facilitate the teaching activities with comprehension and retention abilities of learners in the teaching-learning process (Onivehu & Ohawuiro, 2018). Resultantly, YouTube videos are increasingly being used by teachers to enrich learners' learning experiences in different subject matters across the levels of the formal school system. YouTube is a video sharing platforms that allows a user to create, distribute, share and organize user-generated video. This platform enables registered and unregistered users to make use of the uploaded videos. That is to say, that unregistered users could watch and post comments on YouTube videos. On the other hand, a registered user has a YouTube account that makes it possible for the user to upload different forms of video files such as music videos, documentaries, animations, short video, movie clips, slideshows, subscribe to channels, comment on videos and to create a playlist to easily access their favorite videos (Lai & Ng, 2011; Pinto, Almeida & Goncalves, 2013). Given the importance of videos in the teaching-learning, process, there is no doubt that several video sharing sites, such as Google Video, TeacherTube, SchoolTube, United Streaming, MSN Soapbox, OneWorldTv and YouTube have been widely used to facilitate the process of teaching-learning activities for decades (Buzetto-More, 2014).

The Establishment of YouTube as a Teaching Tool

YouTube is the most popular video-publishing and sharing platform in the world. It does not only offer millions of movie, music, talk shows, sport, news, travel, and personal videos, but also a multitude of educational videos. YouTube is used by people of all ages and for an

unlimited number of purposes including language learning. It offers teachers and students learning resources for developing a variety of language skills and instant access to authentic language in a wide variety of contexts (Wang & Chen, 2020). It promotes second language acquisition in general and self-regulated learning of English (McNulty & Lazarevic, 2012; Wang & Chen, 2020). Both written and video feedback help students achieve greater linguistic accuracy when speaking in English (Tseng & Yeh, 2019). It has been proven that listening and viewing activities affect EFL Learners' listening comprehension (Kuo, 2009; Chien, Huang & Huang, 2020). YouTube videos can be used in teaching English for specific purposes (Al-Jarf, 2017; Al-Jarf, 2012b; Al-Jarf, 2011). EFL-YouTube remix empowers multimodal and computational literacies for EFL purposes (Eisenlauer, 2020). YouTube video-making helps EFL learners develop language, intercultural and intracultural knowledge (Benson, 2015; Yang & Yeh, 2021). Output-focused video-based instruction helps in students' pragmatic development (Jernigan, 2012). Reflective YouTube videos developed students' teamwork skills, ability to manage stress, technological ability and creativity, delivering information and enriching knowledge related to English learning and other types of knowledge (Sari, Dardjito & Azizah, 2020).

YouTube, which is a vital instructional tool in the 21st century classroom, was founded in 2005. Consequently, the impact of YouTube in the field of education has been profound and significant (Mullen & Wedwick, 2008; Fleck, 2014). Extant literature suggests that YouTube promotes students' engagement and recall of the lesson content in different subjects (Hilner, 2012; Buzzetto-More, 2013a; Jones & Graham, 2013). The use of YouTube videos in the teaching-learning process provides a plethora of benefits, which includes stimulating students' interest, attracting students' attention, fostering creativity, increasing collaboration, facilitating hard-to-observe experiences, making learning fun and improving understanding (Alkhudaydi, 2018). YouTube provides users with the opportunity to select from various genres of videos, which include animated input videos, moviemaker videos, participatory videos and student presentations (Yang, 2012; Jenkins & Dillion, 2013). Furthermore, YouTube has been shown to foster independent learning, student-student and student-teacher collaboration, personalization of the learning experience and feedback from students (Everson, Gundlach & Miller, 2013). June, Yaacob and Kheng (2014) also found that the use of YouTube videos in teaching and learning significantly simplified the way students learn and understand abstract concepts or topics. Szeto and Cheng (2014) examined the usage of ICT tools and YouTube for teaching during their teaching practicum among pre-service teachers in Hong Kong and found that the usage of ICT was high and YouTube was perceived to be useful for teaching in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, Koto (2020) also found that YouTube videos facilitated the acquisition of factual, conceptual and procedural knowledge, thereby enhancing students' knowledge in the concept of heat transfer. Steyn and Prinsloo (2015) also found that YouTube improves the outcomes of teaching activities in education by enabling the effective transmission of knowledge and information to inspire and motivate learners. McKemmish et al. (2018) also found that YouTube stimulates collaborative learning and teaching, teacher-student relationship and teamwork.

Finally, YouTube allows teachers and students to search for videos on a wide range of academic subjects. Teachers and students can upload videos here or create playlists from those already available (Bravo et al., 2011). Kousha, Thelwall, and Abdoli (2012) defined three types of YouTube videos. They are art and humanities, natural and formal science videos, and social science. Besides, Nofrika (2019) states that vlogs, a new type of video, are mostly used by students. Vlogging helps connect with people from all over the world. The videos created

by the creator reach the audience all over the world by enabling people to connect with each other. (Othman, 2018; Qiao, 2016) Vlogs also allow students to get information at a time and place that is suitable for them. Learners may feel less pressure when they are permitted to think about a topic and listen to a lesson as many times as needed without the pressure from a class to move on. (Sharma, 2019). That's why using YouTube both inside and outside the classroom can enhance conversation, listening, and pronunciation skills. Besides YouTube videos can be used as realia to stimulate cultural lessons, and promote authentic vocabulary development (June & Kheng, 2014; Terantino, 2011; Watkins & Wilkins, 2021).

YouTube in Fostering Students' Foreign Language Acquisition

The results of a study conducted by Jati et al. (2019) depicts that after using YouTube content some improvements showed up according to students' speaking skills considerably in three areas including fluency, accuracy and overall performance. It is evident that YouTube is used for varying purposes, the majority of which are not educationally relevant. For example, many people use YouTube simply as a form of entertainment. Due to this educational value of YouTube, it is clear that it using YouTube content lays great emphasis on foreign language education (Berk, 2009). Cakir (2006) reported that videos provide authentic language inputs that allow learners to experience more effective language acquisition atmosphere. These authentic environments are quite valuable since they provide real objects, individuals, and circumstances which help to comprehend real context regarding different life situations. Silviyanti (2014) reported that applying YouTube in the EFL classroom often indicates to be compelling, encouraging, and beneficial, where students are enthusiastic to watch different videos and after practice spoken language in the same way as native speakers.

Riswandi (2016) carried out an investigation among seventh-grade students on how YouTube videos affect students' speaking skills. The findings showed that the use of YouTube influenced positively on students' oral language skills, especially vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency areas have been developed by much. According to Albahiri and Alha (2020) and Ünal's (2022) investigation, the findings indicate that videos, particularly those on YouTube can prove to be of substantial benefit for boosting learners speaking ability. The results of this study show that the use of the visual elements provides better considering given its image of the real environment. YouTube videos are of great help to stimulate motivation among the students to learn English. Teachers applying YouTube technology in the EFL classroom helps to engage learners the most in the learning activities which in turn influences on having good learning outcomes. In teaching young learners, a study conducted by Rustan, Cahyono, Junaid (2023) found that children who learn through technology tend to learn better than those who are rarely in touch with the technology. This is also apparent in a review reported by Zomer (2014). Zomer stated that four studies showed that the kindergarten students who learned vocabulary through technology performed better than those who were given another treatment. In the research conducted by Henderson et al. (2019), it was claimed that advancement and change in educational institutions is exceedingly complex and unexpected on multiple and often-contradictory influences over time. Therefore, it is important to get other insights of the utility of the technology for kindergarten students in their development to learn English.

Teaching English in Kindergarten as a Foreign Language

In Greece, a few years ago according to a presidential decree of 2021, the Greek Parliament decided the integration of the English language in pre-school education: "The purpose of the

integration of the English language in the Kindergarten is to enrich the Kindergarten program - methodologically and thematically - in relation to the linguistic and all-round development of the children in order to strengthen multilingual awareness, intercultural communication and the formation of the identity of the active citizen in the modern multicultural society. The introduction of the English Language in Kindergarten: - enriches existing programs and functionally integrates into their philosophy, supporting the exploratory and interdisciplinary approach and the playful character of learning, - is based on the knowledge of the developmental characteristics of young children, - meets the pedagogical principles of the Analytical Program of the Kindergarten, - focuses on the communicative nature of language and the need for intercultural interaction, - respects the holistic approach to learning and is carried out through creative activities with an interdisciplinary character, - is based on the mutual and harmonious interaction and cooperation of Kindergarten teachers and English language teachers."

Personal Reflections on Teaching Preschoolers with YouTube as a Teaching Tool

The writer is an English language teacher in public kindergartens. Henceforth, the use of the YouTube platform is an indispensable tool of her teaching routines. To analyze further on this issue, YouTube videos can function as stimuli when instructors need to present a topic (e.g. spring, Easter) or to assist the instructor in presenting knowledge and making it more explicit. Especially, in young-learners the use of images and the visualization of the concepts presented is of utmost importance and the particular platform serves as an ideal technique; case with can be verified by Rodinadze, & Zarbazoaia (2012) as they have pointed out as one of the most advantageous uses of YouTube videos for foreign language education the fact that these videos provide access to spoken samples, instructional units, and reading and writing practice, especially to less common taught languages. They enable users around the world with access to linguistic information for a specific target language that may not be accessible otherwise.

It is an undeniable fact that there is a plethora of videos on YouTube regarding a vast variety of topics; educators can utilize videos such as songs for kindergarten students, stories from books which have been visualized or even Physical Education (PE) and fitness games in order to offer to their students a wide range of activities and drills so that English language teaching can become a joyful and lively educational procedure. What is more, YouTube can serve as excellent assistant in teaching topic vocabulary in a tremendous variety of topics; such as space, Christmas, Halloween or food to name a few. Finally, YouTube videos can serve as a part of class' routines; to explain further, pre-school educators can use songs and videos to greet and see off their students and simultaneously expose their students to the English language, as the analytical curriculum of the Greek Ministry of Sports and Education dictates.

Students find in most cases YouTube videos entertaining and enjoyable as they derive pleasure from mellow tunes and colorful images. Educators of young learners could encourage their pupils either to dance or sing along with their teacher and their fellow classmates in order to create an agreeable and vibrant atmosphere of motivation and love for English language learning in the classroom. Thereby, students from a very young age are going to acquire a positive attitude towards the English language and are going to be willing to actively continue their learning in higher levels, as well. It is a fact that teachers can inspire and transmit positive or negative feelings and perceptions towards learning to their pupils. Finally, YouTube is a platform that is used on a daily basis from people of all ages and

especially from preschoolers as they are exposed to it at home with their families. Hence, the use of YouTube in the classroom serves as an expansion of a practise which has already been used at their houses with their families; as a result, young learners are delighted when they are exposed to knowledge (i.e. songs, stories) which may have already watched with their parents, possibly as they feel familiar, a feeling which is essential in those ages.

Instance of Using YouTube as a critical part of a lesson

At this point, it would be of insurmountable significance to demonstrate how YouTube could be actively incorporated into the teaching process. Nevertheless, it should be stressed the fact that the educators need to combine the YouTube videos they choose along with creative activities according to the thematic units they would be working on at that time. To elaborate further on the methodology and the teaching goals and objectives, the writer presents an instance of using YouTube videos in an actual lesson plan of her own teaching classes. The thematic unit she worked on was “Summer” and the lesson targeted to familiarize the students with the concept of “Summer” as a season and expose them to potential vocabulary and activities focusing on fine motor skills (i.e. use of scissors), separating items, coloring.

- **Learning Goals and Objectives:** Familiarize students with summer vocabulary and routines.
- Focus on practicing their fine motor skills (e.g. using scissors) and observation skills (e.g. separating items, coloring).

Introduction (5-10')

Start your lesson with a joyful greeting song; more specifically, the teacher used the “Good Morning Song”. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CuI_p7a9VGs). In this way, she tried to establish greeting routines so that her students would know when the lesson starts and create a positive atmosphere. Ask your students to dance if they feel like they want to and as their teacher you can follow them, as well. In this way, the children unwind and feel closer to you.

Main Activities (25-30')

- Engage your students into the summer vocabulary through showing flashcards with pictures in order to visualize the concepts introduced (e.g. beach, seaside, ice-cream, hat, deck chair, sunglasses) and how can the objects shown can be used or where we see them (e.g. deck chairs, ice cream, sun cream).
- Demonstrate a short YouTube video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p50V6Vd5kMI>) regarding summer vocabulary in order to strengthen students’ knowledge acquisition through reinforcement and repetition. A useful tip would be to stop the video so that you could ask them to say the words before they hear them from the video presenter, since you will have mentioned them before by flashcards presentation.
- Prepare an activity with a summer bucket (“My Summer Bucket List”) in order for the students to work on their fine motor skills. During the activity they are instructed to cut and assemble the parts of a bucket through working on a particular theme. Additionally, you can ask your students to draw what they wish to do during summer through summer objects which have been demonstrated in class. If

you have extra time, you can provide students with handouts and ask them to cut summer objects, color them and then stick them on their bucket list. You can also start the “My Summer Bucket List” activity in a previous lesson in order for the students to have more time to cut the summer objects and color them, too.

- If there is time, you can choose a P.E. game on YouTube which will be summer themed. There is a plethora of such games such as “The Shark Chase” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2pq-td3vQ0>. These games are considered entertaining by the students and they love learning through playing.
- Listen with your students the “Summer Song” and ask them to try and sing it with you (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mVhh0oATqBI>). This could also be incorporated as a part of your routines since summer is the season of the year.

Closing (5-10’)

Finally, establish a farewell routine with your students until the next lesson. The “Goodbye Song” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0LDArAjf7-c>) could serve as an effective way to achieve this and you will have your students sing in English, as well. Summarizing, YouTube can serve as an instructional tool which will complement the communicative approach as it provides the teacher with a wide variety of activities such as songs, P.E games and even vocabulary drills which can assist the educator transmit the desirable knowledge in a constructive and engaging way. It is an undeniable fact that kindergarten teaching methods place students in the center of teaching and the lesson is ‘weaved’ and oriented around their interests and needs; henceforth, YouTube as an instructional tool is of inestimable significance, since it comprises an unlimited source of pleasant activities and routines which will help the teacher turn the English lesson a delightful, yet educational experience. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that YouTube as a teaching tool is constantly updated with novel material as we live in an endlessly changing world.

Limitations of the Use of YouTube in the EFL Classroom

There are certain limitations in the use of the particular platform in the EFL classroom. To expand further, YouTube should serve as a tool and not as a teachers’ substitute. It needs to be a part of lesson in order to provoke interest in order for students to visualize more complex concepts, so that they would internalize information better. Nevertheless, the instructor needs to combine the knowledge demonstrated in the video with activities and worksheets assigned in the classroom so that the children are in a position to practice their gross and fine motor skills. Additionally, YouTube could function perfectly as a pre-listening or a post-listening stimuli when the teacher desires to introduce new knowledge or help the instructor analyze and present certain topics in more detail; for instance, the story of Christmas, the story of Easter or even Saint Patrick’s Day, through visuals and animated pictures. In spite of its several applications, YouTube needs to be circumscribed within certain routines, owing to its audiovisual nature, it can be stated that it does not promote the expansion of students’ imagination. To conclude, YouTube should function as an audiovisual section of the teaching process and not as the entire teaching procedure. Young learners are fascinated to be actively engaged in handcrafting activities or sitting around their teacher listening to stories, as it makes them unwind and arises the feelings of closeness and trust towards their educator, which are what instructors endeavor to accomplish when teaching this age.

Conclusion

In summary, it is an undeniable fact that technology is an interrelated part of language teaching. To elaborate further on this issue, instructors could reap the advantages of video technology in order to transmit knowledge to preschoolers through the power of visualization. By utilizing the combination of audiovisuals, i.e. English songs in videos, storytelling through videos, instructors can introduce young learners to English in a simple and entertaining way. It has been proven through numerous researches that YouTube, if it is integrated properly in the teaching procedure, can only benefit both the students and the instructor, as there is a vast variety of material that can be used, ranging from melodious and tuneful songs to memorable stories or even videos which demonstrate experiments which can be conducted in the classroom. Additionally, children nowadays are extremely exposed to the specific platform on a daily basis, since it is used by their families and relatives. Henceforth, it is a tool, which they feel familiar with. Notwithstanding, it is imperative that the use of the YouTube platform be a supplemental and supportive one; under no circumstances should the students only be exposed to the video material without the presence and guidance of their teacher. Moreover, the videos shown should consist a part of the lesson and most preferably not the lesson per se, on the grounds that pupils need to practice their imagination and critical thinking skills along with their fine and gross motor ones. Finally, it can be inferred that YouTube can serve as an exquisite teaching tool as long as its utility is limited within its practical purposes.

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