



The Impact of Using YouTube Videos as Supplementary tool in Teaching Vocabulary to Secondary School Students in Benghazi, Libya

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أثر استخدام مقاطع فيديو يوتيوب كأداة تكميلية في تدريس المفردات
لطلاب المرحلة الثانوية في بنغازي، ليبيا

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الملخص:

مع تزايد استخدام التكنولوجيا في حياتنا اليومية، أصبح التعليم أحد المجالات التي تأثرت بالتكنولوجيا وخاصة تعلم اللغات الثانية ولذلك، فإن توفر الموارد على شبكة الإنترنت داخل الفصول الدراسية يمكن أن يكون بمثابة دعم لصالح المعلمين، وتهدف هذه الدراسة إلى قياس أثر استخدام فيديوهات اليوتيوب كأداة تكميلية في تدريس مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية في المدارس الثانوية بمدينة بنغازي، وأجرى الباحثون اختباراً قسماً لمجموعتين: مجموعة تجريبية (15) ومجموعة ضابطة (15)، وتم تعيين الطلاب (30 إناث) بشكل عشوائي. وتم تعليم المجموعة التجريبية فقط مفردات اللغة الإنجليزية باستخدام مقاطع فيديو يوتيوب لأربعة فصول، ثم تم إجراء الاختبار البعدي لكلتا المجموعتين، واستخدم الباحث اختبار (ت) المستقل لاستكشاف الفروق بين المجموعتين وأظهرت النتائج أن هناك فرقاً بين المجموعتين.

الكلمات الدالة: مفردات، بنغازي، يوتيوب، التكنولوجيا، شبكة الإنترنت.

Abstract

The increase in involving technology in our daily life has profoundly impacted the educational sector, particularly in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Therefore, the integration of web-based resources into the classrooms can be a valid pedagogical support for the teachers. This study aims at measuring the impact of utilizing YouTube videos as a supplementary tool for teaching English vocabulary to secondary school students in Benghazi, Libya. The researchers conducted an experimental research design. A pre-test was administered for two groups: an experimental group (N = 15) and a control group (N = 15). The students (N = 30 females) were randomly assigned to both groups. Only the experimental group was taught English vocabulary

using YouTube videos for four classes. Then a post-test was conducted for both groups. The researcher used independent t-test to explore the differences between both groups. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the two groups.

Keywords: Vocabulary, Benghazi, YouTube, technology, the internet.

1. Introduction

Technology has a significant impact on our daily lives in many aspects including language teaching. Social media platforms—such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube—are no longer merely recreational tools; they are integral components of the technological revolution that has broadened the scope of knowledge acquisition and cross-cultural communication (Alfaki, 2018). Thus, technology is now being used in teaching, which has opened a wide range of sources for teachers and learners to gain knowledge and also provided a better opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and cultures. Consequently, technology is increasingly leveraged in language teaching, offering learners exposure to authentic language input, including English vocabulary. Vocabulary is universally recognized as the cornerstone of language learning; as Allen (2023) posits, it is essential for the successful use of a second language and plays a pivotal role in constructing coherent written and oral discourse. Many studies have investigated the role of social media and its impact on vocabulary learning and languages learning (Tahir & Aminah, 2014; Dhanya, 2016; Indari & Putri, 2018). The majority of these studies have indicated that social media plays an important role in developing learners' vocabulary and language learning.

While a substantial body of literature has examined the efficacy of social media in language learning (Tahir & Aminah, 2014; Dhanya, 2016; Zainal & Rahmat, 2020), there remains a notable gap regarding the application of these tools within the Libyan educational context. Among the plethora of available digital resources, YouTube stands out as a widely accessible, free video-sharing platform that provides authentic materials not originally designed for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, yet highly adaptable for classroom use (Akbari & Razavi, 2015; Miller, 2005; Sabet & Mahsefat, 2012). Recent studies indicate that YouTube positively influences vocabulary learning (Al-Ameri & Rababah, 2020; Kabooha & Elyas, 2018). However, to date, no empirical research has investigated the role of YouTube videos in Libyan EFL classrooms. Therefore, this study aims to measure the impact of YouTube videos as a supplementary tool for teaching vocabulary in secondary schools in Benghazi, Libya.

1.1 The rational of study

The selection of YouTube as the focal point of this study is driven by its unprecedented global usage, cost, and user-friendly interface. Although YouTube is not an exclusively educational platform, it hosts an abundance of language-learning channels that generate millions of views. This diverse content enables teachers to supplement traditional lessons with engaging, context-rich materials. Given that traditional, lecture-based methods often lead to student disengagement, incorporating multimedia aligns with the preferences of contemporary learners. YouTube provides a multimodal learning experience that caters to various learning styles, transforming vocabulary acquisition from rote memorization into an interactive, auditory, and visual endeavor (Duffy, 2008; Wilson, 2015).

1.2 The Aims of the Study

This research seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To evaluate the efficacy of YouTube videos as a supplementary tool for teaching English vocabulary in Libyan secondary school classrooms.
2. To expose students to authentic materials that facilitate vocabulary retention and contextual understanding.
3. To foster students' capacity for independent, out-of-class learning.

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4. To assist students in achieving their academic vocabulary goals more efficiently.

1.3 The research questions

1. To what extent does the use of YouTube videos impact the vocabulary learning of secondary school students in Benghazi?
2. How can YouTube videos be effectively integrated as a supplementary tool in the secondary school EFL classroom?

2, Literature review

2.1. Social Media in Language Learning

The role of social media in SLA has garnered significant scholarly attention. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content,” categorizing it into collaborative projects, social networking sites, content communities (e.g., YouTube), blogs, virtual social worlds, and virtual game worlds.

Empirical evidence consistently highlights the positive impact of social media on language skills. For instance, Borau, Ullrich, Feng, & Shen (2009) demonstrated that using Twitter improved learners' communicative and cultural skills by facilitating interaction with native speakers. Similarly, Tahir and Aminah (2014) found that utilizing Facebook significantly improved students' narrative writing skills while boosting their motivation. Furthermore, Anankulladetch (2017) and Haque and Al Salem (2019) established that students hold positive perceptions of social media integration, noting that it enhances interactive learning and broadens their knowledge base. Specifically regarding vocabulary, Zainal and Rahmat (2020) found that social media exposes learners to new lexicon, encourages English writing, and inspires self-directed vocabulary research.

2.2. Vocabulary Teaching and Acquisition

Vocabulary is broadly defined as the words necessary for effective communication, encompassing both expressive (speaking) and receptive (listening) vocabularies (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009). Harmer (1991) further distinguishes between active vocabulary (words students can use) and passive vocabulary (words students recognize but cannot produce).

Historically, vocabulary teaching relied heavily on rote memorization and bilingual word lists. However, this approach has been widely critiqued. Krashen (1989) argued that vocabulary acquisition is deeply intertwined with reading and is best facilitated through contextualized input. Harmer (1991) echoed this, emphasizing that instruction must move beyond mere definitions to illustrate how words function within authentic contexts.

2.3. Theoretical Framework: Mayer’s Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

The theoretical foundation of this study is grounded in Mayer’s Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2005), which posits that learning is significantly enhanced when information is presented using both words and pictures rather than words alone. Mayer distinguishes between multimedia learning (the cognitive process) and multimedia instruction (the presentation of material using words and pictures to foster learning). The theory rests on three core assumptions:

1. Dual Channels: The brain processes information through separate visual/pictorial and auditory/verbal channels.
2. Limited Capacity: Each channel has a finite capacity for holding and manipulating information in working memory.

- Active Processing: Learners actively select, organize, and integrate verbal and pictorial information into coherent mental models.

According to Mayer (2005), effective multimedia instruction triggers five cognitive processes: selecting words, selecting images, organizing words, organizing images, and integrating these representations. Applying this to YouTube integration, videos that strategically align visual cues with auditory explanations can optimize cognitive processing, thereby enhancing vocabulary retention more effectively than traditional text-based methods. See Figure 1

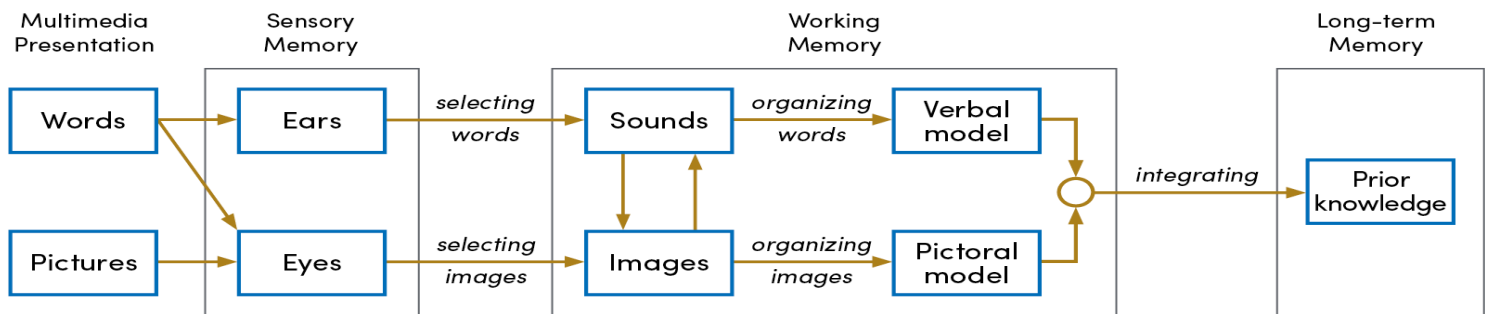


Figure 1. Multimedia work map

2.4. The Use of YouTube in ESL classroom

Launched in 2005, YouTube is the world's premier video-sharing platform. Duffy (2008) identified several educational features of YouTube, including its vast repository of diverse content, accessibility, and interactive functions such as tagging, subscribing, and content channels. To maximize learning, Duffy (2008) proposed strategies for educators, such as segmenting videos, utilizing the pause function for predictions, and using the "sound off" technique to stimulate descriptive language.

In the EFL context, empirical studies support YouTube's efficacy. Kabooha and Elyas (2018) found that YouTube had a statistically significant impact on vocabulary acquisition and reading abilities, with students exhibiting highly favorable attitudes toward the medium. Similarly, Al-Ameri and Rababah (2020) concluded that YouTube enhances students' capability to learn new vocabulary, proving technology's positive influence on the learning process. Despite this, a gap remains in understanding the specific types of YouTube content that best align with students' cultural contexts and interests, particularly in the Arab world.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participant

The study sample comprised 30 female students enrolled in the second-grade scientific track at a public secondary school in Benghazi, Libya. The participants' ages ranged from 16 to 17 years. The students were randomly divided into two intact classrooms: an experimental group (n = 15) and a control group (n = 15).

3.2 Research Design

The researchers adopted a quasi-experimental research design utilizing a pre-test/post-test control group model. Both groups were administered a pre-test to establish a baseline of their vocabulary knowledge and a post-test to measure any subsequent changes.

3.3 Instrumentation and Procedure

The instrument utilized for both the pre-test and post-test was a 15-question vocabulary assessment adapted from the Barton English Level Test, an online diagnostic tool aligned with

the British Council's leveling standards. The selected questions were meticulously chosen to reflect the vocabulary outlined in the Libyan national English curriculum ("English for Libya").

Prior to the intervention, all participants took the pre-test anonymously. The experimental group then received four instructional sessions where vocabulary was taught using YouTube videos carefully selected by the researchers. The integration of these videos was strictly guided by Mayer's (2005) principles of multimedia learning and Duffy's (2008) pedagogical strategies for active viewing (e.g., segmenting and pausing). Conversely, the control group received four sessions of traditional vocabulary instruction (e.g., board work, bilingual lists, and textbook drills) without multimedia supplementation. Following the intervention, both groups completed the post-test.

4. Data analysis

This study was employed to determine whether the students' vocabulary recognition skills improved significantly as a result of their learning through using YouTube videos for four classes. Data were analyzed using SPSS 20. An independent t-test was conducted to compare means between two groups. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

The first step of data analysis was to measure the descriptive statistics of the sample. Table 1 gives a detailed description of the pre-test results for both groups; and Table 2 provides a detailed description of the pre-test results for both groups.

Table 1. Pre-test independent sample t-test

Group	N	M	SD
Experimental	15	4.7	2.6
Control	15	4.7	2.3

Table 2. Post-test independent sample t-test

Group	N	M	SD
Experimental	15	8.3	1.6
Control	15	6.1	2.8

As indicated in Table 3, the pre-test means scores for the experimental group ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 2.6$) and the control group ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 2.3$) were identical. The independent t-test revealed no statistically significant difference between the two groups prior to the intervention ($t = .000$, $p > .05$), confirming that both groups started at the same proficiency level.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-Test for Pre-test Scores

	N	t	df	p
results	15	.000	29	1.000

Table 2 presents the post-test results. Following the four-session intervention, the experimental group ($M = 8.3$, $SD = 1.6$) outperformed the control group ($M = 6.1$, $SD = 2.8$). The independent samples t-test indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups ($t = 2.45$, $p < .05$). These results suggest that the integration of YouTube videos as a supplementary tool yielded a measurable improvement in vocabulary recognition compared to traditional teaching methods.

Table 2. Independent Samples t-test for Post-test Scores

	N	t	df	p
results	15	2,45	29	0.020

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to measure the impact of YouTube videos on vocabulary acquisition within the context of the official Libyan secondary school curriculum. The quantitative findings clearly indicate that students who received vocabulary instruction supplemented with YouTube videos performed significantly better on the post-test than those taught via conventional methods.

These results corroborate the findings of previous literature. The positive outcome aligns with Kabooha and Elyas (2018) and Al-Ameri and Rababah (2020), who also found that YouTube integration significantly enhances vocabulary learning. From a theoretical standpoint, the success of the intervention can be attributed to Mayer's (2005) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. By providing simultaneous auditory input (spoken English) and visual context (images, gestures, and on-screen text), the YouTube videos engaged students' dual-channel cognitive processing. This multimodal approach likely reduced the cognitive load associated with abstract vocabulary memorization, making the learning process more meaningful and contextually anchored.

Furthermore, the results support Zainal and Rahmat's (2020) assertion that digital platforms expose learners to authentic language, thereby increasing their motivation and engagement. The dynamic nature of YouTube content provided the experimental group with a more stimulating learning environment compared to the static, traditional methods used in the control group.

6. Recommendations

Based on these findings and limitations, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. For Curriculum Designers: Authentic digital materials, such as YouTube videos, should be officially incorporated into the national EFL curriculum as supplementary resources, rather than relying solely on textbook lexicons.
2. For Teachers: Educators must be mindful of their students' cultural contexts and linguistic levels when selecting YouTube content. Following Duffy's (2008) guidelines, teachers should employ active viewing strategies (e.g., pausing, segmenting) rather than passive watching.
3. For Administrators: Educational authorities and school administrators should organize targeted training workshops to equip EFL teachers with the digital literacy skills required to effectively integrate technology and multimedia into their pedagogical practices.

7. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the efficacy of YouTube as a supplementary tool for teaching English vocabulary in a Libyan secondary school context. The data demonstrate that integrating YouTube into the EFL classroom has a statistically significant positive impact on students' vocabulary acquisition. By transforming vocabulary instruction from a passive memorization exercise into an interactive, multimodal experience, YouTube proves to be a valuable asset for both educators and learners.

However, the researchers acknowledge certain limitations. The intervention period was relatively brief (four sessions), which may restrict the generalizability of the long-term retention of the acquired vocabulary. Additionally, the pre-test scores revealed a generally low baseline

proficiency among the participants, which initially hindered their ability to fully engage with undated YouTube content. Finally, a cultural deficit was observed; the participants were not habituated to consuming English-language digital content, requiring an adjustment period.

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