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YOU TUBE'S INDISPENSABLE ROLE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Unlike earlier attempts at overdependence on ELT methodologies current trends offer much flexible and learner friendly ways to inculcate good language habits. The gradual improvement from being an occasional speaker of English to near Native like fluency is possible only through adoption modern and viable technologies like audio-visual aids. One of such most important sources and quite useful for all groups of learners is You Tube. It offers one of the most useful participatory environments along with much exposure about how several learners behave and learn while they are in a language learning setting. Variety is another more important aspect that You Tube offers in a way that helps almost all learners.

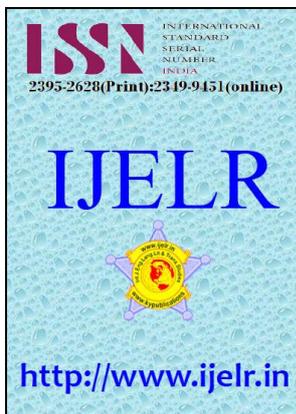
This paper aims at discussing reasons why learners should be taught English via You Tube channels and the soundness of such practice in a rapidly globalizing context.

**Keywords:** ESL , ELT, You Tube, Language learning

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Video lessons for language learning have been there for quite some time. Any online search shall bring plenty of videos with a variety of subjects even from 1980's. The increased production and cost reduction all digital media has enabled people to be able to reach that technology which renders more knowledge in less time. Affordability of learners is also such that they can possess gadgets like tabs, laptops, mobile phones and iPads for multitasking. A practical report on video-based activities by Wilkinson (1984) for use in "intermediate level language courses" (p. 84)

With the globalization and much information sharing YouTube is within the reach of almost every learner who has the access to internet and it has entirely replaced the basic notion of pre-recorded video. Because of this propagation today several videos on any subject that is known to human beings are available. Listening activities require learners to listen to an audio and answer questions on comprehension or information gaps as a task. The audio may usually contain an interaction between two or more people or it may be an information providing article. In a video learners are privileged with much informational clues as body language for complete comprehension and interpretation. Comprehension scores improved very significantly when students are provided with a visual stimulus according to a study conducted by Heron(1995).Lake (2003) cites Asher (1993) and says that there must be an image attached to the mental representation of a word in order to retain and use it. Several other studies in the same field also support the idea of visual stimulus as they help provide paralinguistic and non-verbal aspects of communication for



constructing meaning more readily and holistically, listening activities (for example Gruba, 2004; Hasan, 2000;Shin, 1998).

Iwasaki (2009) writes, "Visuals can help dramatize meaning" (p. 3).Shrosbree gives us an idea on why video is preferable video over audio only for listening activities.

There is an obvious appeal to using video in the language classroom. Instead of the rather unnatural task of listening to a disembodied voice emanating from an audio player, learners are able to see the speaker and elements of the surrounding environment(p. 75).

Even in the native language context speakers usually look at each other's faces while interacting or in a general conversation. In other conversation types that are not face to face like messaging via computer often emoticons are used to send to compensate that lack of face to face conversational facility. This suggests that human beings naturally depend on body language for understanding and interpreting what the speaker is conveying to them(joy2009).

Moreover, the multi-sensory aspect of video may help reduce the cognitive demands on learners, where the more senses utilized when acquiring new language, the easier this knowledge may enter our long-term memory (Swaffar&Vlatten 1997).

The additional cognitive support that video in language learning provides a ladder to acquire vocabulary, grammatical structures, improve spelling and develop the four linguistic skills of reading , writing ,speaking , listening (Medina 2002, p1 ).Weyers (1999) stated that video-based instruction seems to improve students oral production and particularly confidence in their speech (Weyers 1999).

Wagner (1999), and Wood(1999) interestingly and paradoxically consent to the above quotes and argue that video alone does not provide sufficient impetus for language learning, however, when used with appropriate support material, can "activate the passive knowledge of language learners in particular, and assist with language assimilation and transfer, both in terms of that language presented as well as that which is implicitly suggested" (p.95)

#### **Audiovisuals satisfy multiple learning styles**

A comprehensive guide to learning styles by Fleming (2001) that is VARK guide to learning styles, learners can be classified into either one or the other of the following four main learning styles or have two or more learning preferences (aka. multimodal):

Visual –process knowledge from maps, charts, spider diagrams etc.

Aural – prefer information that is spoken or heard.

Reading (or writing) – prefer to receive information via the written word.

Kinesthetic – process knowledge through bodily sensations (Gardner, 2006). The key point about kinesthetic learners is that they can learn from either real or simulated experiences, like learning from movies, or other models of the foreign language in use.

From the above information , for completing a listening activity an audio CD may suffice but Video sources(aural + visual) appeal to multiple styles of learning i.e., aural , visual and kinesthetic learners.

Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis reiterates that teachers have an obligation to provide learners with not only an abundance of interesting, meaningful and relevant learning materials, but additionally create a learning environment that helps to lower their affective filter. This supports motivational theories that the greater the motivation the easier the learning process of a second language learners.

This paper aims to support the view that the usage of YouTube and other such sites may provide useful support materials to language learners. Two important highlights of Metekohy (2010) reveals that more than 70% of YouTube traffic comes from outside United States and a 24 hour video is uploaded every minute in the YouTube.

On analysis of the above statistical figures one comes to know that learners and public are much aware of the YouTube channel and the propagation is in leaps and bounds. This familiarity with a certain medium increases confidence and reduces affective filter(Krashen, 1999) which in turn increases motivation

levels. Time spent on YouTube learning a language may create a feeling of having fun while learning unlike a traditional text book in the case of second language learners.

Moreover the statistics shows that there is plenty of material available because of the frequent uploading of videos. Though it is sometimes difficult to shortlist what is more suitable for a learner and intuitive and an understanding of learners' areas of improvement shall guide him to suggest a topic of importance. Once the learners do this they are provided with many such relevant videos by different authors which may be useful for grading and choosing the material.

You tube may be used to introduce language points and vocabulary and other language components by selecting the finest videos. Educators can use this facility on a huge scale by using projectors to be able to cover an entire class. Utmost care should be taken by the teachers while selecting videos because some videos may contain not appropriate in terms of having sexual references and other objectionable content to the young and adolescent learners. Judicious selection shall on the part of the teacher reward with a pleasurable learning environment.

#### **Implications of the "15 minute upload limit"**

Compared to a feature-length movie on DVD's the 15 minute time limit on the uploads has a positive implication in that they provide many different stories , product reviews , articles etc., with a decisive beginning ,a middle and a conclusion to the learners with having to view for long hours restlessly. It is always advantageous to learn from a limited material rather on an elaborate one in the forming stages.

Context usually unfolds as the video is played and conversely the learners inculcate a habit of visualizing the contexts while short stories and movies are watched.

Canning (2000) suggests that video should be shown in short periods as apposed to showing a full feature-length movie without intermediate comprehension

activities. By imposing a 15 minute limit on each video You Tube seems to offer manageable chunks of videos superbly appropriate for conducting other comprehension activities or else replay it entirely for better insights.

The themes of the videos are usually narrow allowing the learners to discuss learning items like vocabulary, collocation and usage.

Here are given four different activities using videos found on You Tube. These are not completely different from each other in a strict sense but are rather variants of the same activity sometimes.

Activities using You Tube 1: Two ways of doing a dictogloss

One way is to do a traditional dictogloss activity using a video to help student comprehension. The teacher shall create a short narrative text based on the contents of a chosen YouTube video before the lesson is carried out in class. The lesson plan is

**Preparation stage:** Stages of the dictogloss activity are explained by the teacher, as preparation, to the learners by introducing the topic and important vocabulary from the text. Students can be encouraged to brainstorm vocabulary that they think may be relevant to the topic.

**Dictation stage:** The teacher reads the lesson at least two times while the learners listen.

To get a comprehensive idea of the text learners should not write anything during the first listening .During the second listening are encouraged to take notes judiciously so that they can reconstruct the text on their own.

**Reconstruction stage:** Learners work together in workable teams to reconstruct the text.

Right at this stage students are given an opportunity to view the video on which the dictogloss is based. From this the learners will be able to compare to their own reconstruction and actual video components and assess the closeness to the original context. The visual clues in the video work as stimulator of the motivation because of the interest it generates.

**Analysis and correction stage:** Learners verify and compare their reconstructions asa whole class. Individual groups' reconstructions are compared to the original text to establish how and what level of variations is agreeable.

The second is a reverse of the process where the students would watch the video first and think about the ways to narrate or produce the content in their version. A dictogloss has been appended at the end to do this activity.

1. Students should discuss the vocabulary with each other in their group or else they should be provided with a pre-fixed vocabulary for brainstorming.
2. Students should view the video that they are supposed to narrate.
3. Students can write the words which might be useful from the movie and can be crosschecked to know as to how many other important and different words have already been noted by the other students.
4. Students should watch the video again. Students are to be given how they can illustrate a story in six frames provided that a time limit be implemented for their drawings.
5. Once the storyboard is completed the learners should give captions explaining each image.

Finally there are two follow-up options:

- (1) Let learners read their captions to each to compare their linguistic accuracy but more importantly to know how others have understood the story.
- (2) Play the video one more time and let learners give their narration to the rest of the class.

Activity with You Tube 2: utilizing the most out of music videos.

Songs are selectively used in language class rooms for listening activities. They cover cloze test, how many times a given word is repeated, what is the refrain, getting to know the meaning of the song and the feelings it triggers in each learner. A music video besides facilitating above involvement also allows the teacher to frame the extended comprehension and other related activities.

Iwasaki(2009) mentions the use of audio-visuals and the crucial role in imparting language components using the song "Fight for your Right to Party"(Beastie Boys, 1986) to teach about the usage of slang and rebellious nature of the culture in American subculture.

The video may be used as the source for both listening and speaking activities.

There are a number of activities that could be implemented based on this song:

Spot the lyrics – How many times each word is heard?

Focus on the lyrics – Rhyming used in rap or slang words in general.

Contrast with the way students behave in India – Similarities and differences.

Speak about rebellious things each learners have noted and compare with a member.

Comparing the noted rebellious acts of the video by different participants or viewers enables them to understand their standard of grasping things around. Optimal use of audio-visuals will help prevent distraction from the intended purpose.

Activity with You Tube 3: Guessing sequence of events.

"What happens next" activity is an activity which engages the learners in thinking with motivated curiosity. The learners are required to guess when the video is paused half way through by the teacher and this creates among the learners because a right guess itself work as reward to the guesser – naturally a human intuition. It appeals to all age groups. The steps for this activity are:

1. The title of the videos often times gives an understanding of the conclusion. So the video should be played in the full screen mode.
2. Intermittent comprehension should be checked and vocabulary be introduced as the video plays.
3. Hints may be provided as to who are the chief characters of the video.
4. Students should be encouraged to guess what happens next. Prompting
5. Keddie suggests, to initiate motivation, that students should be told to "be as imaginative as possible and that everyone must write something down if they want to see the end of the clip".
6. Students write what is going to happen on a sheet of paper.
7. The teacher collects the papers and corrects errors.

8. Finally, the students who guessed right are rewarded to ensure participation with increased motivation.

In order to demonstrate the basic steps involved in the activity a few more videos may be practiced until all the procedure becomes hands on experience. The steps would involve:

1. Play this video also in full screen mode
2. The teacher pauses the video after every 10 seconds to ask the learners to guess what is going to happen.
3. After some more progress in the story the video is again paused to introduce more vocabulary and phrases.
4. Continue the video until around 1:25 and ask the learners to guess what is next or else if necessary give some starting words like "I think...."
5. At this point the learners write their possible predictions and hand in the sheets.
6. The teacher corrects errors, finds trends and rewards correct responses.

A review of the learners' scripts may be suggested as a follow up activity.

### CONCLUSION

The article has mainly concentrated on the importance of using You Tube in second language teaching class rooms through which the teacher will be able to reduce cognitive demands on the part of learners thereby increasing motivation. Though there are some viewpoints which don't support the usefulness of the You Tube videos this paper has consistently referred to works which outline multiple learning styles and the videos' irreplaceable usefulness to such learners of aural, visual and kinesthetic type of learning styles.

The paper also provided the steps to be followed while performing an activity and at every each step enunciated what is to be benefitted and what is to be guided by the teacher in order to use these activities optimally. Vocabulary, grammar, various phrases and other language components will find their way into the minds of the learners to trigger an automatic speech reducing halts and pauses and increasing fluency.

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