



The Effect of YouTube on Speaking and Listening Skills of Students

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In an English as Foreign Language context like Saudi Arabia, university business students face a difficult challenge to speak in English and to understand what is spoken. The students don't have the opportunity in their daily life to listen to native speakers in or outside the classroom, but they are expected to listen to the text book audios in the classes spoken by the native speakers of English. Therefore, the difficulty rises in Listening and Speaking Skills Course as the students are not exposed to the British accent. In order to solve this problem, the researcher used YouTube videos spoken by the native speakers in the experimental group, and the control group just had the normal practice of listening to only the textbook audios. The researcher adopted quasi-experimental design with pretest and posttest in both control and experimental groups and analyzed the performance of the students using SPSS and Excel. The study proved that the results of experimental group improved significantly in their listening comprehension skills and performed better in their presentations than the control group. In the English as Foreign Language contexts, where business students fail to have exposure to the native accent of English, YouTube videos can make a great contribution in improving their listening and speaking skills.

Keywords: audio tracks, English as foreign language, authentic speaking/listening, YouTube

INTRODUCTION

Saudi EFL students rarely have the opportunity of speaking in English or listening to the native speakers in their daily life. As a result, in spite of being aware of the basic sentence structures and grammatical items, they seldom speak in the class and find it difficult to understand the audio tracks spoken by the native speakers in the Listening and Speaking course. Many students do not have fluency because they do not have the opportunity of listening to English, as it is a foreign language to them. Listening skill plays a key role in the improvement of speaking, reading and writing, but it is considered the most difficult in language learning (Prasongngern & Soontornwipast, 2023). Therefore, Saudi students need to practice listening skills more than any other skill. The Arabic medium schools in Saudi Arabia follow traditional methods to teach English. Alhamami (2013) says that the traditional methods of teaching speaking skills such as a few artificial speaking exercises have failed to produce fluent speakers who

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can engage in spontaneous conversations. Saudi students do not communicate actively in the class as they find themselves verbally challenging. For Saudi EFL learners, speaking is a serious problem (Aljumah, 2011). In addition, some students understand what they hear, but they cannot express what they feel spontaneously as they do not use the language in their daily life. Finally, many students have mother tongue influence when they speak. The sound /p/ is pronounced as /b/, and /dʒ/ is pronounced as /g/. They also insert a few extra vowel sounds in the middle of the words like *learn* is pronounced as /liarin/ and *against* as /ageinisit/. Due to this, the foreign instructors find it difficult to understand what students speak in the class.

The objective of the Listening and Speaking Course is twofold. Firstly, students have to listen to short audios and answer the questions based on them. These audios are part of the text book: *Q Skills: Listening and Speaking 1*. The listening exercises focus on improving the listening for specific information and listening for general information. Secondly, they have to make oral presentations twice for five minutes each. The topic of the first presentation is ‘tell me about yourself’, and for the second presentation, students select any one topic from the ten topics given by the instructor. The course instructor evaluates the students following a rubric, which has content, duration, body language, eye contact, fluency, language, and grammatical accuracy as the criteria of evaluation (See appendix A). The students experience a number of problems while listening to the tracks and making presentations in the class. First, many students have not heard the native speakers of English, but they have to understand the audio tracks spoken by the native speakers and answer the questions. Second, some students understand some parts of the tracks and miss the rest of the audio. Third, most of the students understand only a few words. They cannot make sense of the full audio. In addition, many students do not have listening practice. Hence, they forget most of the information presented in the track. Next, some students switch off their minds the moment the course instructor plays the track because of the fear of not understanding the content.

The researcher observed that all the students possess smart phones, computers, and tabs and they have free WiFi facility in the university and at home. The youth, especially the students use social media such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram on daily basis to post their content and make money or purely for entertainment (Alhrahshah & Almajali, 2023). As social media is popular among the young people, the language instructors can make use of them for educational purposes (Rajayi & Maleki, 2023). In order to solve the problems mentioned above, the researcher used YouTube videos as Thornhill et al. (2002) promote video streaming in classes as a guide for educational development. These videos contain the theme of the lessons and grammatical points presented in each lesson. The objective of using YouTube videos is to find out whether they can improve the listening and speaking skills of the Saudi EFL students. A primary concern in learning a foreign language is to maximize the target language interaction in and outside the classroom (Barrs, 2012). Therefore, the researcher used YouTube to expose the students to the native speakers’ accent. Social media like YouTube provides opportunity to the learners to have free interaction with the native-speakers of the language and helps in improving diction and pronunciation (Siddig, 2020). The study of Shehadeh (2024) recommends that language teachers should motivate and encourage students to

use technology such as smartphones and social media to improve their language skills. Therefore, the researcher utilized this web technology to solve listening and speaking problems of Saudi students.

Video applications like YouTube are the basic important instruments in the classroom to enhance the learning of English language (Alshraideh, 2021). YouTube contains a number of videos to improve the language proficiency of students in all aspects. Taking the advice from Gilakjani (2017) that instructors of language should use technology for pronunciation and instruction, the researcher used the freely available technology in the college. Moreover, the study of Lin et al. (2016) proves that the learners generally have positive attitude towards language learning social network sites. If learners are taught through online mode, these social media networks come in handy. Social media provides opportunity to generate information and share it across the world. Slim and Hafedh (2019) feel that KSA is a sociocultural conservative country that does not expose a student to learn a foreign language unless he spends sometime in the country where that language is native. The researcher finds that only a limited number of students are fortunate to learn the language by immersion method by staying in the country where it is spoken. Instead, the university students can be exposed to the native speakers of English through YouTube and understand how the natives speak English. Jensen et al. (2012) say that video inclusion enhances the language learning of students by promoting their confidence and individual dependence. Therefore, the researcher used YouTube videos in the classroom.

The classrooms of Business College contain state-of-the-art technology like smartboards, digital podiums, free WiFi, a computer and audio system. In fact, the government of Saudi Arabia supports the use of appropriate technology in the classrooms for the process of teaching and learning (Alshraideh, 2021). The Ministry of Education encourages Saudi schools to adopt new teaching strategies and methods in teaching English, and provides evaluators to make the teachers update their skills (Aljohani, 2016). Due to this, the researcher could comfortably carry out his study using the technology in the classrooms.

The users of YouTube can view the videos, create their own videos and upload them into the application without any cost. This allows the users to exercise their creativity in making the English language lessons effectively and nontraditionally. Online technologies like YouTube videos enhance the second language literacy in different contexts. (Elbalazi, 2015). A good number of videos are available on the platform to improve the various skills of the learners. However, in Saudi Arabia, neither the teachers nor the learners exploited this technology much for educational purposes (Alwehaibi, 2015). Therefore, the researcher undertook the present study. YouTube became popular media across the world. YouTube helps teachers to have collaborative content creation, peer assessment and student motivation. Authentic learning tasks and learning experience of students develop through the effective use of media. Keeping this in mind, language instructors are using YouTube more and more to teach the English language (Duffy, 2008), as Saudi Arabia supports the use of technology in classrooms. YouTube, as an attractive and famous social medium, contributes to the education sector across the world effectively (Sheetz, 2009). Various instructors of

language create videos and upload them in this platform for the benefit of the learners. Binmahboob (2020) opines that YouTube as a teaching tool to improve speaking skill is understudied in the Saudi EFL context. Hence, the researcher took a step to study the effect of YouTube in improving the speaking and listening skills on business graduate students.

Any learner can modify the settings of the audios or videos in YouTube as per his level and try to understand the contents at his comfort level. Personalization, such as increasing or decreasing the speed of the audios or videos is the most important characteristic feature of Information and Communication Technology in education. The student can customize the technology as per his individual needs, which makes him learn at his own comfort and speed, and language instructors can prepare their lessons as per the needs of the learners (Alobaid, 2020). Teachers used YouTube as a teaching tool to improve the language skills of the students. Language instructors around the world could use the language materials created by the native speakers. This is one of the most fruitful areas of YouTube in education (Soukup, 2014). Language instructors of other countries also create videos and upload them in this platform for the benefit of their students. This will prove their efficiency in the language and provide them with monetary benefits. Through the internet, students can easily access YouTube and other language teaching websites. Moreover, Saudi EFL students are positive towards using mobile phones for language learning (Alrefaai, 2019). Using social media is not a problem to the students as they possess the best smart phones and the college provides free WiFi facility. At present, social media became the most powerful learning tool, as the users feel highly comfortable and informative (Zabidi & Wang, 2021). Unlike the face-to-face classroom experience, the learners can play these videos repeatedly at different speeds and times as per their comfort. This facility enables them to learn the language quicker and easier.

Research Question

Does watching YouTube language videos improve the basic listening skills like listening for specific information and listening for general information and fluency of speaking in the oral presentations of Saudi EFL graduate students?

Literature Review

As YouTube is an effective social media that makes a great impact on people, a good number of researchers conducted various studies in different aspects of it. Alshraideh (2021) analyzed the perceptions of Saudi EFL learners and teachers toward using the online videos in the language classes. The participants are 120 Saudi female students of preparatory year at Taibah University and six EFL teachers. Both the students and the teachers agreed that it is an effective technique and are positive toward using the videos. Binmahboob (2020) examined the perceptions of secondary 30 EFL teachers in Riyadh at secondary stage in improving the speaking skills of students. The results showed that the language instructors are positive towards utilizing YouTube in developing the speaking skills of students. YouTube helps in lessening the students' anxiety of learning, improving learning faster, motivating the students to retain the attention for a long time. The study of Aoki (2010) shows that students demonstrated better

knowledge, presentation skills, and creative when continually exposed to ICT technologies like YouTube. Students were also positive toward these technologies and took more efforts into self-learning. Alsuraihi et al. (2016) explored belief and usage of social media of 657 medical students from 23 Saudi Arabian medical colleges. The most common social media used by boys and girls (42.3%) is YouTube. 95.8% of students believed that utilization of social media, especially YouTube is beneficial to them.

Rachmawati (2020) conducted a study on the use of YouTube videos in improving the pronunciation skills of non-English department students. These experimental group students used some direct pronunciation learning strategies such as imitating the YouTuber, saying the words aloud and practicing the pronunciation of words. The results proved that YouTube improved the pronunciation skills of the non-English department students.

Rachmijati et al. (2019) focused on improving the speaking skills of EFL Indonesian students by using YouTube vlogs. The students made 13 vlogs on the topic of tourism. When these vlogs were evaluated, they found that speaking skills of students improved a lot along with creative skills. There is an increase in the self-confidence of the students too.

Wu (2020) utilized TED Talks available in YouTube in the EFL Taiwan graduate classes to improve the listening skills of students. The results of the study revealed that the students upgraded their listening comprehension after watching the TED Talks on YouTube. Fatehi (2013) conducted an experiment to find the effectiveness of videos with subtitles to teach English. He found from this experiment that students improved their grammatical accuracy by watching subtitled videos.

Harmer (2007) says in his book that videos provide most effective learning experience as the students see the language and not just hear it. Video makes the students aware of cross cultural differences as they look at the situations beyond their classrooms. Students will have increased level of interest and are motivated towards learning.

Elbelazi (2015) synthesized various studies from 2004 to 2011 that used technology in various contexts. A considerable number of studies revealed positive results in adopting technology in language teaching while the other studies highlighted some practical issues like lack of computer skills. The researcher also gives possible solutions to these problems like teachers and students should be well aware of the technical applications used in the classes.

Alhamami (2013) examined the use of YouTube in language teaching and learning. After the observation of language learning videos in YouTube, he presented a novel rubric which provides a pedagogical guideline for language acquisition. The rubric has 44 questions with five main sections such as video characteristic, attractiveness, clarity, reaction and content.

Alobaid (2020) examined the role of YouTube on developing the written skills of students. This study clearly shows that students improved in the aspects of accuracy and

organization of ideas after exposing the learners to YouTube for five months. This study proves that YouTube is effective and strongly recommended for students and teachers.

Alwehaibi (2015) experimented to find the impact of YouTube technology on content learning of Saudi EFL college students. This study demonstrated positive results for the experimental group as they learned more content from YouTube videos. Thus, the study recommends the usage of YouTube as an effective instructional tool in the classroom.

METHOD

Subject Characteristics

The researcher conducted the study on 84 students by dividing them randomly into control and experimental groups. Both the control and experimental groups had 42 students each. All these students come from Arabic medium schools in and around Al Kharj, Saudi Arabia. Their mother tongue is Arabic. The English efficiency of these students is similar to each other as they come from local Arabic schools. The university is the only place they speak and listen to English. Their ages range from 17 to 21. All of them are studying the course first time.

Lesson Plan

In the Listening and Speaking Course, students need to make oral presentations twice and answer the listening comprehension questions. The researcher conducted a pretest in both the control and experimental groups and then introduced the tool of YouTube videos in the experimental group. The control group had only the tracks from textbook. After the fifteen weeks of the semester, the researcher conducted a posttest in listening and speaking in both the groups, analyzed the performance of the students using SPSS and Excel, and drew the conclusions.

Hypothesis

Watching YouTube videos spoken by the native speakers improves the listening and speaking skills of students.

Null Hypothesis

Using YouTube videos in the classroom has no significant difference on the listening and speaking skills of students.

$$H_0: \mu_{\text{pretest}} = \mu_{\text{post test}}$$

Alternate Hypothesis

Using YouTube videos in the classroom has significant difference on the listening and speaking skills of students.

$$H_1: \mu_{\text{pretest}} < \mu_{\text{post test}}$$

Research Design

The researcher adopted quasi-experimental research design with pretest and posttest in both control and experimental groups. The researcher administered pretest on the

students of both the groups. Then, the experimental group students received the treatment by way of YouTube videos in the classroom along with the lessons. However, the control group experienced the regular classes without YouTube videos. At the end of the semester, both the groups took a posttest. The researcher analyzed the pretest and posttest scores of these groups to find out whether the YouTube videos made any difference in the performance of the experimental group.

Analysis

The objective of conducting the present study is to find out whether the YouTube videos influence listening and speaking skills of EFL Saudi graduate students. For this purpose, the researcher adopted pretest and posttest method, and he conducted these tests in both control and experimental groups. The following table presents the paired samples statistics of these groups:

Table 1
Paired samples statistics

Groups/Tests	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Correlations	Sig.
Control Pretest	5.4286	42	1.66957	.25762	.860	.000
Control Posttest	5.9524	42	1.56099	.24087		
Experimental Pretest	5.6429	42	1.41113	.21774	.642	.000
Experimental Posttest	8.1667	42	.79378	.12248	.642	.000

As the table depicts, the pretest results of control and experimental groups are similar. The mean pretest score of control group is 5.42, and the experimental group's mean is 5.64. However, the posttest results of these groups are different from each other. Control group's posttest scores are a little better than the pretest due to the regular teaching in the classroom, but it is negligibly small (5.95). However, the experimental group posttest results show a significant growth in their performance. The experimental group's posttest mean is 8.16. In addition, the standard error mean experimental group posttest is lower than the experimental group pretest and control group's pretest and posttest. This clearly shows that the students of experimental group performed much better in posttest. Similarly, the standard deviation of control group's pretest and posttest, and experimental group pretest are similar to each other and much higher than the experimental group posttest. As the experimental group posttest standard deviation is lower than the rest, which is just .79, the students of experimental group are closer to their mean score. It clearly proves that all the experimental group students have improved their listening and speaking skills. In the above table, the strength of a relationship between the variables is shown by correlation. Control group pretest and posttest correlation is .86, and that of experimental group is .642. This means that they are highly correlated to each other. Paired Samples Test table is given in Appendix B to view the paired differences.

The below line graph depicts the pictorial representation of the performance of these two groups in their pre and posttests.

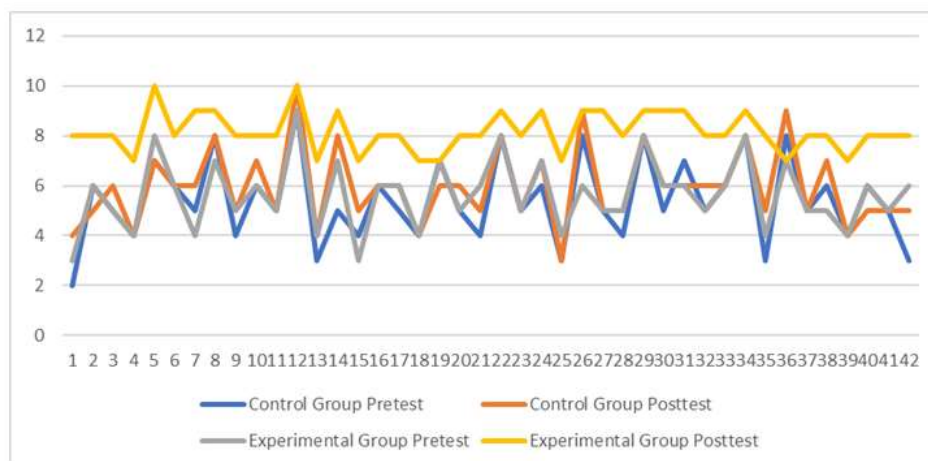


Figure 1
Control and experimental groups' pre and post test scores

As the graph depicts, the pretest scores of both groups are similar to each other, but the posttest scores of experimental group is much higher. Hence, the study proves that the intervention of YouTube videos made a significant improvement in the performance of experimental group students.

Hypothesis Testing

As the p-value is less than 0.05, null hypothesis is rejected and alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, playing YouTube videos has significant difference on the improvement of listening and speaking skills of students.

DISCUSSION

The researcher followed the advice of Elbelazi (2015) and made sure that all the students are well aware of how to use YouTube application in their mobiles and computers.

The intervention of YouTube videos spoken by native speakers had a positive effect on students. It improved their listening for specific information, and listening for general information skills. The videos also helped students develop their oral presentation skills in the classroom. They improved their fluency and gave speeches confidently fulfilling the evaluation criteria of the test.

As video streaming is promoted by Thornhill et al. (2002), the researcher played YouTube videos in the experimental group and achieved positive results. The research findings are in line with the findings of Siddig (2020) that the social media helps the learners to improve the target language in terms of diction and pronunciation. The researcher observed that the mother tongue influence of the students reduced drastically because of listening to the native speakers. The experiment has contributed in solving the problem raised by Slim and Hafedh (2019) that students belonging to a conservative

country like Saudi Arabia should be exposed to immersion method by sending the students to England or America. As the exposure to English language spoken by the natives is important, YouTube videos make a great contribution.

The research agrees with Jensen et al. (2012) that videos help in language learning and promote students' confidence and individual dependence. As Saudi Arabia supports using technology in language learning and teaching (Alshraideh, 2021), the researcher made use of the technology available in the classroom to conduct this research. The classrooms are equipped with smartboards with a computer system, speakers and free uninterrupted WiFi. As Alwehaibi (2015) and Binmahboob (2020) observed that YouTube is not used much for educational purposes in KSA, the researcher conducted this research using YouTube and obtained positive results. The findings agree with Sheetz (2009) who opined that YouTube contributes to the global education effectively.

The results of the present research support the findings of Alshraideh (2021) and Binmahboob (2020) that the students are positive towards using YouTube videos and improve their listening and speaking skills. The results are also in line with Aoki (2010) that students improve their presentation skills by continuous exposure to YouTube. The present research proves that the more students are exposed to the native speakers' audios and videos, the better they perform in their tests.

The present research is conducted with the Business students. Nevertheless, the findings agree with the results of Alsuraihi et al. (2016) who conducted the research with medical students. In both the researches, the students proved that utilization of YouTube is beneficial to them.

The research findings of Rachmawati (2020) and Rachmijati et al. (2019) are completely in agreement with the present research which proved that YouTube improves speaking and pronunciation skills of students and creates positive attitude in them. The findings are also in line with Wu (2020) who used TED talks in the classrooms that listening comprehension skills of students improve as they watch YouTube videos spoken by native speakers.

The researcher observed that as the students listened to more and more videos, their grammatical accuracy improved gradually. This is evident in their presentations. This finding agrees with Fatehi (2013).

The research of Alobaid (2020) focused on writing skills of students by playing the YouTube videos. The researcher has not focused on writing skills in this study. Nevertheless, the present experiment adds to the improvement of writing skills of students as an additional benefit. Similarly, the present research helped in improving the content learning of students (Alwehaibi, 2015). This is evident from the presentations of the experimental students. In the first presentation, the content of the talk was not up to the mark. But the posttest content was considerably appreciable. This is another benefit of watching YouTube videos.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher played the YouTube videos only in the classrooms. If students watch them even outside the classroom, the results could have been still better. The research took place only in the College of Business Administration, Al Kharj. The researchers can carry out this research in various other colleges in and outside the university to support and confirm the results of the experiment.

CONCLUSION

The Business students of Saudi Arabia experience EFL context where they have no opportunity to listen or speak English language. Sending all the students to England or America to learn English is impractical. Therefore, the researcher chose the YouTube videos as a remedy to solve these problems. Playing the videos in classrooms spoken by native speakers gives an opportunity to students to listen to the British accent again and again and comprehend them. This activity helps them understand the audio tracks of listening and speaking skills which are spoken by the native speakers. This experiment also solves the problems like mother tongue influence, not understanding the full contents, forgetting the information as they listen, and the fear of not understanding the audios. The experiment helped students in listening comprehension and expressing themselves better in oral presentations.

The research question whether students improve listening and speaking skills through YouTube obtained positive results as the experimental group students acquired better grades in their posttest. The students acquired fluency in their speeches and improved their listening comprehension abilities in the aspects of listening for specific information and listening for general information.

The research concludes that playing YouTube videos spoken by native speakers improve the listening and speaking skills of Saudi EFL business graduate students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Grading Matrix for Presentations

Criteria	Marks		
	1	0.5	0
Content	Excellent: knowledgeable, substantive, relevant to chosen topic	Average: limited knowledge of subject, little substance, inadequate development of topic.	Poor: does not show knowledge of subject, non-substantive, not pertinent, or not enough to evaluate.
Duration	Excellent: More than 3 minutes	Average: less than 2 minutes	Poor: less than a minute
Body Language	Excellent: body language is positive, thorough movements, make necessary gestures	Average: body language is ok, few movements, few gestures	Poor: poor body language, no movements, no gestures
Eye Contact	Excellent: Proper eye contact	Average: occasional no eye contact	Poor: no eye contact
Fluency	Excellent: Fluent enough	Average: Tries hard to speak but fragmentally	Poor: does not communicate, not enough to evaluate.
Language	Excellent: sophisticated language without mistakes	Average: few language errors	Poor: makes many mistakes
Grammatical Accuracy	Excellent: make very few grammatical mistakes	Average: tense errors and prepositional errors, often get confused	Poor: frequent errors of agreement in number and gender, poor pronunciation

Appendix B**Paired Samples Test**

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Control pretest – Control posttest	-.52381	.86216	.13303	.79248	-.25514	3.937	41	.000
	Experimental pretest – Experimental posttest	2.52381	1.08736	.16778	2.86265	2.18497	15.042	41	.000