

The Use of YouTube Videos to Improve Pronunciation among Iraqi Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study seeks to explore the effectiveness of using YouTube videos in improving the English pronunciation of English learners at the secondary level in Iraq. One of the main components of communicative competence is pronunciation but in EFL classrooms it is usually neglected because of the emphasis on grammar, lexis and written exams. This study utilized a quasi-experimental pre-intervention/post-intervention control-group design. The sample was made up of 50 Iraqi secondary school students from Al- Qadisiyah Governorate: an experimental group (n = 25) taught selected pronunciation YouTube videos and a control group (n = 25) taught through traditional pronunciation instruction. It was a pronunciation test designed by the researcher and focusing on segmental sound phonemes such as vowels, stress, and intonation. The results showed that the experimental group had a higher performance than the control group on all aspects of pronunciation: consonants (90% vs. 70%), vowels (85% vs. 60%), and stress and intonation (80% vs. 65%).

Keywords: YouTube videos; pronunciation; Iraqi EFL learners; secondary school students; multimedia learning; pronunciation instruction.

سين النطق لدى طلبة المدارس الثانوية العراقيين

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ملخص

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف فعالية استخدام مقاطع فيديو يوتيوب في تحسين نطق اللغة الإنجليزية لدى متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المرحلة الثانوية في العراق. يُعد النطق أحد المكونات الرئيسية للكفاءة التواصلية، إلا أنه غالبًا ما يُهمل في فصول تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL) بسبب التركيز على القواعد النحوية والمفردات والامتحانات التحريرية. وقد استخدمت هذه الدراسة تصميمًا شبه تجريبيًا يتضمن مجموعة مراقبة قبل التدخل/بعد التدخل. تألفت العينة من ٥٠ طالبًا عراقيًا في المرحلة الثانوية من محافظة القضيبيّة: مجموعة تجريبية (n = 25) تم تدريسها باستخدام مقاطع فيديو مختارة من يوتيوب عن النطق، ومجموعة مراقبة (n = 25) تم تدريسها من خلال طرق تعليم النطق التقليدية. كان الاختبار عبارة عن اختبار نطق صممه الباحث وركز على الفونيمات الصوتية المقطعية مثل الحروف المتحركة والتشديد والنغمة. وأظهرت النتائج أن المجموعة التجريبية حققت أداءً أعلى من المجموعة الضابطة في جميع جوانب النطق: الحروف الساكنة (٩٠٪ مقابل ٧٠٪)، وحروف العلة (٨٥٪ مقابل ٦٠٪)، والتشديد والنغمة (٨٠٪ مقابل ٦٥٪). كما أشار اختبار تي (t-test) إلى تحسن ذي دلالة إحصائية في أداء الطلاب الأفضل في المجموعة التجريبية. الكلمات المفتاحية: مقاطع فيديو يوتيوب؛ النطق؛ متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقيون؛ طلاب المدارس الثانوية؛ التعلم متعدد الوسائط؛ تعليم النطق.

Section One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In modern retraining for English teaching this is where technology based coaching comes in, in the form of overseas language training. Unlike traditional coursebooks, digital resources can provide exposure to EFL learners that is in some ways unique. Out of those resources, YouTube has been especially important due to free samples of real spoken English, pronunciation hands on, interviews, songs, movies, and tutorials by experienced teachers. This source of material can also enable listening and speaking development in situations where learners have little access to English speakers (Watkins & Wilkins 2011).

Pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence. Besides correctly producing fitur–fitur which segmental (individual vowels and consonants), prosody also concerns with fitur–fitur suprasegmental as stress, rhythm and intonation. As learners have enough vocabulary and grammar, mispronunciation leads to incomprehensibility and interruption of successful communication (Derwing & Munro, 2005, 2015).

YouTube has a very visual interface and an audio interface which can help close the gap. It enables the learner to hear model pronunciation and to see mouth movement, visual context, and facial expression as well. This multimodal characteristic relates to the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2001, 2009) where it has been shown that people learn and retain better when information is presented in both visual and verbal channels. The most useful course for this combination of sound and image is in working on pronunciation, as students can listen, imitate, stop, rewind, and repeat at their own pace.

1.2 Problem of the Study

While students have access to most digital media, most Iraqi secondary schools still use traditional teacher–centred approaches to pronunciation teaching. If people learn it, they do so through repetition and reading aloud and textbook drills, and they have almost no contact with the actual spoken English. As a result, they frequently find it difficult to produce certain English sounds correctly, to hear the differences in vowel contrasts, to use correct word stress or to use the right intonation patterns. The study problem is that whether classroom practice alone had significant effect on learning non–native level English production of Iraqi secondary school students as pronounced in the instructional event when supported by YouTube videos prepared to be use in a structured way. It is also attempting to find out at what pronunciation features this

improvement is the clearest after exposure to the YouTube-based pronunciation input.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How to measure the impact of YouTube on the development of the English pronunciation of Iraqi secondary school students?
2. What are areas of pronunciation feature consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation that significantly improved after the use of YouTube videos?

1.4 Aims of the Study

1. There are the objective of the study is to investigate students English pronunciation performance under the Effect of YouTube Videos.
2. To pinpoint the pronunciation features most affected by YouTube-based pronunciation teaching.
3. To Give Practical Suggestions To Use YouTube Videos In Teaching Pronunciation In Iraqi EFL Classes.

1.5 Hypotheses of the Study

1. The results of learning through YouTube videos are not statistically different from those using traditional methods based on students' pronunciation performance.
2. The experimental group is the group of students that have been taught by watching YouTube to pronounce more effectively than the control group who have been taught using traditional means..

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is important since it addresses to the issue of technology-enhanced pronunciation instruction in the Iraqi EFL context. The results may validate the use of YouTube videos as alternative pronunciation models for teachers to draw on in classes that have little access to native speakers. Curriculum designers at the English language level may also benefit from the study as it highlights the importance of the use of digital and audio-visual pronunciation resources.

1.7 Limits of the Study

The present study is limited to a number of 50 Secondary school students in Al- Qadisiyah Governorate for the academic year 2025–2026. It only target pronunciation skills, and it is not investigating other areas like reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary. The results are additionally constrained by the length of the treatment, the choice of videos, students' internet prestige, and the supply of abstracted as opposed to uncooked person take a look at data.

Section Two: Literature Review

2.1 Pronunciation in EFL Learning

As pronunciation is an indispensable part of oral communication, it also becomes the one-of-the-most difficult skill while learning English as a foreign language. Whether segmental features (consonants and vowels) or suprasegmental features (stress, rhythm and intonation) According to Derwing and Munro (2005), intelligibility matters more than nativelike accent; pronunciation that enables listeners to understand what learners are really trying to say is what learners need. Thus, the goal of pronunciation instruction should be intelligibility and communicative success rather than a single norm to be imitated.

In some EFL contexts, pronunciation has been historically overlooked as, given the constraints of time and the empirical difficulty to improve pronunciation within boundaries of limited class time, some teachers feel untrained in this area and may feel ill-equipped to put such experimentation into practice. Considering the regular shortcomings in speaking content Morley (1991) contends pronunciation is indeed an integral aspect of communicative language teaching. In the same vein, Fraser (2001) observes how explicit and pedagogical training of pronunciation can help students take part in oral communication.

2.2 Technology and Multimedia in Language Learning

Language learning with the help of technology has become a new big area in applied linguistics. As per the Literature (2016), CALL and MALL provides learners flexible access to authentic input (e.g. text, video, audio), interactive materials and opportunities for independent practice. As Levy and Hubbard (2005) state with respect to CALL, “The advent of computer–assisted language learning significantly widens the range and quantity of, exposure to TL (target language) with which learners have access. Kukulska–Hulm and Shield (2008) take a similar viewpoint regarding the significance of mobile devices as a means of learning outside of the classroom.

Pronunciation is particularly aligned with multimedia learning since it allows an integration between auditory and visual data. Mayer (2001, 2009) argues that learning is enhanced when people learn from words and pictures presented together in a way that makes sense. Videos provide a way to hear how words are pronounced as well as to see articulation and gestures and communicative context and so on, which makes this type of input beneficial in pronunciation teaching. This is also what makes video more effective than a written description of how to produce the sounds.

2.3 YouTube as a Learning Platform

YouTube is among the largest video–sharing site and has turned into an essential tool for formal and informal language learning. Includes basic pronunciation, lectures, interviews, songs, dialogues, and teacher–made classes. For example, Hafner and Miller (2011) demonstrate how projects involving video can promote learner autonomy and engagement. Moreover, according to Snelson (2011), YouTube is an across–discipline educational tool used to deliver accessible, reusable learning resources.

As described in YouTube for Pronunciation Learning YouTube has several advantages for pronunciation learning. Primarily, it exposes learners to authentic and near-authentic spoken English models. Second, it enables listening and imitation from the same sample, which is essential for an accurate pronunciation. Thirdly, it gives visual feedback like mouth-movement and facial expression. A fourth point is that it allows students to practise in between classes. Such features highlight the value of YouTube in EFL settings where learners might otherwise experience minimal opportunities for exposure to spoken English (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011; Wagner, 2010).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is primarily based on the theory of multimedia learning cognition and the theory of learner autonomy. Mayer's multimedia theory articulates how YouTube videos might support pronunciation: students engage with the spoken pronunciation through the auditory channel, and the visual articulation through the visual channel. This helps learners combine the two channels, allowing for the construction of a stronger mental model of sound production.

One more reason to use Youtube is Youtube enables pacing practice, this benefits the learners autonomy theory. In the video activity, students select the videos, replay them, pause and practice pronouncing after classes. Autonomy, however, is not an absence of teacher guidance. YouTube, a more formalized teaching support method, blended by the teacher selecting appropriate clips and tying them to the pronunciation tasks in the current study.

Section Three: Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control-group design. Intact classes are usually common in-school research where full random assignment may not be practical so it is an appropriate design. The

study divided participants into two groups: one experiment group was given pronunciation instruction through YouTube videos and another served as a control and received traditional pronunciation instruction..

3.2 Variables of the Study

The independent variable was whether or not YouTube videos were incorporated in pronunciation instruction. The students' production of English consonants, vowels, stress and intonation was the dependent variable, or measure of outcome.

3.3 Population and Sample

Participants in the current study were Iraqi secondary school students. The sample of the study consisted of (50) students from Al-Shaheed Sadiq Secondary School for Boys located in Al- Qadisiyah Governorate. Participants were two intact groups of students which included 25 students in experimental and 25 students in control group. Both groups were matched in terms of their educational background, age range, and overall experience in learning English.

Table 3.1: Distribution of the Sample

Group	Instructional Method	Number of Students
Experimental group	YouTube-supported pronunciation instruction	25
Control group	Traditional pronunciation instruction	25
Total	---	50

3.4 Research Instrument

Researchers designed the instrument for the main. The test evaluated the students' pronunciation of specific English consonants and vowels as well as intonation and stress patterns. It was given as pre-test before and post-test after the treatment. Since pronunciation performance is a spoken skill that could not only be assessed with written answers, students were evaluated through oral production tasks. The pronunciation test was aimed at testing areas in which Iraqi EFL learners are typically not proficient, i.e., the contrasts between voiceless

and voiced pairs of consonants (e.g., /p/ and /b/), some vowel contrasts, word stress and sentence intonation. The scoring system in this test was based on accuracy and understandability. EFL experts reviewed the scoring procedure for content validity.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Test items and scoring criteria were presented to specialists in English language teaching and applied linguistics to establish validity. The functionality of the test was redefined using their comments, and it was checked whether the test could measure pronunciation features that actually correspond to the aims of the study. The scoring criteria were kept constant for the same pronunciation and the reviewing of performance by raters ensured reliability. Nevertheless, subsequent research should describe the exact reliability coefficient as well as inter-rater agreement value as a means of bolstering the statistical rigor of the instrument.

3.6 Instructional Treatment

The participants were assigned to the experimental group taught pronunciation through YouTube videos on English sounds, vowels, stress and intonation. The videos were chosen based on clear sound, suitable for students level, relevant to target pronunciation features, and presented visual articulatory cues. It included listening, and repetition imitating, practice guided by the teacher and oral production tasks.

The control group received traditional instruction of the same areas of pronunciation through teacher explanation, textbook reading, repetition, and oral drills, but systematically did not use any YouTube videos. Instruction to both groups occurred over the same general period to mitigate the potential attribution of differences to time on task.

3.7 Procedures of the Study

Both groups were given a pre-test to determine their pre-test pronunciation performance.

The experimental group was taught pronunciation supported by YouTube, whereas the control group had traditional instruction.

It comprised the organization of consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation.

At the end of the instructional period, a post-test was given to both groups.

The outcomes of this analysis have been both descriptively and inferentially analyzed using percentages and t-test values.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data were analysed through the use of descriptive statistics as in percentages of correct pronunciation performance. Moreover, t-test procedures were used to compare changes in mean performance between pre-test and post-test and to determine performance differences between experimental and control groups. As much of the data are summary, interpretive attention is given to percentages in some cases and t-test significance levels in others. Journal publication would be strengthened by data in the form of raw scores, standard deviations, confidence intervals, and effect sizes.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The study was guided by the basic ethical principles of educational research. In addition, participation was limited to classroom learning experiences; student identities were not able to be traced; and results were combined to form an overall level of success. Teachers picked videos that were both age- suitable and instructionally relevant.

Section Four: Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, this analysis is presented of the pronunciation test results. It aims to investigate whether pronunciation performance of students who were taught pronunciation through YouTube-supported instruction was better than those who were taught pronunciation using

traditional assistance. The analysis centers on the key pronunciation target areas examined in the study.

4.2 Baseline Diagnostic Results

Before the instructional treatment, data from the first diagnostic test revealed that students had poor pronunciation performance. The rate of correct responses to the five diagnostic items was 20% while the rate of incorrect responses was 80%. This regression essentially establishes a pronunciation learning problem that warrants the need for instructional intervention.

Table 4.1: Diagnostic Pronunciation Accuracy Before Treatment

Question	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers
1	16%	84%
2	24%	76%
3	10%	90%
4	30%	70%
5	20%	80%
Total average	20%	80%

These baseline numbers are low because initially, students had trouble producing or spotting the target pronunciation features. The worst was in Question 3, where only 10% of answers were correct. It indicates that explicit and repeated practice on some pronunciation features, especially challenging segmental contrasts or suprasegmental patterns was necessary.

4.3 Post-Test Results by Pronunciation Feature

The results show that the experimental group outperformed the control group on all pronunciation categories on the post-test, following the completion of the instructional period. Results show that participants performed the best in consonant pronunciation, before vowel pronunciation, then stress and intonation.

Table 4.2: Comparison of Post-Test Pronunciation Results Between Groups

Group	Correct Pronunciation of Consonants	Correct Pronunciation of Vowels	Stress and Intonation
Experimental group	90%	85%	80%
Control group	70%	60%	65%
Difference	+20 percentage points	+25 percentage points	+15 percentage points

As shown in Table 4.2, by the responsive way of teaching supported by YouTube led to better pronunciation performance. The single biggest difference was in the pronunciation of vowels, where their experimental group had an advantage of 25 percentage points. You also get much better with the consonant, 20 percentage improvement for consonant pronunciation. A slightly lower but still notable difference of 15 percentage points was observed for stress and intonation.

4.4 Statistical Significance

T-test procedures were conducted to examine the statistical significance of both the improvement in the experimental group and the difference between groups. The observed values for the reviewed subtests show improvement is robust after treatment, and at post-test, the experimental group outperformed controls significantly.

Table 4.3: Summary of Reported t-Test Results

Comparison	Test Statistic	Significance Level	Interpretation
Experimental group: pre-test vs. post-test	$t = 3.20$	$p < .05$	Significant improvement after YouTube-supported instruction
Experimental vs. control group: post-test	$t = 6.50$	$p < .01$	Significant difference in favor of the experimental group

These findings lend support to the alternative hypothesis that watching YouTube videos makes a difference in terms of better pronunciation performance among students. The post-tests comparison reveals that the experimental group far benefited from exposure to audio-visual pronunciation models as opposed to the control group that did not.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The results reveals that YouTube video had a good impact on Iraqi Lyceum students English pronunciation. For consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation, the results show that the experimental group performed better compared to the control group. The these results are in line with the Multimedia Learning theory positing that learners benefit when information is presented concurrently through the auditory and visual channels (Mayer, 2001, 2009). Your Data mainly goes until October 2023In pronunciation learning, too, the target sound & its articulation help the learners do a closer imitation.

As far as the EFL context is concerned, an improvement in the consonant production in the Iraqi EFL is especially important. One example would be the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/, which lacks an Arabic feature—specifically, students have difficulty pronouncing this sound in a native way [10]. The repetition of a few pronunciation videos might help students pay attention to sounds they once mixed up, perhaps /p/ & /b/, & help them master these sounds. This affirms the belief that real audio-visual content can aid learners in overcoming pronunciation problems that textbooks alone cannot remedy.

Stress and intonation also improved, but the improvement was smaller than that seen in consonants and vowels. Perhaps suprasegmental features demand more exposure and communicative experience. However, the better performance of the experimental group suggests that YouTube videos in the classroom can raise students' awareness of rhythm, stress placement, and intonation patterns.

The results also bolster YouTube as a medium promoting learner autonomy. Videos can be paused, replayed, slowed down, and mimicked by students away from the classroom. Teacher-centred measures alone cannot meet the repeated practice required. But this should not be seen as a finding that YouTube can take the place of the teacher. Instead, YouTube works as an extraordinarily resource with pronunciation lessons when integrated into an established curriculum.

Section Five: Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions

5.1 Conclusions

This study aimed to investigate how useful YouTube videos are to better the English pronunciation of Iraqi secondary school pupils. The study found the experimental group had higher post-test scores than learners who received traditional pronunciation instruction. The experimental group received higher scores for consonants, vowels, stress, and intonation, which suggests that pronunciation may be supported in both segmental and suprasegmental features when they are combined with some interactive elements with visual aids.

The results indicated that YouTube offers learners authentic and repeated audio-visual input. This input assists learners to hear the sounds produced correctly, look at how they are articulated and also to copy model speakers and practise on their own. In countries like Iraq where those students may not have much contact with a native or competent speaker of English, YouTube may help provide a ready source of pronunciation models to those students.

The results of the research show that using YouTube as a supporting tool in teaching pronunciation is possible, but lessons like this require teacher support, requiring teachers to select videos relevant to the lesson, tasks suitable for the context and provide constructive feedback. Otherwise, students will either passively watch videos, or pick materials that are not matched to their level.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Selected YouTube pronunciation video should be supplemented into pronunciation lessons on English teachers.
2. It is their job to guide students in the right channels and videos according to their level of proficiency and learning needs.
3. Teaching pronunciation need both segmental features, such as consonants and vowels, and suprasegmental features, such as stress and intonation.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

1. Further research should explore the impact of YouTube clips on pronunciation retention and over a longer period.
2. Researchers might contrast YouTube with other types of digital tools, such as pronunciation apps, speech recognition software, and learning management systems.
3. Future research should explore the effects of YouTube on speaking fluency, listening comprehension and learner motivation.

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