



POLYTECHNIC STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF YOUTUBE USAGE IN THE ENGLISH ORAL COMMUNICATION CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

A new creative classroom technique to promote learning environment in English oral communication lesson is important. Integrating and adopting multimedia and web technologies can motivate and engage the new generation learners. YouTube usage in the English oral communication classroom is one of the strategies which will have more flexible, effective instructional materials to the learners in making the students involve in active communication. The inclusion of multimedia technologies into the classroom has changed the educational landscape. It had introduced important changes in the educational system and impact the way learners communicate information with each other. Hence, the purpose of this paper was to investigate students perceptions of YouTube as an effective teaching tool as to prompt oral communication in classrooms. A set of questionnaire was distributed to 120 students regarding their perceptions of YouTube as a learning tool and a face to face interview was carried out with 12 students. The results of this study show that students have positive attitudes towards this learning environment using YouTube.

Keywords: Academic YouTube: Learning tool, Technology, Oral communication classroom

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the major goals and important outcomes in English oral communication lesson is for the students to communicate effectively. It is often difficult for educators to find suitable resource materials, mainly focusing on visual material which can aid understanding of the subject matter and simultaneously learning on the use of target language as in English in higher education classroom. Educators in higher institutions are preparing the students who will be going to the working world where the employers are looking for candidates who are furnish with good English oral communication skills. Employability skills of fresh graduates have constantly received considerable attention in the local media. Lack of English language proficiency has often been cited as one of the major factors contributing to graduate unemployment (Sharif, R. 2005). Therefore, there is a need to look into the teaching and learning of oral communication skills to promote effective strategies to be used in the classroom. The aim of this paper is to promote the use of technologies such as the online materials to initiate speaking in the class.

The new technologies today provide a lot of opportunities to enhance the quality of teaching and learning such as the use of internet and the development of web 2.0 which emphasizes the social networking which allows online conversation to occur and the use of extensive online materials. This indirectly will improve the quality of the student's individual interaction with

learning materials (Taylor, 1995). YouTube is an internet application in which educators can use as teaching materials which can be incorporated in oral communication lessons. There are millions of videos and comments being uploaded each day onto this application. Using YouTube is an innovative move to incorporate teaching using video. According to Educause (2006), YouTube is a fast-paced learning style of younger learners that frequently use the Internet. As a strategy that incorporates technology, it can motivate and engage students in active learning. By using a variety of instructional methods and learning activities in the classroom or via distance education courses, an enriched learning environment is created for the student (Fill & Ottewill, 2006).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

YouTube is an amusement and social communication website. The site can be used as a resource for teaching and learning activity in English oral communication classroom. The benefits of web-based information as a source for teaching material in English lessons allows students and educators to observe and provide critique in various ways of the video watched on YouTube. It can also provide 'a compelling and immersive educational experience' (Fill & Ottewill, 2006). In this way it can arouse the students' attention and interest to speak in the class and present 'real-life' problems for them to discuss (Fill & Ottewill, 2006). It can also enhance and capture students' attention, motivate interest, and provide relevance to the subject area (Hobbs, R. 1998).

Laurillard's 'conversation' model encourages educators to consider 'media for purpose', to do detail, compliment and enrich and reinforce existing components of teaching (Fill & Ottewill, 2006). As to this, using YouTube will be able to embrace the English oral communication activities such as discussion, interaction, adaptation and reflection which are seen necessary for teaching and learning (Fill & Ottewill, 2006). YouTube as learning materials can create communication between learners, peers and tutors. Research has suggested that there are restrictions to the amount of information that students can concentrate to and process effectively. This has been underpinned by the great idea of web as a platform (Anderson, 2007). The present age of the Web such as using YouTube, is all about two-way communication, collaboration and incorporating YouTube in the classroom is an ideal place to utilize these technologies (Ishak, 2002). YouTube can change students from passive to active learners (Sharif, 2005). Students need to be engaged actively in processing information, to transmit it from short-term memory to long-term memory, and recall of information is often facilitated when the learned material is encoded in some ways (Giffords, 2009). To ensure that the materials used in the classroom are meaningful, the use of YouTube can be a good strategy to initiate communication between the students and the content which is facilitated by the encoding process.

The youth today use technology such as the Internet more than any other methods as a medium of communication and socialization (Mishna et al., 2009). Due to that reality, it would make the learning more interesting when the educator brings in YouTube into the classroom to suit their preferences. Recent studies have shown that communication technology is increasing exponentially with each generation (Mishna et al., 2009). In fact, as technological advancements are made, the young generation becomes more interested to different approaches of learning such as incorporating the use of YouTube videos to initiate oral communication.

There are theories which have surfaced regarding the impact of social networking. It has been found that input in social network sites provides a number of potential benefits for youngsters. Hinduja and Patchin (2008) posit the idea that bringing in YouTube into the classroom as a teaching material to prompt speaking is an effective way to provide means in which to make learning more meaningful. Using YouTube can prompt in giving differing viewpoints, express thoughts and feelings in a healthy way, and practice critical thinking skills (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). The use of YouTube provides a virtual stimulus to share thoughts and objects with personal meaning, such as in pictures and stories (Hinduja & Patchin, 2008). Also, it is believed that students may feel empowered when using social networking to establish relationships that provide information, mutual assistance, and support (Giffords, 2009). The above discussion lends it hands to the benefits of using YouTube in oral communication classroom especially in higher institution which focus is given for students to practice their social skills.

3. METHODOLOGY

The data was gathered quantitatively and qualitatively. A survey was carried out using the questionnaire consisting of closed ended questions which investigated the respondents' perceptions using the You Tube in the classroom. A total of 120 students who signed up for the English oral communication two courses at a Polytechnic are the respondents to the survey. The qualitative data was collected by face to face interview with 12 respondents who participated in the activity. There were required to give feedback on how the You tube had increased their confidence to speak to them after watching the You tube. The participants were semester three students in the second year of their diploma course from the Commerce department. These were students with average grade of D in their SijilPelajaran Malaysia (SPM) result in English paper. There are 42 male and 78 female students.

The lesson carried out for this research purpose was a topic on process and services. The students were required to react on an interactive online You Tube played in the class as an activity to prompt the students to speak. The students are required to respond to the You Tube orally. They are required to explain what the video is about and they are to provide their opinions about the services given at the hotel. At the end of the lesson the students were given a set of questionnaire on their perceptions on the use of the You Tube for that particular lesson.

The questionnaires made use of the Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS 16.0 and resulted in a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.819, which is a satisfactory score for reliability.

4. DISCUSSIONS

Respondents were asked about their enjoyment in learning using YouTube in the classroom in reference to the oral presentation specifically. It can be seen that 92.2% of the students strongly agreed that they have enjoyed the lesson. In terms of the relevance of the YouTube usage to the learning process, majority of respondents (84%) agreed that after watching the YouTube videos they were more confident and were able to respond to the task given. This can be supported by their comments " I was able to speak with the points given in the You Tube shown. It made me understand clearly about the services in a hotel. This gives me confident to use the same points and speak." In addition, they added that using You Tube supported them in picking words from the Video. " I always have problem with my vocabulary. I cannot find right words to speak, but after the viewing of You Tube section I use the words used in the video. I feel confident of my sentences because of my words are right". This feedback actually proves that the students' level of confidence in speaking is being increased. The You Tube helps them to get new points to speak and helps them in using suitable vocabularies.

From the analysis, it can be seen that 72% agreed and 20% strongly agreed that You Tube had supported them in speaking in terms of giving view points on the services provided by the hotel. This proves that the strategy of using You Tube in the class is effective as it supports Palmer, Graham, & Elliot (2005) claims that Internet programs seem to have the advantage of developing quickly and delivering timely information and support learning.

According to the results, majority of the students 99.1% responded by indicating that You Tube assisted their creative thinking skills when responding to the oral communication task and 79.9% stated You Tube assignment enhanced their learning process. Students gave positive responses on carrying out the group discussion after viewing the You Tube. 82.3% of the respondents agreed to the statement. As educators, there is a need to regard the use of You Tube as a tool in oral communication lessons and they must strongly consider what students' think and feel about these tools in their lessons. Frey and Birnbaum (2002) found that students considered teachers who used technology in their courses as more organized than those who did not use it.

Respondents were asked if You Tube allowed them to understand the topic better and the findings shows that 72% of the respondents strongly agreed and 12% agreed. Therefore, using You Tube as a purposeful media in the classroom, as a teaching and learning strategy, could enhance or support the students understanding of the lesson. Green & Tanner (2005) highlights that visuals,

photographs, video clips, charts and tables are learners' preference. Responding to the question on if they want other lessons to be incorporated with You Tube, 100% of the students agreed the lesson should be incorporated with You Tube. This proves that the lesson using You Tube were effective.

Introducing YouTube video-clips in the classroom as a tool in oral communication lesson which represents the real-life issues such as service in the hotel, the students responded 61% agreed and 20% strongly agreed. This indicates that there was a learning impact of viewing the video-clips during the lesson. It can be seen that in a majority of cases the impact was noted over 60% agreed and strongly agreed. Students showed positive attitudes towards the incorporation of You Tube in their learning. It allows students to take control of their oral presentation after viewing the You Tube.

5. CONCLUSION

Teaching and learning can be enhanced through creativity and innovation. Research has shown that the traditional approach to teaching is of limited effectiveness [10]. This study showed that YouTube can be a practical, innovative teaching material to enhance the students to perform their oral presentation better. It is important to bring in technologies into the classroom. The potential and effectiveness of this You Tube in classroom can result to active classroom participation of the students in their oral communication lessons. The results of this study reveal that teaching English oral communication using YouTube has been highly rate by the students. They feel that it is easy to respond to the task given. Additionally, they feel that YouTube enhances their learning and they want educators to use it in their other lessons as well. Thus, using YouTube videos in teaching the classroom may have a positive impact on what students' learn. Even though more research needs to be carried out in different lessons regarding the use of YouTube videos, this study implies that using YouTube in the classroom is a positive idea to be adopted. However, there is a need to be aware on the suitability of You Tube videos chosen to fit the educational purposes. They need to be screened in advance to ensure the reliability and relevancy of the videos to be used in classroom.

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