



THE IMPACT OF INCORPORATING YOUTUBE VIDEOS TO TEACH PREPOSITIONS TO GRADE 11 ESL STUDENTS IN A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL

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This action research investigates the impact of incorporating YouTube videos when teaching prepositions to a class of thirty grade eleven students in a government school, in the Rathnapura district of Sri Lanka. While prepositions are a fundamental aspect of grammar, they can prove challenging to grasp in practical communication. Therefore, this research explores how integrating YouTube videos can enhance understanding of prepositions and students' ability to use them. This research has utilized a mixed-method approach, comprising qualitative and quantitative data collection methods. A focus group discussion was conducted for the needs analysis, and classroom observation throughout the intervention was used as the qualitative aspect of the study. Concerning the quantitative front, a pretest and a post-test were used to measure and analyze the students' comprehension levels before and after the intervention. The Likert scale questionnaire used after the post-test offers insights into students' perceptions, experiences, and attitudes toward the effectiveness of using YouTube videos during the teaching-learning process. The research findings suggest a substantial positive impact of incorporating YouTube videos when teaching prepositions. The findings indicate a positive effect on comprehension levels, engagement, and retention by integrating YouTube videos on prepositions into the lessons. The sample was eager to watch the videos during the teaching-learning process and expressed that the selected videos helped them clarify confusion and doubts about certain prepositions. In addition, the post-test results demonstrate a significant improvement in students' level of understanding of prepositions with exposure to YouTube videos. In the meantime, this research encounters some limitations, such as internet connectivity issues and time constraints. However, the positive impact on learning outcomes and motivation surpassed the abovementioned challenges. In essence, integrating YouTube videos on prepositions into different phases of lesson plans appears to be an encouraging approach to enrich the knowledge of prepositions of the target sample. The research provides notable insights into the effectiveness of multimedia resources in enhancing language learning experiences, especially for learners who do not have enough English language exposure. The research recommends that educators and policymakers consider innovative teaching methods, such as multimedia resources, to improve language learning outcomes.

Keywords: YouTube videos, prepositions, multimedia learning

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a multifaceted construct essential for communication and comprehension within human societies. Currently, English has achieved a global status, transcending geographical boundaries. In education, English proficiency opens several international opportunities, enhancing learning experiences and broadening intellectual horizons. Additionally, English mastery boosts employability due to its extensive use in global business, technology, and innovation.

In Sri Lanka, English functions as a crucial 'link language' or lingua franca, significantly influencing social mobility and serving as a medium of communication in the economy, education, and politics. The 1980s marked the increasing prominence of English in Sri Lankan education, with its compulsory inclusion in the General Certificate of Ordinary Level and introduction of the General English course for Advanced Level students in 1998 (Navaz, 2021; Wijesinha, 2003).

Although the students of government schools start to learn English from grade three, many Sri Lankan students perceive English as a challenging subject, lacking interest and confidence. Traditional teaching methods fail to dispel these myths, and students have limited exposure to English outside the classroom. Many students excel in more challenging subjects like science and mathematics but struggle with English. Grammar, particularly when using prepositions, is a significant hurdle due to its complexity and contextual variability.

The teaching-learning process becomes monotonous when teaching becomes limited to textbooks alone (Mathew & Alidmat, 2013). To address this, the potential of audio-visual aids, specifically YouTube videos, was explored. YouTube can be considered a user-friendly platform, that offers accessible and engaging content that can enhance informal language acquisition. Although the school possesses digital resources like smart boards, they are underutilized in the school context

Thus, this research investigated the role of YouTube videos in teaching prepositions for grade 11 students in an ESL classroom in a government school in the Ratnapura district by attempting to answer the following research questions.

1. How does integrating YouTube videos in grade 11 ESL classrooms have an impact on students' learning of prepositions?
2. What are the perceptions of grade 11 students regarding the incorporation of YouTube videos as a learning aid for prepositions?

By answering these questions, the researcher expects to achieve the following objectives.

- To assess the effectiveness of using YouTube videos as a learning aid to teach prepositions for grade eleven ESL students.
- To find out the perceptions of eleventh-grade students regarding the impact of incorporating YouTube videos as a learning aid to learn prepositions.

Therefore, the study seeks to enhance the teaching and learning of English prepositions, moving beyond traditional methods and embracing digital tools to foster a more effective and engaging learning environment.



METHODOLOGY

Intervention - An initial focus group discussion revealed the students' difficulties and their preferences for learning tools, followed by a pre-test to establish their baseline understanding.

The intervention consisted of ten lessons, each incorporating YouTube videos at various stages of learning; warm-up, presentation, practice, and production. Videos introduced prepositions of place, time, and direction through different multimedia approaches: animated videos for movement, instructional videos, and songs for prepositions of time. For instance, on the first day, a video on prepositions of place was followed by group activities, allowing students to engage interactively with the content. The intervention: phase followed by a post-test indicated the progress of the students in terms of the focus of the intervention.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical approval was obtained from the Open University of Sri Lanka Ethics Board. Consent was also obtained from the school principal, sectional head, class teacher, parents, and students. Confidentiality of student identities and performance was maintained, and the research was conducted objectively and without bias.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Focus Group Discussion - During the focus group discussion, the researcher posed ten pre-structured questions categorized into three main criteria. The first set of questions addressed general learning preferences, with the majority of the students expressing a desire for interactive activities and videos integrated into their lessons, rather than relying solely on traditional, textbook-based instruction. Questions 2-5 focused on students' experiences with YouTube and online learning, revealing that all students had access to the internet and either a computer or a smartphone. Despite this, only 5 out of the 30 students had previously utilized YouTube for educational purposes, with most reporting that they had watched educational videos on local channels such as Rupavahini's 'Nenasala' and DP Education, and none mentioning engagement with English lessons conducted by native speakers. The final set of questions inquired about specific needs and challenges related to grammar in the ESL classroom, aiming to identify areas of difficulty and tailor the intervention to address these needs effectively. The responses gathered from this discussion were exploited in shaping the research intervention, ensuring it was relevant and targeted the students' actual needs and preferences.

The study employed two quantitative data analysis instruments. They were the pre-test, the post-test, and a Likert-type questionnaire.

The intervention showed a considerable improvement in students' understanding and application of prepositions. Pre-test and post-test marks were compared, revealing marked progress following the incorporation of YouTube videos. This is illustrated in figure 1.

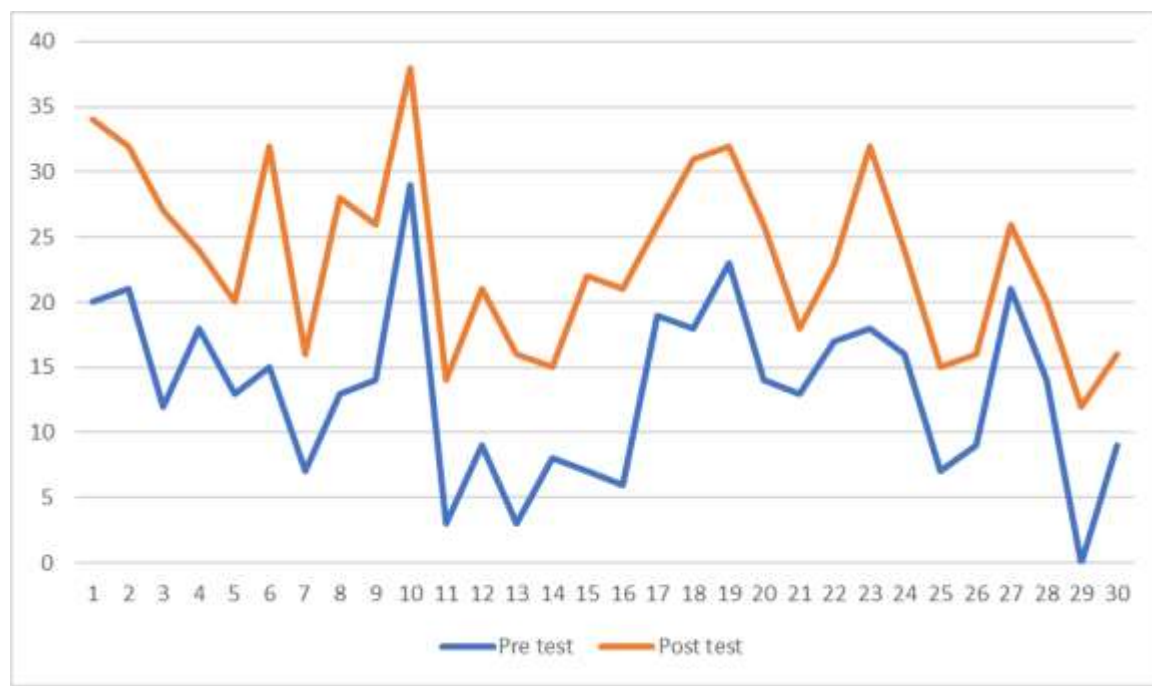


Figure 01- Comparison of the marks between the Pre-test and the Post-test

The line graph above represents the differences in marks obtained by the selected sample of 30 students for pre-tests and post-tests. The horizontal axis shows the total marks out of forty for four tests based on prepositions (place, time, direction/movement, and a mixed exercise). The vertical axis indicates each student's total marks. The significant improvement shown in the post-test marks highlights the positive impact of incorporating YouTube videos as a learning aid for teaching prepositions more effectively.

Although students knew the meanings of prepositions individually, they struggled to use them correctly in sentences because they had limited exposure to textbooks and teacher-written sentences on the board. However, the students were exposed to varied examples in different contexts through YouTube videos, including sentences, dialogues, stories, and songs. This broader exposure facilitated a better understanding and application of prepositions. Therefore, this analysis confirms that incorporating YouTube videos significantly enhanced students' grasp of prepositions, as evidenced by improved test scores

Analysis of Responses to the Questionnaire - The Likert-type questionnaire results indicate a highly favorable response to using YouTube videos for teaching prepositions. Specifically, 57% of students strongly agreed that these videos enhanced their understanding, while 33% agreed, and only 10% remained neutral. A notable 90% of students felt that the videos made lessons more engaging and interesting. The visual content effectively clarified doubts about challenging prepositions like "in," "on," and "at." A strong preference for integrating YouTube into lessons emerged, with 70% strongly agreeing and 30% agreeing. Overall, 83% found learning prepositions more enjoyable through these videos. The responses to the final five questions reinforced this view, with all participants agreeing that YouTube videos enhance interest, 83% strongly agreeing that they make lessons more engaging, and 70% stating they simplify content comprehension. Additionally, 87% recommend using YouTube for grammar instruction, highlighting the positive impact of this tool in ESL learning contexts.



Analysis of Classroom Observation During the Intervention - Throughout the research, active observation revealed that students initially lacked interest and struggled with certain prepositions, often guessing on the pre-test. During the intervention, some students required extra encouragement to engage with the video content. Using an observation checklist, the researcher evaluated aspects such as engagement, comprehension, and classroom environment in a well-equipped smart classroom. Over time, student interest grew; they took notes, participated in discussions, and applied prepositions more accurately. The videos helped students understand and use prepositions in various contexts, fostering better sentence construction and participation in both individual and group tasks. By the post-test, students, especially those who initially struggled, showed marked improvement in their scores, affirming the effectiveness of YouTube videos as an engaging and impactful tool for teaching prepositions.

Effectiveness of the Intervention - Analysis of test scores revealed a significant improvement in students' understanding and application of prepositions following the intervention. Continuous observations throughout the research indicated that students were actively engaged and demonstrated increased confidence in applying prepositions in various contexts during the post-test phase.

The Likert-type questionnaire administered after the intervention showed positive student feedback, with strong agreement on the effectiveness of YouTube videos in enhancing learning. The data highlighted that the students found the videos engaging and beneficial. Further, the findings indicated positive student engagement with the videos which reflected the perceived benefits indicating a strong preference for integrating such multimedia resources into ESL lessons. Overall, the research confirmed that YouTube videos effectively improved students' grasp of prepositions and fostered a more engaging learning environment.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Data analysis from pre-tests, post-tests, questionnaires, and observations indicates that YouTube is an effective tool for teaching prepositions to ESL learners, enhancing engagement and understanding, particularly among less responsive students. YouTube videos provide varied contexts for prepositions, addressing common challenges in their application. However, despite available technology, teachers often hesitate to incorporate it due to strict schedules and exam-focused priorities, limiting practical English learning.

Future research should extend the study duration to at least six months for a comprehensive assessment of YouTube's impact on grammar skills. Incorporating feedback from other teachers on YouTube's effectiveness compared to traditional methods could provide valuable insights. Identifying high-quality YouTube channels for teaching prepositions and encouraging educators to create custom video content may enhance learning outcomes. Promoting the adoption of technological tools among all educators can maximize the potential of YouTube and similar platforms in English language instruction.



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