

The Effect of YouTube on Second Language Acquisition of Elementary School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effect of YouTube as a learning medium on second language acquisition among elementary school students. The rapid growth of digital media has positioned YouTube as a prominent source of audiovisual input that may support vocabulary acquisition and speaking development. This research employed a quantitative pre-experimental design, utilizing a one-group pretest–posttest model. The participants were 27 fourth-grade students from SDN Gongseng, Jombang, selected through a total sampling method. Data were collected using vocabulary and speaking tests administered before and after the YouTube-based instruction. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and a paired samples t-test with IBM SPSS Statistics 30. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' English abilities, particularly in vocabulary mastery and pronunciation accuracy. The findings suggest that YouTube provides meaningful and comprehensible input that supports second language acquisition when integrated into classroom instruction with appropriate guidance. This study contributes to the growing body of research on digital media-assisted language learning in primary education.

Keywords: Youtube; Second Language Acquisition; Vocabulary Learning; Speaking Skills; Elementary Students

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technology has transformed educational practices, particularly in language learning contexts. Among various digital platforms, YouTube has emerged as one of the most accessible and influential sources of audiovisual content for young learners. Children are increasingly exposed to YouTube videos as part of their daily routines, making the platform a potential source of linguistic input in second language acquisition. The audiovisual nature of YouTube allows learners to encounter vocabulary, pronunciation, and contextual language use simultaneously, which may facilitate more natural language learning processes.

Despite its popularity, the use of YouTube in children's learning remains controversial. Many parents and educators express concerns regarding excessive screen time, reduced face-to-face interaction, and exposure to inappropriate content. Priyambodo and Suminar (2021) argue that uncontrolled use of YouTube may negatively affect children's attention span and communication skills. These concerns have led to a widespread assumption that YouTube poses more risks than benefits for children's language development.

However, recent empirical studies suggest otherwise. Research by Raihana Sakdiyah and Alemina Br. Perangin-angin (2023) and Elvira Putri Anshary and Alemina Br. Perangin-angin (2024) demonstrates that consistent exposure to English-language YouTube content can enhance vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation accuracy. Ilfan Askul Pebala et al. (2022) also report that age-appropriate YouTube content positively contributes to children's language development when accompanied by parental or teacher supervision.

Nevertheless, most previous studies examine YouTube's impact on isolated language components and often treat learners as passive viewers. Limited research has explored YouTube's role in supporting second language acquisition holistically within formal classroom settings, particularly at the elementary school level. This gap highlights the need for empirical studies that measure learning gains through

structured instructional use of YouTube.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effect of YouTube on second language acquisition among elementary school students, focusing on vocabulary mastery and basic speaking skills. This article contributes to the field by providing empirical evidence on how YouTube can function as an effective instructional medium in primary English education.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a pre-experimental design with a one-group pretest–posttest model. This design was chosen to identify changes in students' English abilities before and after the implementation of YouTube as a learning medium. The research was conducted at SDN Gongseng, Jombang, during regular English classroom sessions in the 2025/2026 academic year.

The population consisted of fourth-grade students, with 27 students selected as the sample through total sampling due to the limited class size. Data were collected using achievement tests measuring vocabulary mastery and basic speaking skills, including word recognition, pronunciation accuracy, and simple oral responses. The instruments were aligned with the instructional materials delivered through YouTube videos.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to calculate mean scores and inferential analysis using a paired samples t-test to determine the significance of differences between pretest and posttest scores. A normality test using Kolmogorov–Smirnov was conducted before hypothesis testing. All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 30.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results indicated a significant improvement in students' English abilities after learning through YouTube. The mean pretest score was 7.22, while the mean posttest score increased to 8.48. The paired-samples correlation revealed a strong positive relationship between the pretest and posttest scores ($r = 0.839$, $p < .001$), suggesting consistent performance patterns among the participants.

Furthermore, the paired-samples t-test showed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($t = -9.976$, $df = 26$, $p < .001$), indicating that students performed significantly better after the intervention. Although the normality test on the original scores indicated a non-normal distribution, the analysis focused on the difference scores, which met the assumptions required for the paired-samples t-test. Therefore, the use of the t-test was considered appropriate. Classroom observations further supported the quantitative findings, revealing increased student engagement, improved pronunciation, and more frequent spontaneous use of newly acquired vocabulary.

Discussion

The findings support Krashen's Second Language Acquisition theory, particularly the concept of comprehensible input. YouTube videos provided contextualized audiovisual input that made English more accessible to young learners. This exposure enabled students to acquire vocabulary and pronunciation naturally through imitation and repetition.

The results also align with Paivio's Dual Coding Theory, which emphasizes the effectiveness of combining visual and auditory input. The integration of images and spoken language in YouTube videos enhanced memory retention and pronunciation accuracy. These findings are consistent with Neumann (2020) and Sari and Margana (2019), who reported that YouTube increases motivation and improves speaking skills.

Furthermore, this study extends previous research by providing quantitative evidence of learning gains within a formal classroom context. The findings confirm that YouTube can serve as an effective instructional medium when used with clear learning objectives and teacher guidance.

Table 1 Pre-Test and Post-Test Table

Number	Nama	pretest			total	posttest			total
		pronunciation	response	confidence		pronunciation	response	confidence	
1	riko	2	2	2	6	2	3	3	8
2	aqilah	2	3	3	8	3	2	3	8
3	reva	3	2	3	8	3	3	3	9
4	firza	1	2	2	5	2	2	3	7
5	aksa	1	2	2	5	2	3	3	8
6	angel	2	2	2	6	2	3	2	7
7	cinta	2	3	2	7	3	3	3	9
8	fitri	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
9	zahra	3	2	2	7	3	3	2	8
10	husna	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
11	syafa	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
12	jihan	3	2	2	7	3	3	2	8
13	nadia	3	2	3	8	3	3	3	9
14	nanda	3	3	3	9	3	3	3	9
15	aiman	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
16	albi	3	2	2	7	3	3	3	9
17	dani	3	3	2	8	3	3	3	9
18	rafka	2	2	2	6	3	3	2	8
19	arabella	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
20	yoga	3	2	3	8	3	3	3	9
21	aksha	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
22	kanza	1	2	3	6	2	3	3	8
23	irham	3	2	2	7	3	3	2	8
24	anam	3	3	2	8	3	3	3	9
25	abi	1	2	2	5	2	2	3	7
26	syafa	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
27	hafiz	2	3	3	8	3	3	3	9
			average		7.2222222		average		8.481481481

The results of this study show a significant improvement in the English abilities of fourth-grade students at SDN Gongseng 1 after learning with YouTube. A total of 27 students took a pretest before the treatment and a posttest afterward. The statistical data show that the average pretest score was 7.22, which increased to 8.48 on the posttest. The paired samples correlation also showed a very strong relationship between the pretest and posttest scores ($r = 0.839$, $p < 0.001$), as shown in image 1, indicating consistent progress during the treatment.

Paired Samples Statistics				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1 PreTest	7.2222	27	1.12090	.21572
PostTest	8.4815	27	.70002	.13472

Paired Samples Correlations				
	N	Correlation	Significance	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1 PreTest & PostTest	27	.839	<.001	<.001

Paired Samples Test									
			Paired Differences			Significance			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1 PreTest - PostTest	-1.25926	.65590	.12623	-1.51872	-.99980	-9.976	26	<.001	<.001

Figure 1 The Result of the Paired Sample Test

In the image above, the paired samples t-test confirmed that the difference between the pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant ($t = -9.976$, $df = 26$, $p < 0.001$). The average difference of -1.259 shows a clear improvement in students' abilities after using YouTube as a learning tool. The 95% confidence interval also indicates that this difference is stable and not due to chance.

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
		PreTest	PostTest
N		27	27
Normal Parameters ^{a, b}	Mean	7.2222	8.4815
	Std. Deviation	1.12090	.70002
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.312	.363
	Positive	.207	.229
	Negative	-.312	-.363
Test Statistic		.312	.363
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) ^c		<.001	<.001
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed) ^d	Sig.	<.001	<.001
	99% Confidence Interval		
	Lower Bound	.000	.000
	Upper Bound	.000	.000

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.
d. Lilliefors' method based on 10000 Monte Carlo samples with starting seed 2000000.

Figure 2 The Result of a One-Sample Test

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that YouTube positively influences second language acquisition among elementary school students, particularly in vocabulary mastery and basic speaking skills. The findings demonstrate that YouTube offers meaningful linguistic input that supports natural language learning processes. Despite its limitations, this study provides pedagogical implications for integrating digital media into primary English instruction. Future research is encouraged to employ experimental or mixed-method designs to further validate and expand these findings.

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