

# Influences of Watching YouTube on Taiwanese English-major College Students

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## Abstract

This case study aims to explore the influences of watching YouTube on Taiwanese English-major college students. A total of exact one hundred college students from a particular department of Applied Foreign Languages were recruited to fill out a questionnaire designed to investigate their perspectives of using YouTube in their daily life. It was found that more than two thirds of these college students (71%) often listened to English songs on YouTube (M=4.06). The students also took advantage of YouTube to improve their listening comprehension (77%, M=3.97), and speaking skills (62%, M=3.65) in English. Many participants had utilized the resources on YouTube to feel relaxed while studying (82%, M=4.23), to enrich their knowledge about language and culture (68%, M=3.75), and prepare for their oral presentations (65%, M=3.79). Nevertheless, a good number of students indicated that the advertisements on YouTube were quite annoying (74%, M=4.08). The findings of this research can help English teachers as well as other educators to understand the influences of watching YouTube on college students in their daily life and language learning. YouTube is not just an entertainment medium but also a very resourceful website for second language learning.

**Key words:** YouTube, Web 2.0, English-Major College Students

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the computer has played such an important role in language learning that learning through technology has already become “a fact of life” (Chapelle, 2001, p.1). Due to the innovation of high computer technologies such as Web 2.0, students’ learning and studying styles have changed dramatically. They do not just read books to acquire knowledge but also utilize online media such as YouTube to gain information. On YouTube, there are various types of videos such as dramas, news, music, and English lessons. Consequently, modern people, including second language learners, can really take good advantage of this web technology to acquire beneficial knowledge and the latest information.

This paper aims to examine how Taiwanese English-major college students use YouTube in their daily life and language learning. Since YouTube is not only an entertainment site but also an ideal platform where learners of English can improve their language skills. As a result, the investigators hope to find the influences of watching YouTube on a specific group of English-major college students. Do they use YouTube to learn English? Are there any positive or negative effects of watching YouTube on college students? To sum up, this study is guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the features of English learning on YouTube for the college students?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of watching YouTube on college students?
3. How do college students use YouTube to learn English in their daily life?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. YouTube as a Web 2.0 Technology

Born in this high technological society, students of Net generation can gain numerous various

resources about their target language through Web 2.0 services such as YouTube. Coined by Tim O’Reilly (2005), the term “Web 2.0” is defined as the use of web technology and design to enhance creativity, collaboration, and secure information sharing, etc. Web 2.0 has led to the evolution of web communities and hosted services, such as YouTube, wikis, blogs, and Facebook. YouTube as a Web 2.0 site of video sharing is not merely a collection of information since members of YouTube are able to share their works and participate in peer feedback through asynchronous interaction with many users (Jones & Cuthrell, 2011). Due to the innovation of this web technology, English learning and teaching methodology have dramatic changes. Language learners can not just read books to acquire knowledge but also use the online media of YouTube to gain information. YouTube as a Web 2.0 technology has become a quite useful and convenient tool to teach or learn a foreign language.

### 2.2. Applications of YouTube for Language Learning

Hughes and Tolley (2010) point out that web technology provides learners with good methods or approaches to acquiring a foreign language, especially English. There seems to be a close connection between online media and students’ intelligences (Gardner, 2000; Veenema & Gardner, 1996). The youth today have used technology more than any other methods as a medium of communication and socialization (Kaynay & Yelsma, 2000; Mishna, McLuckie, & Saint, 2009; Nie & Hillygus, 2002). In fact, as technological advancements are made, the young generation becomes more interested in different approaches of learning such as incorporating the use of YouTube videos into initiating oral communication. YouTube is



not only used on education but it is also a form of entertainment at the same time (Terantino, 2011). For instance, one can create a video and then post it on YouTube while others will go check it out and download it. The online media of YouTube provide language learners and other users access to all kinds of videos across the globe.

### 2.3. YouTube in Language Classroom

Video materials on YouTube provide learners with authenticity and motivation (Chung, 2012) and can be very useful resources for language teaching and learning (Burke, Snyder, & Rager, 2009). Although language learners may be temporarily distracted or entertained by a YouTube video clip, they will simultaneously gain authentic linguistic knowledge and language skills. In other words, students could be learning a language without initially realizing that they are learning it. Consequently, it will make the learning process much intriguing when educators bring YouTube into their classrooms to suit their preferences. Many researches have shown that YouTube is a beneficial learning tool to enhance students' overall learning process (BuzzettoMore, 2013; Hilner, 2012; Jones & Graham, 2013; Tan & Pearce, 2012). The advancement in the hardware and software capabilities of interactive media has also facilitated an increase in the use of Web 2.0 technology for language learning (Owens & Dwyer, 2005). That may be why YouTube is now used in classrooms and in our leisure time extensively.

### 2.4. Advantages and Disadvantages of YouTube

The use of YouTube in language classrooms can encourage student-centered learning ecologies, increase peer-to-peer interaction (Dieu, Campbell, & Ammann, 2006; Jones & Cuthrell, 2011), heighten

learner motivation (Alm, 2006; Malhiwsky, 2010), increase authenticity of tasks (Kelsen, 2009; Malhiwsky, 2010; Mayora, 2009; Pong, 2010), and improve teachers' knowledge as great aids in preparation for lessons (Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). In addition, Kelsen (2009) indicates that YouTube as a motivational tool enables students to use the website as a medium for studying English outside of class. Balcikanli (2009) indicates that YouTube provides a limitless resource and a real world language use for language learning. In his paper, he suggests students find varieties of spoken language videos, such as speeches, songs, and talk shows. Moreover, they can enrich their knowledge about language and culture by watching YouTube. On YouTube, students can even comment and raise questions about the video lessons. The use of YouTube in its various forms has been found to improve students' oral, aural, and writing skills in many action research studies (Alm, 2006; Hazzard, 2006; Kelsen, 2009; Malhiwsky, 2010; Mayora, 2009; Pong, 2010; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). Besides, it has been reported that music helps second language learners acquire vocabulary and grammar, improve spelling and develop the linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening (Jalongo & Bromley, 1984; Jolly, 1975; Martin, 1983; McCarthy, 1985; Mitchell, 1983). Furthermore, computer-based instruction not only enhances learning but also fosters positive attitudes toward instruction by offering the opportunity for conceptual understanding through visualization (Kulik & Kulik, 1985). However, Burke, Snyder and Rager (2009) assert that the limitation of using YouTube lies in the inaccuracy and incredibility of the videos that are posted on the video-sharing web sites. In addition, computer hackers may use online video resources on YouTube to upload Spyware and viruses.



### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Context

This case study was conducted in the department of Applied Foreign Languages at a national university of science and technology in Taiwan. The program of Applied Foreign Languages in this department had been divided into classes A and B. The students in class A are in business group; on the other hand, the students of class B are in English-teaching group. Each grade consists of one class A and one class B; therefore, there are four classes A and four classes B in this department.

#### 3.2. Participants

Two classes were chosen randomly by the researchers through drawing lots. The participants were from class 1A and class 1B in the department of Applied Foreign Languages at the particular university. There were exactly a total of 100 students (29 males and 71 females) who participated in this study and voluntarily filled out a questionnaire.

#### 3.3. Data Collection

Designed to investigate how English-major college students used YouTube in their daily life, the questionnaire in the present study was divided into three major sections. Section I contained twenty 5-point Likert-Scale items which were based on three major themes: language learning on YouTube, the advantages of watching YouTube, and the disadvantages of watching YouTube for the college students. Section II consisted of multiple-choice

questions which included four items to explore further details about how students used YouTube in their daily life. Section III asked for the basic personal information about the participants.

### IV. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the features of English learning on YouTube for the college students?

Table 1 presents the findings of English-major college students' language learning on YouTube for more general purposes. More than two thirds of the students (71%) utilized YouTube to listen to English songs (M=4.06). Above half of the participants had watched YouTube movies with English subtitles (56%, M=3.50) and indicated that watching English programs on YouTube helped them to improve their pronunciation (55%, M=3.49). Nonetheless, there were few students who gained more English vocabulary (29%, M=3.02) and used YouTube to watch English international news (33%, M=2.94). As many of these English-major students in this study loved to listen to English songs on YouTube, music actually had been used by some teachers to help language students learn a second language to acquire vocabulary and grammar, improve spelling, and even develop the linguistic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening (Jalongo & Bromley, 1984; Jolly, 1975; Martin, 1983; McCarthy, 1985; Mitchell, 1983).

TABLE 1: Language Learning on YouTube: More General Purposes

Questionnaire Item / (N=100)	SD/D (%)	N (%)	A/SA (%)	Mean
1. I often listen to English songs on YouTube.	10	19	71	4.06



3. In order to obtain the latest international news in English, I watch YouTube videos.	39	28	33	2.94
4. I use YouTube to gain more English vocabulary.	31	40	29	3.02
5. Watching English teaching programs on YouTube helps me improve my pronunciation.	14	31	55	3.49
10. I would watch YouTube movies with English subtitles.	15	29	56	3.50

Notes: SA (strongly agree) = 5; A (agree) = 4; N (neutral) = 3; D (disagree) = 2; SD (strongly disagree) = 1

Table 2 shows the English-major college students' language learning on YouTube with respect to more specific language skills. A lot of students (77%) agreed that watching English video on YouTube was helpful to enhance their listening comprehension (M=3.97) whereas 62% of the students deemed it beneficial to use YouTube to improve their English speaking skills (M=3.65).

However, only 26% of the participants watched Talk Show on YouTube to increase their English fluency (M=2.95). Very few students used YouTube to improve their writing (19%, M=2.78), and grammar (18%, M=2.71). It seemed that YouTube was more frequently used to improve oral skills (listening and speaking) than grammar and writing by these English-major students.

TABLE 2: Language Learning on YouTube: Grammar and Four Skills

Questionnaire Item / (N=100)	SD/D (%)	N (%)	A/SA (%)	Mean
2. I watch Talk Show on YouTube to speak English fluently and naturally.	29	45	26	2.95
6. From YouTube videos, I learn more about English grammar.	46	36	18	2.71
7. I watch video clips on YouTube to enhance my English writing proficiency.	42	39	19	2.78
8. It is beneficial to improve my English speaking skills by watching video clips on YouTube.	15	23	62	3.65
9. Watching English video on YouTube helps me to increase my listening comprehension.	8	15	77	3.97

Notes: SA (strongly agree) = 5; A (agree) = 4; N (neutral) = 3; D (disagree) = 2; SD (strongly disagree) = 1

Research Question 2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of watching YouTube on college students?

Table 3 reports the advantages of using YouTube

for the English-major students in this study. A great number of students (82%) listened to music on YouTube to feel relaxed while they were studying (M=4.23). Two thirds of them (68%) indicated that



watching YouTube could enrich their knowledge about language and culture (M=3.75). 65% of the students looked for useful videos on YouTube to prepare for their oral presentations (M=3.79), while 62% used YouTube to gain a lot of information easily and quickly (M=3.76). More than half of the students (54%) acknowledged that using YouTube videos

helped them to complete their homework assignment (M=3.54). As YouTube had benefited the learning of the college students in various aspects, Balcikanli (2009) similarly indicated that YouTube provided limitless resources and real world language use for second language learners.

TABLE 3: Advantages of Watching YouTube on English-Major College Students

Questionnaire Item / (N=100)	SD/D (%)	N (%)	A/SA (%)	Mean
11. Watching YouTube can enrich my knowledge about language and culture.	11	21	68	3.75
12. Listening to music on YouTube helps me feel relaxed while I am studying.	11	7	82	4.23
13. To be well prepared for my oral presentations, I search useful videos on YouTube.	11	24	65	3.79
14. I can acquire a lot of information easily and quickly from YouTube.	10	28	62	3.76
15. YouTube videos can help me complete my homework.	12	34	54	3.54

Notes: SA (strongly agree) = 5; A (agree) = 4; N (neutral) = 3; D (disagree) = 2; SD (strongly disagree) = 1

Table 4 examines the potential disadvantages of watching YouTube for English-major college students. A lot of students (74%) felt it disturbing and could not watch videos smoothly because of the advertisements on YouTube (M=4.08). Half of the students indicated that not all of the English learning videos on YouTube were practical to use (M=3.45). Much fewer students (13%) deemed YouTube unsafe to watch because of inappropriate material (M=2.45). Very few students suggested that they had no time to study for exams (13%, M=2.35), and their eyesight

became worse (M=2.37) because of watching YouTube videos. Although many students felt the YouTube advertisements annoying, they did not find it unsafe to use YouTube. The results seemed to differ a little from the findings of Burke, Snyder and Rager (2009) who argued that the videos posted on YouTube were not always correct with enough credibility while computer hackers had been found to use online video sites such as YouTube to upload Spyware and viruses.

TABLE 4: Disadvantages of Watching YouTube on English-Major College Students

Questionnaire Item / (N=100)	SD/D (%)	N (%)	A/SA (%)	Mean
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16. Not all the English learning videos on YouTube are practical to use.	11	40	49	3.45
17. The advertisements on YouTube really annoy me while I am watching.	12	14	74	4.08
18. I have no time to study for exams due to watching YouTube for long hours.	60	27	13	2.35
19. My nearsightedness is getting worse because of watching YouTube.	55	35	10	2.37
20. YouTube is unsafe for students to watch because it has inappropriate material (such as bully).	52	36	12	2.45

Notes: SA (strongly agree) = 5; A (agree) = 4; N (neutral) = 3; D (disagree) = 2; SD (strongly disagree) = 1

Research Question 3: How do college students use YouTube to learn English in their daily life?

Figure 1 presents the activities college English-major students often do on YouTube in their daily life. Their primary activities on YouTube included listening to music (24%), watching films (19%), searching information (13%), and learning English (12%). Other common YouTube activities were downloading music (11%), watching news (9%), watching teaching programs (7%), and uploading video (4%).

The items with less than 1% were combined into the portion of others in the figure. It seemed the online materials on YouTube were quite beneficial for the college students to learn English since Chung (2012) also reported that online video materials were very useful resources for language learning, for it provided learners with authenticity and motivation.

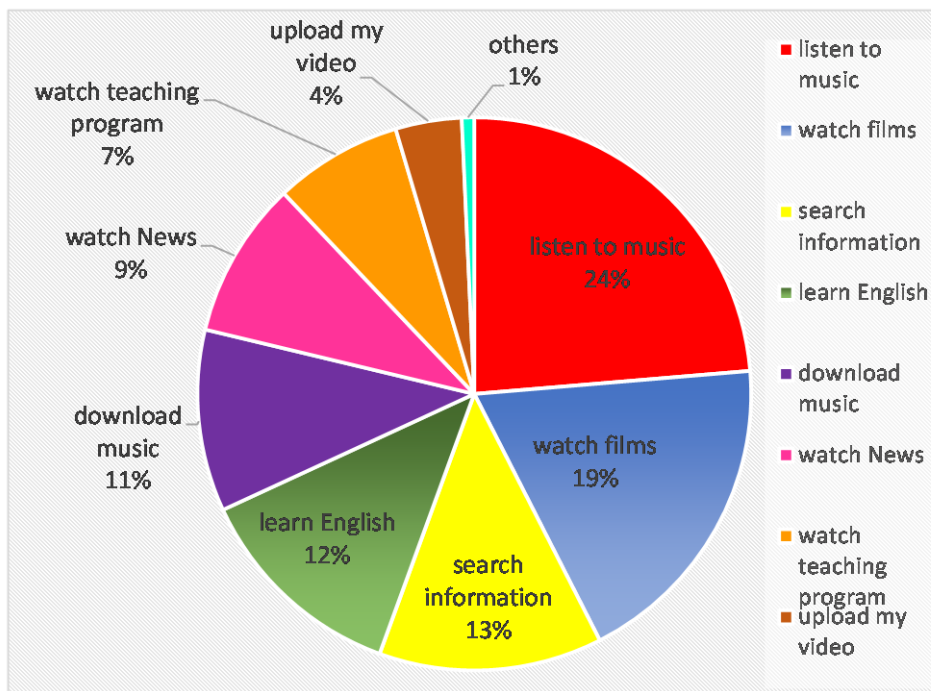


FIGURE 1: Things College Students Often Do on YouTube



Figure 2 looks further into the types of videos or movies the college students have watched on YouTube. The primary videos they watched on YouTube included drama (16%), English learning (15%), travel (15%), and dancing (14%). Other

common types of videos were cooking (9%), culture (8%), technology (7%), and academic knowledge (6%). The items with less than 3% were combined into others in the figure.

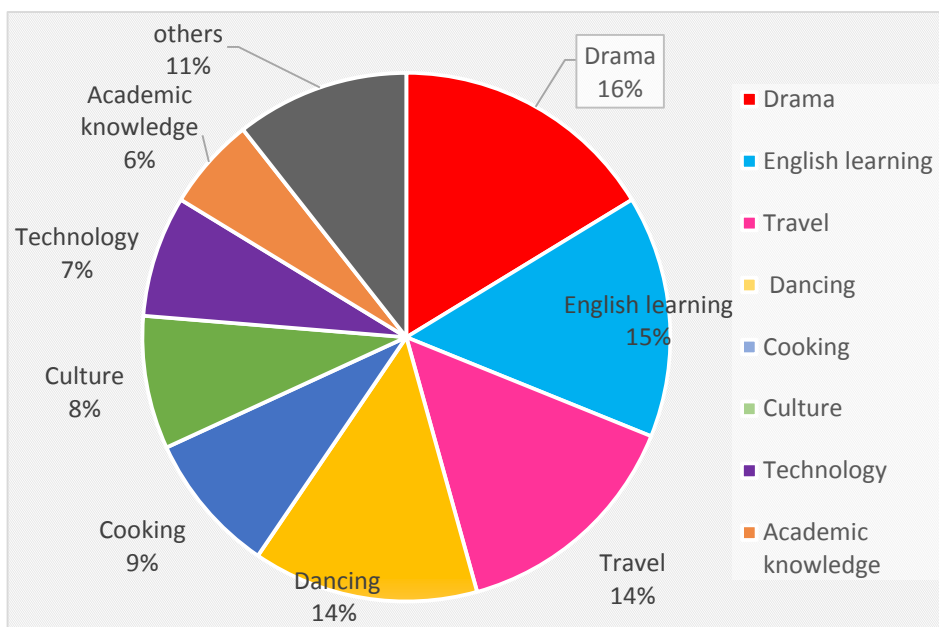


FIGURE 2: Types of Videos Watched on YouTube

## V. Limitation, Implication and Direction for Further Research

This case study involves a small population of English-major college students in a department of Applied Foreign Languages at a national university of science and technology. Therefore, the results of this study may not be generalized to the students of non-English majors in college. Nevertheless, the present study has provided insight into the influences of watching YouTube on the language learning in the daily life of English-major students.

Many of the participants in this study were found to listen to English songs on YouTube in their leisure time. Although YouTube as a Web 2.0 technology provides various resources for language learning, the students in this study do not seem to take good advantage of some particular English learning programs such as grammar and writing. We

suggest teachers promote the strength of using YouTube video clips to help learners acquire English grammar and writing skills vividly. Nonetheless, many students have made good use of YouTube to improve their English speaking and listening skills perhaps because they are more interested in increasing their oral and listening abilities.

As for the positive and negative effects of watching YouTube, a high percentage of students found it was relaxing to listen to YouTube music while studying. Many students not only used YouTube to prepare their homework or presentations but also acquired a lot of knowledge and information from it. On the other hand, a good number of students were bothered by the frequent occurrence of advertisements on YouTube. In addition, the students' primary activities on YouTube were listening to music, watching films, searching information, and





learning English.

Despite the fact that people usually watched YouTube as an entertainment, YouTube could serve as an important learning medium for college students to self-learn a second or foreign language. Therefore, an important issue for further research is to look for the evidence of learner autonomy in watching YouTube. The researchers recommend further investigation to include more in-depth interview data and expand the range of participants to include non-English major students in order to understand how students from different colleges use YouTube for language learning in their daily life.

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## 看 YouTube 對台灣英文主修大學生之影響

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### 摘 要

本篇研究主要探討觀看 YouTube 對台灣主修英文的大學生有何影響。研究對象是一所國立科技大學應用外語系一百位同學，他們自由填寫了一份問卷以調查同學在日常生活中，使用 YouTube 的經驗及看法。研究結果顯示：這些主修英文的學生，超過三分之二的同學(71%)經常用 YouTube 聽英文歌曲 (M=4.06)。同學也會運用 YouTube 來增進英文聽解能力(77%, M=3.97)與口語技巧(62%, M=3.65)。多數的參與者同意在讀書時會使用 YouTube 上的資源幫助他們心情放鬆 (82%, M=4.23)，豐富語言與文化方面的知識 (68%, M=3.75)，乃至運用 YouTube 查尋有用的資訊以準備英文口頭報告(65%, M=3.79)。然而，有相當多的同學對於 YouTube 上頻繁廣告感到討厭 (74%, M=4.08)。本研究之調查結果有助於教授英文的老師以及其他教育工作者深入了解大學生生活中使用 YouTube，以及用 YouTube 學語言帶來的影響。其實 YouTube 不只是一個娛樂性的媒體，同時也是提供第二語言學習資源豐富的平台。

**關鍵字:** YouTube，網站 2.0，英文主修大學生

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