The Relation Between Use of YouTube, Learner's Motivation, and Perception of Lessons in EFL Classrooms at a Junior High School

Yoshio KANAMOTO[1], Hiroyuki OKAZAKI[2], Kenichiro ISHIZU[3]

Email: kanamoto-yoshio@tym.ed.jp, hokazaki@edu.u-toyama.ac.jp, k142@edu.u-toyama.ac.jp

Abstract

The aim of this study is to examine the relation between use of YouTube, learner's motivation, and perception of lessons in EFL classrooms at a junior high school. One-hundred-twenty-eight junior high school students in Toyama, Japan participated in the study and watched approximately five minutes of a YouTube video without subtitles. This was accompanied with comprehension tasks and pre- and post-viewing activities. A questionnaire was administered after the lessons, and factor analysis, single linear regression, and mediation analysis were carried out. The results of the analyses suggested that effective use of YouTube videos in EFL classrooms could increase students' motivation, while YouTube videos alone may not directly motivate students. The results also implied that YouTube videos could be effectively used for junior high school students to improve their motivation, though the actual causation was not revealed due to the limitations of the analyses.

Keywords：authentic materials, YouTube, motivation, mediation analysis, EFL

1. Introduction

1.1 Authentic Materials

Authentic materials, such as newspapers and movies, are created for native speakers, and are not designed for teaching purposes. Authentic materials have been used in EFL classrooms since the 1970s, and the materials are useful tools to motivate learners, arouse learners' interest and expose learners to real language they would face in the real world (Azri & Al-Rashdi, 2014).

Sabet and Mahsefat (2012) conducted a study at a university in Iran. Their results revealed that the students who received authentic listening materials performed better in the listening proficiency test than those who were given simplified listening materials. They also reported that the students who received authentic listening materials showed their satisfaction and positive attitudes towards the authentic materials. Kabooha (2016) used short segments of movies and conducted pre- and post-viewing activities in a study conducted at a university in Saudi Arabia. The use of movies increased students' motivation, and the students demonstrated their positive perception of using movies to improve language skills. However, Kilickaya (2004) noted the risks of using authentic materials. He stated that authentic materials could cause students at lower levels to feel demotivated and frustrated when their vocabulary and grammar skills are insufficient to understand the target language.

These studies indicate that authentic materials have beneficial effects and can be used to improve learners' motivation, but the effects of authentic materials on learning varies depending on the learners' proficiency. Thus, further investigation is needed to understand the effectiveness of utilizing authentic materials as a way to motivate EFL learners.

1.2 YouTube Videos

Devices such as tablets have become more widely available in junior high schools in recent

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[1] Shikino Junior High School

[2] University of Toyama

[3] University of Toyama

years, and students can access a variety of content on the Internet either inside or outside the classroom via smartphones or tablets. YouTube has 41 genres of movies and 31 genres of TV shows, according to the website. YouTube is also claimed to be a beneficial teaching tool for EFL classrooms (Alwehaibi, 2015; Kabooha & Elyas, 2015). It might be assumed that YouTube is a useful platform that provides valuable materials for EFL learners in Japan. Watkins and Wilkins (2011) stated that YouTube had a vast collection of diverse content, and using YouTube both inside and outside classrooms could enhance conversation, listening, and pronunciation skills. They claimed that two primary benefits of using YouTube in classrooms are exposure to authentic English and promotion of learners' autonomy. They also noted that teacher guidance is necessary in order to prevent students from spending time unproductively browsing YouTube.

Kelsen (2009) undertook a study in a university in Taiwan. Sixty-nine chemistry major students participated in the lessons that utilized eighteen YouTube clips related to topics from the class textbook. In order to assist their comprehension, corresponding vocabulary and background information was taught prior to showing the videos. The results revealed that the students found the experience of using YouTube interesting, beneficial, and motivating in class, but few students revisited the websites introduced in class in their own time, and whether there was any development of learners' autonomy remained unclear. In a study conducted with 45 university students who majored in English in Indonesia, Silviyanti (2014) measured students' interest during a listening course consisting of watching movies on YouTube, and administered a questionnaire modified from the one used in Kelsen's study. The study revealed that the students were not highly motivated to use YouTube outside class, although the students reported that YouTube motivated them to study English, and the use of YouTube was beneficial for learning English.

These findings indicate that YouTube has beneficial effects, and it could improve learners' motivation in EFL classrooms. However, the direct effect of YouTube on learners' motivation remains unclear, and the relationship among the use of YouTube, learners' motivation, and learners' perception of lessons, such as learners' interest in lessons and feelings towards activities in class, remains unknown.

1.3 Assessment of the Use of YouTube

In order to examine the vocabulary level of junior high school students, the words in the textbook Sunshine (Kairyudo, 2016) were compared with the words included in a travel show's video which was used for the lesson (see Table 1). The captions acquired from YouTube were compared with the list of words provided by Kairyudo (n.d.). In the comparison, high frequency words (Nation, 2013) such as articles and pronouns were counted numerous times. The analysis demonstrated that out of 1,635 words, 75.4% of the words were covered by the textbook. Silviyanti (2014) mentioned that university students showed weakness in listening when English was spoken fast. Considering the vocabulary level and potentially fast speech rate in YouTube videos, it is fair to say that understanding YouTube is challenging for junior high school students.

Nevertheless, visual cues in YouTube videos might assist students' understanding. Arndt and Woore (2018) investigated vocabulary learning from watching YouTube with multinational students in an online community who were aged between 14 and 25. The findings of the study indicated that YouTube videos promoted better recall of grammatical functions and greater recognition and remembrance of meanings of words because visual information helped learners to comprehend aural language input. Wagner (2007) examined test-takers' behavior in video listening tests at a university in the United

Table 1

Words in the YouTube Video That Are Covered by the English Textbook

	YouTube	Junior high school			Total
		grade 1	grade 2	grade 3	
Number of words	1,635	1,063	150	20	1,233
%		65.0	9.2	1.2	75.4

Note. YouTube Video = *Flying The Nest*, a travel show

States. The study revealed that the participants watched the video monitor 69 % of the testing time, and the behavior was consistent.

From the study, it can be inferred that students obtain information from visual images while listening. Moreover, Kilickaya (2004) asserted that authentic materials can be effectively used for lower level learners as long as teachers provide students with pedagogical support. These studies imply that even junior high school students can understand YouTube videos with visual aid and adequate support from teachers.

In summary, previous studies have revealed the beneficial effects of using authentic materials, yet some of the research indicates possible risks or ineffectiveness. Studies also have displayed the positive impact of using YouTube on learners' motivation, while some researchers have indicated possible ineffectiveness of using YouTube outside classrooms. Additionally, previous studies have not directly investigated the association between the use of YouTube videos, learners' motivation, and learners' perception of lessons, and the relationship between those factors remains unclear. Therefore, this present study examines the relation between the use of YouTube, students' motivation, and students' perception of lessons at a junior high school in Japan.

2. Methods
2.1 Participants

One-hundred-twenty-eight junior high school students in Toyama, Japan participated in this study. Among them, 62 students were third graders, and 66 students were second graders.

MEXT (2015) reported that approximately 30% of Japanese junior high school students had an English proficiency at the upper A1 level of CEFR. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, students' English proficiency was assumed to be at CEFR's A1 level.

2.2 Materials and Instruments

YouTube Video. A travel show *Flying The Nest* (Parry & Valentine, 2019) was selected, and the video was viewed for approximately five minutes, twice in each lesson. A travel show was chosen because it was presumed that students would understand the story relatively easily compared to stories from other genres of videos such as news or comedy.

Questionnaire. A questionnaire consisting of eight five-point Likert scale items in Japanese was developed and administered after the lessons with the assurance that personal information would not be disclosed. Previous studies have shown several aspects of lessons using YouTube, such as learner's perception of YouTube videos, learners' perception of lessons, and learners' motivation. The combined study of these aspects might display learners' motivation and interest in English lessons utilizing YouTube videos.

Two items were developed to assess students' interest and understanding of YouTube videos. Another two items were then developed to measure students' motivation towards learning English and watching authentic materials such as English videos and movies. Finally, the remaining four items were developed to gauge students' interest in the lesson as well as their feelings towards conversations, group activities,

and the improvement of their listening ability. Altogether, these eight items were established to examine students' motivation and interest in English lessons utilizing YouTube videos.

2.3 Procedure

All the students, who belonged to four classes, watched approximately five minutes of the YouTube video without subtitles. This was accompanied with comprehension tasks and pre- and post-viewing activities. Groups of four students were given two types of questions about the details of the video. One type was given to the whole group, and one type was given to each group member. The questions were assigned this way so that group members could help each other comprehend the summary of the contents. Additionally, in order to assist their comprehension tasks, each student was provided with a card including a question and a corresponding screenshot from the video. After viewing the video once, the students shared their answers in groups and filled out worksheets consisting of the questions given to each group. After the class as a whole heard each group's answers, the students watched the video a second time to check their answers while the teacher provided a brief explanation about the content in Japanese. In addition to doing the comprehension task, students had conversations in English about topics related to the videos before and after viewing the video.

2.4 Data Analysis

First, a factor analysis was performed based on post-program questionnaires. In order to determine the most significant items for each of the factors, items with a minimum loading of 0.30 were selected, and the correlation matrix was analyzed. The analysis was conducted with an expectation to find the following three factors: students' perception of lessons (hereinafter, Lesson Factor), students' motivation (hereinafter, Motivational Factor), and YouTube (hereinafter,

YouTube Factor).

Next, several descriptive and preliminary analyses (*M, SD*, and Pearson's correlation coefficients) were performed. Finally, in order to examine the association between the three factors obtained from the factor analysis, single linear regression and mediation analyses were carried out.

In the analyses, a model without Lesson Factor was first tested so as to investigate the direct effect of YouTube Factor on Motivational Factor (see Figure1). Afterward, Lesson Factor was added to the model in order to examine the direct effect of YouTube Factor on Motivational Factor, and the indirect effect of YouTube Factor on Motivational Factor via Lesson Factor as a mediator (see Figure2). To assess the fit of the models, several commonly used fit indices, such as the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), goodness of fit index (GFI), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) were utilized. The RStudio software version 1.2.5 and the related packages *psych* (Revelle, 2019) and *sem* (Fox et al., 2017) were used for a factor analysis, descriptive and preliminary analyses, simple linear regression, and a mediation analysis. The significance level was set at $p < .05$ for all analyses in the current study.

3. Results
3.1 Factor Analysis

The three factors were obtained as anticipated via weighted least squares method and promax rotation (see Table 2). The reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha was 0.83 with Lesson Factor, 0.78 with Motivational Factor, and 0.76 with YouTube Factor, respectively.

3.2 Descriptive and Preliminary Analyses

The means, standard deviations, and correlations between all variables are presented in Table 3. As displayed, all variables were positively correlated with each other. Taking this into account, a simple linear regression and

Table 2

Summary of Factor Analysis

Item		Factor loading			Communality
		1	2	3	
Factor 1: Lesson					
4	The English conversations were enjoyable.	**1.06**	-.17	-.04	.85
5	I proactively participated in the group comprehension activity.	**.78**	.19	-.22	.58
6	I feel I can understand spoken English better than before the lesson.	**.38**	.26	.17	.52
1	Today's lesson was interesting.	**.37**	.24	.20	.54
Factor 2: Motivation					
8	The lesson made me think I want to study English more.	-.04	**.98**	-.09	.79
7	I want to watch more English videos, movies, or dramas.	-.15	**.71**	.18	.55
Factor 3: YouTube					
3	The video was interesting.	-.16	.04	**1.04**	.92
2	I understood the content of the video.	.36	-.16	**.52**	.50
	Factor correlations Factor 1	1.00			
	Factor 2	.69	1.00		
	Factor 3	.73	.69	1.00	

Table 3

Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of the Questionnaire Scores

Item		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	Today's lesson was interesting.	-							
2	I understood the content of the video.	0.42**	-						
3	The video was interesting.	0.61**	0.62**	-					
4	The English conversations were enjoyable.	0.60**	0.56**	0.52**	-				
5	I proactively participated in the group comprehension activity.	0.51**	0.42**	0.40**	0.67**	-			
6	I feel I can understand spoken English better than before the lesson.	0.53**	0.52**	0.54**	0.56**	0.51**	-		
7	I want to watch more English videos, movies, or dramas.	0.44**	0.36**	0.54**	0.34**	0.39**	0.47**	-	
8	The lesson made me think I want to study English more.	0.54**	0.34**	0.53**	0.43**	0.47**	0.54**	0.65**	-
	Mean	4.5	3.4	4.0	4.0	4.1	3.6	3.7	3.8
	Standard Deviation	0.7	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.2	1.1

Note. $N = 128$

$**p < .01$

Figure 1
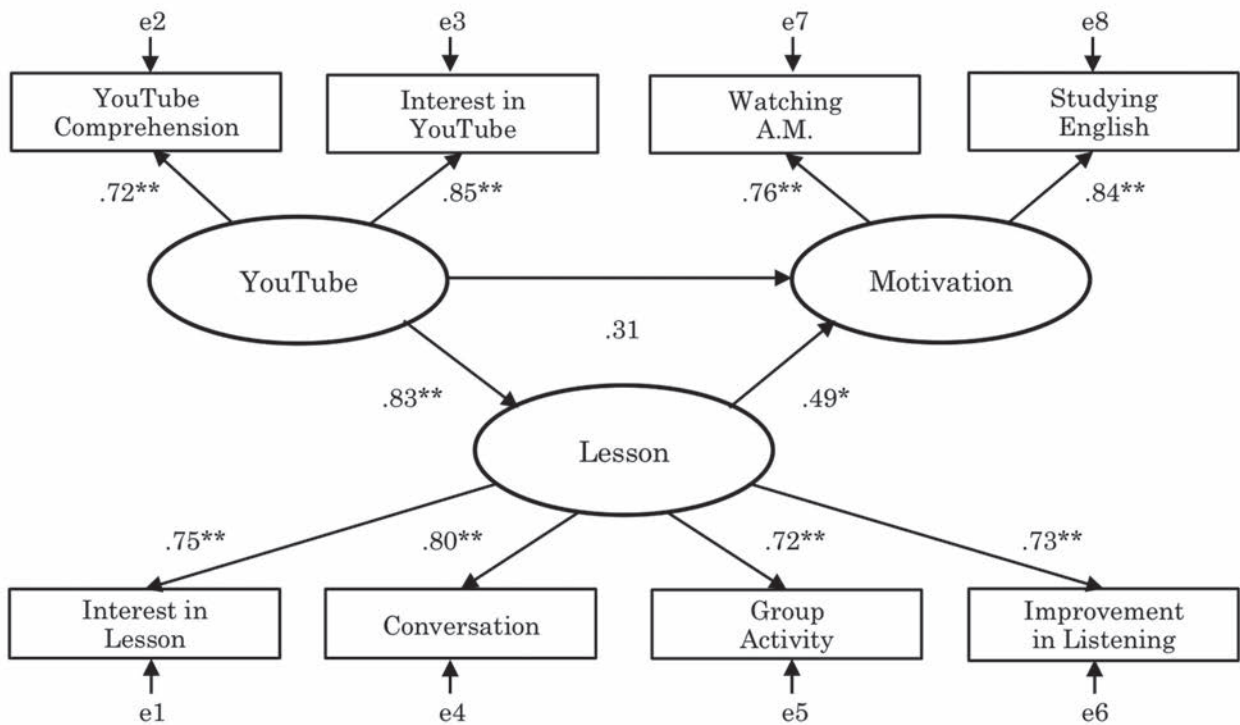*Simple Linear Regression Model of Relation Between YouTube and Motivation*
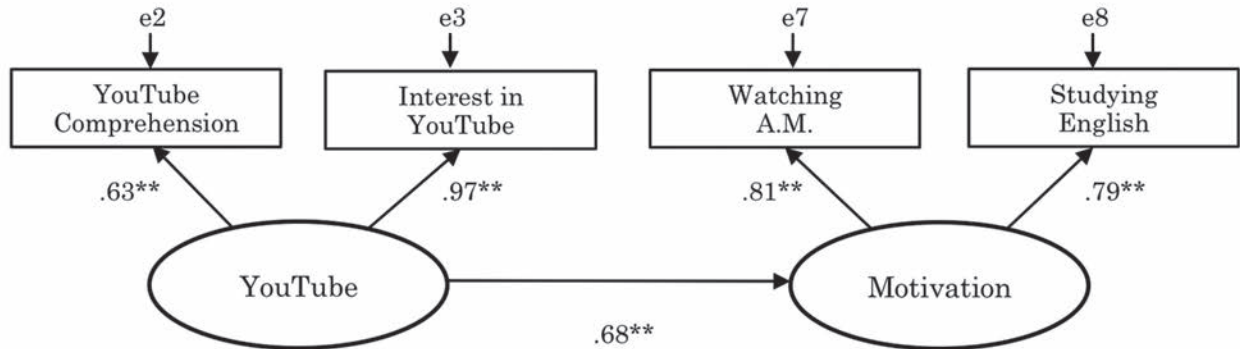
Note. YouTube Comprehension = Item 2 in Table 2, Interest in YouTube = Item 3 in Table 2, Watching A.M = Item 7 in Table 2, Studying English = Item 8 in Table 2

**$p < .01$

Figure 2
Mediation Analysis Model of Relation Between YouTube, Motivation, and Lesson

Note. YouTube Comprehension = Item 2 in Table 2, Interest in YouTube = Item 3 in Table 2, Watching A.M = Item 7 in Table 2, Studying English = Item 8 in Table 2, Interest in Lesson = Item 1 in Table 2, Conversation = Item 4 in Table 2, Group Activity = Item 5 in Table 2, Improvement in Listening = Item 6 in Table 2

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$

mediation analysis were conducted.

3.3 Simple Linear Regression and Mediation Analysis

The simple linear regression in Figure 1, described by the first model between YouTube Factor and Motivational Factor, demonstrated that YouTube Factor positively influenced Motivational Factor ($ß=0.68$, $p < .01$). The mediation analysis in Figure 2, illustrated by

the second model between YouTube Factor, Motivational Factor, and Lesson Factor, displayed that YouTube Factor positively affected Lesson Factor (ß=0.83, p < .01), and Lesson Factor positively influenced Motivational Factor (ß=0.49, p < .05). In contrast, the direct effect of YouTube Factor on Motivational Factor appeared to be insignificant (ß=0.31, p > .05). The second model in Figure 2 showed a fit to the data for some indices ($\chi^2(df)$ = 47.555 (17), p < .01; GFI = 0.913; AGFI = 0.816; SRMR = 0.051; RMSEA = 0.119).

4. Discussion

The first model in Figure 1 demonstrates a moderate positive and significant path from YouTube Factor to Motivational Factor. In contrast, the path between these two factors is a weak positive and insignificant in the second model in Figure 2, which displays a strong positive and significant path from YouTube Factor to Lesson Factor and a moderate positive and significant path from Lesson Factor to Motivational Factor. In other words, Lesson Factor mediates the link between YouTube Factor and Motivational Factor. These results indicate that effective use of YouTube videos in EFL classrooms contributes to an increase in students' motivation, whereas watching YouTube videos without guidance or support does not directly contribute to increasing students' motivation.

These results can be interpreted in several ways. The studies by Kelsen (2009) and Silviyanti (2014) indicated that students were not as motivated to view YouTube videos outside classrooms as they were inside classrooms. The students surveyed may have found that YouTube videos motivated them because the teacher facilitated their meaningful learning experience in classrooms, which is in line with the path from YouTube Factor to Motivational Factor via Lesson Factor in Figure 2. On the other hand, the students were seemingly not motivated to view YouTube videos because the videos themselves

did not have a direct effect of motivating the students to view videos. Kelsen (2009) and Watkins and Wilkins (2011) noted that teachers' guidance is necessary when utilizing YouTube for lessons. This point seems to be important because there is a possible risk of YouTube not motivating students when there is inadequate guidance from teachers. The fact that Lesson Factor is the mediator between YouTube Factor and Motivational Factor indicates that teachers' guidance in classrooms could lead to effective use of YouTube videos, which in turn may enhance students' motivation. Hamilton (2010) reported success in carrying out student-centered and task-based lessons using YouTube at a university in Japan. The author conducted a variety of activities in the study, and such student-centered lessons might have been successful because of the author's careful arrangement of activities. Therefore it is crucial for teachers to remember that YouTube may not directly increase learners' motivation, and effective use of media in classrooms is necessary to motivate learners.

Additionally, the model in Figure 2 indicates that YouTube can be effectively used for junior high school students or lower proficiency learners. Kim (2000) asserted that authentic input should be given to only high proficiency learners because authentic input at an early stage of foreign language acquisition could be frustrating for learners. Kilickaya (2004) also noted that authentic materials could demotivate lower proficiency learners. However, Figure 2 implies that YouTube could be used for lower proficiency learners as well in order to enhance their motivation.

5. Conclusion
5.1 Summary of This Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relation between use of YouTube, students' motivation, and students' perception of lessons at a junior high school in Japan. The main findings of this research can be summarized as follows.

First and foremost, effective use of YouTube videos in EFL classrooms may increase students' motivation, while viewing YouTube videos may not directly motivate students. The second finding is that YouTube videos could potentially be effectively used for junior high school students to improve their motivation.

5.2 Limitations of This Study and Implications for Future Research

There are several limitations of this study. First, while the model in Figure 2 showed a good fit of the model with GFI and SRMR, there was room for improvement in AGFI and RMSEA. Second, although the result of the factor analysis displayed some validity as the three factors were obtained as presumed, the concurrent validity of the developed factors needs to be assessed. Further, the questionnaire items should be examined again so as not to have cross loading. Third, in order to provide equal learning opportunities to all the participants, this study did not separate groups. Therefore the subsequent analyses did not reveal the actual causation of an increase in learner's motivation due to lessons using YouTube videos. Fourth, the current study displays models using one YouTube video for one lesson for junior high school students. Thus, in further research it is worth investigating the effects of lessons setting treatment and waiting-list groups, and utilizing a wider variety of YouTube videos for a longer period of time for learners at a range of proficiency levels. Moreover, a similar study can be conducted with other types of authentic materials to analyze the relationship between authentic materials, learners' motivation, and learner's perception of lessons.

5.3 Pedagogical Implication

Despite the limitations of this study, there are a number of pedagogical implications. First, if teachers wish to utilize YouTube videos to improve their students' motivation toward learning English, it is necessary to utilize YouTube effectively in classrooms by giving sufficient guidance or support. When teachers have students watch YouTube videos outside classrooms, they should provide sufficient guidance like they do for lessons, otherwise the effects may be mitigated. Teachers should keep in mind that it may not be YouTube that motivates learners, but lessons where YouTube is effectively used with teachers' management.

In addition, YouTube may be used not only for advanced or intermediate proficiency learners, but also for lower proficiency learners or junior high school students. Since the level of language used in such videos seems to be difficult for lower proficiency learners, it might be necessary to give sufficient assistance accompanied with pre- and post-viewing activities and visual aids, for instance, screenshots, as was done in the lessons carried out in this study. When there is ample teacher assistance, YouTube as an authentic material can be effectively utilized for EFL learners with a range of proficiency, and learners' motivation may improve.

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