

Perceived Influence of the Use of Youtube on the Performance of Undergraduates in Phonetics and Phonology in Babcock University

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Abstract: This study looked into the influence of YouTube use on students' performance in phonetics and phonology in Babcock University. Phonetics and phonology are intricate aspects of language. Everyone that speaks or writes uses phonetics and phonology. As an academic subject of study, English students are required to attain a certain level of proficiency in both.

The study was carried out among Babcock University students in the departments of Education and Languages and Literary Studies. The main population of the research included all 200, 300 and 400 level students in both departments. To achieve the objectives of this study, four research questions and two hypotheses were composed. A questionnaire designed by the researcher was used to collect data in order to draw inference on the project and the responses were analyzed using regression analysis and independent t-test.

As a result of the study, it was established that the majority of students in Babcock University have access to internet facilities, knowledge on how to use them and they also use YouTube to enhance their learning of Phonetics and phonology.

The study was concluded with the recommendation that students should consult YouTube before attending classes, not after. The researcher also recommends that teachers encourage their students to use YouTube more often to increase their performance in phonetics and phonology.

Key words: YouTube, Phonetics and phonology,

Date of Submission: 05-06-2019

Date of acceptance: 20-06-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

In Nigeria, English language is an official language used for day-to-day transactions, administration, religion, businesses, education and health, among others. Despite the important role of English language in social, political, economic, military, technological advancement, etc., there are high numbers of non-English speakers; the acceptability of English in Nigeria is due to its neutrality as a non-indigenous language. The English language is an integral part of people's lives, and they are motivated to learn it for different reasons. English is considered the second language in many parts of the world, Nigeria inclusive. Advancements in almost every discipline necessitate learning English. Because most researches are published in the language, it is regarded to be an important and universal language. In addition, many schools and institutions of higher learning use it as the medium of instruction (Morris & Maxey, 2014).

Phonetics and phonology are concerned with the study of the structure of human speech sounds and the graphical representation of those speech sounds; they basically set down the guidelines for the use of language. Consciously or unconsciously, every language user employs phonetics and phonology when speaking or writing.

Due to recent advancements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), various factors especially social media and the internet influence English language learners. Although English language learning is not an easy task (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014), the channels through which learners acquire knowledge about the subject have shot up significantly over recent past years, making comprehension easier for them. The conventional teaching methods have been complemented by social media such as YouTube.

YouTube is said to be very influential in the education of English language because most students in higher institutions spend a considerably large amount of time online, and are attracted by audio-visual modes of learning. Onyenweakwu&Edem (2017) posit that technological innovations have gone hand in hand with the growth of language teaching, especially English. The YouTube website has offered English teachers the opportunity to switch from the archaic and banal 'chalk and talk method'. Watching videos on language learning provides the opportunity to experience environmental and pedagogical changes for learners who are traditionally

used to face-to-face teaching in the classroom in the sense that it provides learners with the avenue to confirm what they are taught in class, and they can also in a way, choose their individual learning pace because they can always refer back to what they learn unlike a classroom lesson which cannot be repeated.

English being a second language in Nigeria, it is not easily understood by most learners. Even for those who have basic knowledge of the language, writing becomes an issue for them sometimes especially in the aspect of spelling. This is because of 'mother tongue inference'; when a person's mother tongue is reflected in their second language use. This problem has been pointed out by many to be caused by the fact that the British, after independence, handed over the affairs of the nation including the educational system to Nigerians who were at the time not proficient enough to pass down valuable knowledge about the language. Ola-Busari (2014) pointed out that the mastery of English language in Nigeria has declined over the years because emphasis and importance is not placed on the language as much as it was decades ago. Ola-Busari (2014) also mentioned in the article that there is less motivation on the part of both learners and teachers. Fatiloro (2015) stated that the issue of incompetence in English language in Nigeria is because the process of learning is seen merely as a duty carried out without interest, reinforcement or motivation.

The two major subfields of phonetics are articulatory phonetics and acoustic phonetics. Simply put the former focuses on the speaker of language while the latter is concerned with the perception of speech by the listener's ears (Kalyani, 2019).

This is the aspect of phonetics that deals with the way sounds are produced in the human system. It gives an insight into the various organs involved in the process of sound production as well as the functions of those organs (Essays. UK, 2013). The respiratory system plays a very important role in the sound production process, because the process begins with the passage of air as presented by Mannell (2014). For consonant sounds to be produced, the organ above the larynx (the upper vocal tract) is in put in a complete or partial closure, which leads to an obstruction of the airstream/ airflow. Vowel sounds are articulated with a free passage of air through the larynx, upper vocal tract and out of the nasal or buccal (oral) cavity (Essays. UK, 2013). The organs involved in speech production include the larynx, oral, nasal and pharyngeal cavities, glottis, epiglottis, uvula, teeth, tongue, alveolar ridge, palate etc. (Kalyani, 2019).

As stated earlier, acoustic phonetics deals with the way listeners perceive sounds; it is the study of the frequency, amplitude and duration of the sound (kalyani, 2019). It is the study of the transmission of speech signals through air, bones and tissue. Speech signals are studied in terms of the distance of the vibration of a sound wave as well as the duration (Gibbon, 2014). Akmajian et al (2012) defined acoustic phonetics as the study of the physical elements of speech sound waves which are generated in the vocal folds and vocal tract. Acoustic phonetics employs analog-to-digital conversion and mathematical definitions of filters and transformations in the analysis of speech signals (Gibbon, 2014).

The following null hypotheses were tested

1. There is no significant influence of YouTube on the performance of Babcock University undergraduate students in phonetics and phonology.
- 2 There is no significant difference between male and female Babcock University undergraduate students' ability to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research employed a descriptive survey research design and asked questions in relation to the problem this research sought to find a solution to, in order to ensure that enough perspectives were gotten from a selected sample group. The research describes the way in which YouTube use impacts undergraduate students' performance in phonetics and phonology in Babcock University.

Population

The main population of this study consists of all English students in Babcock University while the target population was all students in 200, 300 and 400 level respectively under the selected departments: Department of Education and Department of Languages and Literary Studies (LALS).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study is 283 students in total: 136 English Studies students and 147 English Education students; that is the total number of students taking both courses from 2001-4001. The researcher involved all 200-4001 students in the study, due to the fact that the number of students in the total population is quite limited. The responses filled in the questionnaire by all 283 respondents were analyzed in order to determine how and if at all the use of YouTube influences the performance of students in English phonetics and phonology.

Instrumentation

Information was obtained from the sample group using a self-designed questionnaire, which is divided into three segments. Section A was used to get general information about the students, section B was used to obtain information about the availability of internet facilities and access to social media, and section C was used to get information about YouTube use for phonetics and phonology. Their responses were placed in a Likert Scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Some parts of the questionnaire also require 'yes/no' answers.

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was validated by the professional statistician/analyst provided by the Department of Education, Babcock University. 20 students from 100 and 200 level were selected to carry out a test-retest using the questionnaire. Thankfully, the population was responsive and objective in their responses. To test the reliability of the questionnaire, the responses gotten from the questionnaires were analyzed and declared satisfactory. The result of the reliability is:

r = .848

Method of Data Analysis

Hypothesis one which states that there is no significant influence of YouTube on the performance of Babcock University undergraduate students in phonetics and phonology was analyzed using Regression Analysis while hypothesis two which states that there is no significant difference between male and female ability to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology was analyzed using Independent t-test. Regression Analysis is used to measure influence while Independent t-test is used to measure or determine if there is a difference between two objects.

III. RESULTS

Hypothesis one

H0₁: There is no significant influence of YouTube on the performance of Babcock University undergraduate students in phonetics and phonology.

Table 1 Coefficients of the Regression Analysis for the Influence of YouTube on performance in phonetics and phonology.

Model	Unstandardized B	Standard Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(constant)	21.560	1.263		9.528	.000
YouTube use	.096	.014	.274	10.659	.000

Dependent variable: performance in phonetics and phonology

Results in table 1 was significant (Beta=.247, t=10.659, P<.05). The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of YouTube on the performance of Babcock University undergraduates in phonetics and phonology is therefore rejected and the alternative hypothesis is upheld. It is thus concluded that there is a significant influence of YouTube on the performance of Babcock University undergraduates in phonetics and phonology. Table 1 further revealed that students' performances could be predicted from YouTube use by means of the regression equation:

$$\text{Performance in Phonetics \& Phonology} = (0.096 \times \text{YouTube Use}) + 21.560$$

Hypothesis Two

H0₂: there is no significant difference between male and female ability to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology.

Table 2: Independent t-test for Difference in Performance in Phonetics and Phonology between Male and Female Students

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t	Sig.	LCID	UCID
Male students	139	18.9744	4.42771	281	-.755	.452	-.75291	.99673
Female students	144	19.7273	4.62231					

Dependent variable: performance in phonetics and phonology

Results in table 2 were not significant ($t_{(281)} = .755, P > .05$). The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female students' abilities to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology is therefore retained and upheld. This implies that: the mean performance score of 19.0 for male students was not significantly different from the mean score of 19.7 for female students.

IV. DISUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the hypothesis that there is no significant influence of YouTube on the performance of Babcock University students in phonetics and phonology, it was discovered that YouTube significantly influences the performance of Undergraduate students of Babcock University in phonetics and phonology. This denotes that Babcock University students are aware of YouTube as a SNS that can help in the aspect of academics. It also implies that students who use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology have better success academically than students who do not.

This finding is supported by that of Balbay and Kilis (2017) that undergraduate students are familiar with YouTube and they watch videos on the SNS by their own discretion for learning purposes, and that those students who watch YouTube videos for the purpose having better knowledge on academic speaking skills and they have an improved performance in classroom discussions. The study conducted by Zaidi et al (2018) also supports the findings of this research. Zaidi et al (2018) concluded after their research that YouTube is being used at a high rate by university students, and also that YouTube enhances the students' pronunciation (an aspect of phonetics and phonology).

The second hypothesis of this study states that there is no significant difference between male and female Babcock University undergraduate students' ability to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology. It was revealed that there is no significant difference between male students' ability to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology and female students' ability to use YouTube for learning phonetics and phonology therefore, the hypothesis is upheld.

This finding is corroborated by the study of Li (2017) on the use of social media in English language teaching and learning. The results of the study carried out by Li (2017) revealed that out of the 122 respondents, 38% of the females use YouTube weekly while 40% of the males use YouTube weekly. The close margin between the results of both genders show that there is no significant difference between male and female students' use of YouTube for language learning.

V. CONCLUSION

Phonetics and phonology is an important aspect of English language, it accounts for the pronunciation of sounds and the articulation of speech. Because it is taught as a course in universities, it contributes to the academic success or otherwise of students who offer the course(s). Other than the academic aspect, phonetics and phonology helps learners gain better intonation and language speaking skills generally, and learning of the subject is made easier with the use of the popular Social Networking Site (SNS) YouTube.

YouTube permits individuals to upload their videos and create channels. Some visionaries have seized the opportunity of this global outreach platform to educate willing learners about English language, especially from the aspect of phonetics and phonology which have to do with articulation. Students who use YouTube to learn phonetics and phonology are generally more knowledgeable in the subject than students who do not use YouTube.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested by the researcher based on the discoveries made during the course of the study. The recommendations, if heeded, will improve students' academic performance and English language understanding as well as speaking skills.

Students should consult YouTube for clarification on topics they do not understand in the classroom, in all subjects. Watching YouTube videos helps give the student an all-round proficiency in the subject, because there are varieties of videos from various sources on the platform. Teachers also, should encourage their students to consult YouTube.

Students should research before attending lectures so they would be ahead of the course outline. This allows for intelligible classroom discussion and better understanding. It also makes the class more interesting for both students and teachers.

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