

Research Article

Breaking the Barriers: Leveraging Digital Platforms for English Language Learning

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Abstract: This research paper examines the learning process and personal growth of learners of English through Project-Based Learning. The project was designed to aid individuals who are not fluent in English. The project revolves around creating short videos that educate viewers about common grammatical errors and frequently misunderstood aspects of the English language. These short, engaging videos are tailored to simplify the complex linguistic concepts, thereby making them accessible to a wider audience, particularly non-native speakers and those with limited English proficiency. The primary focus of this paper is the learning journey and the skills students acquired throughout the project phase. By engaging in this initiative, they deepened their understanding of the English language and gained insights into content creation, audience engagement, and the importance of consistent and effective communication.

Keywords: Project-Based Learning; English Language Learning; ELT; Digital Learning

Introduction

In the contemporary interconnected society, proficiency in English is a crucial competency for academic success and future employment opportunities. Nevertheless, learners from rural areas and villages frequently encounter challenges in learning English for various reasons. Typically, these students have limited access to high-quality educational resources and infrequently encounter the language in their everyday experiences. This also includes common language mistakes, incorrect tenses, misplaced articles, and improper use of prepositions. This results in them not conveying their message clearly. This project is geared toward addressing the problem through one-minute video lessons that demonstrate common errors and how to correct them in English. The videos are developed in shorter, more engaging ways to boost students' confidence in their expert use in school and other professional environments. The current study aims to assess the project's effectiveness, determine how these videos help students, and reflect on what learners who created the videos have learned in the process. In addition, it will examine the potential of short videos as a valuable learning resource for students in rural areas who face significant limitations in accessing conventional language-learning materials.

Throughout the project, the student team encountered challenges that shaped their approach to learning. These included identifying the most relevant topics, crafting messages that resonate with diverse viewers, and balancing the educational content with entertainment value. Such obstacles pushed the students to develop problem-solving skills and adapt strategies to improve the impact of the work. Additionally, working collaboratively enhanced teamwork and time management abilities, as they navigated the demands of planning, scripting, filming, and editing each video on a regular schedule. A significant part of the learning process was understanding the audience. Regular viewer feedback played a pivotal role in refining the content. The candidates learned to anticipate their needs, address recurring issues, and expand their focus to include vocabulary, pronunciation, and idiomatic expressions. This iterative process emphasized the value of active listening and adaptability in educational initiatives. The paper also reflects on the broader implications of the project.

Each short video required meticulous research to ensure accuracy, creativity to design visually appealing and concise content, and critical analysis to address common pain points in English language learning. Through the lens of their work, the learners observed the power of digital platforms to democratize education and reach global audiences. Social media offered a unique opportunity to teach English in an informal yet effective way, bridging the gap between traditional language instruction and modern learning preferences. It also highlighted how technology can foster inclusivity by making education accessible to those who might otherwise lack resources or opportunities.

Literature Review

Multimedia learning has demonstrated efficacy in augmenting language acquisition by integrating visual and aural cues, thereby considerably boosting

comprehension and retention. Mayer (2009) contends that multimedia elements, including narrative audio and graphical images, correspond with cognitive load theory, facilitating effective information processing and retention for learners. This approach alleviates cognitive strain by dividing cognitive effort across multiple channels, such as visual and auditory, offering learners a disciplined and enjoyable way to acquire new language skills. The interactive nature of multimedia enhances engagement with information, which is especially advantageous for language acquisition, as it requires continual reinforcement of concepts through diverse exposures.

Moreover, video-based learning mitigates the difficulties that students in rural or disadvantaged areas face by providing an accessible platform for complex linguistic topics. Visual aids, such as animations and real-life scenarios, help students connect academic language norms to everyday situations, thereby enhancing the relevance and practicality of the learning experience. The use of subtitles in these movies functions as a dual-input method, offering both auditory and textual reinforcement, enabling learners to enhance their listening and reading comprehension concurrently. Diao and Sweller's (2007) research illustrates the efficacy of this method, showing that learners benefit from integrating spoken conversation with written material, thereby enhancing comprehension across multiple presentation modalities.

Furthermore, the use of concise, focused movies that address common mistakes, such as incorrect verb tenses, misused prepositions, or subject-verb agreement errors, has demonstrated significant efficacy in accurate language repair. These films provide instant feedback and present practical examples for learners to replicate, promoting a more engaged and concentrated learning atmosphere. This technique, unlike conventional classroom approaches that often lack adequate individual attention, enables the tailoring of information to address specific mistake patterns frequently seen in rural pupils. (Celce-Murcia) (2001) underscores that immediately and repeatedly addressing these faults is essential for their long-term reduction. This tailored, video-based technique ensures that even learners with limited access to resources can receive focused, effective language education.

Methodology: Video Content Production

The project aimed to create one-minute videos on common mistakes in English. It had to be simple yet powerful, with quick lessons that could be easily integrated into students' daily activities. Every video tackled one common language mistake: explaining it in detail, then correcting it clearly with example sentences showing how the word or sentence should be used. Captions and other visual aids were also included to emphasize key points. The material was meticulously developed so that each video focuses on a distinct problem, such as common mistakes EFL learners make in areas like articles, verb forms, and prepositions. Moreover, the videos were developed systematically, starting with the introduction of mistakes, then moving to corrections, and ending with examples that allow learners to apply their learning in real-life scenarios. All these videos were integrated into the Language Lab software, which was utilized during the practical class hours for first-year undergraduate engineering students in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.

Target Market

The targeted population is mostly university students from rural areas and other small towns, with minimal exposure to functional English. This demographic picture shows basic English users who continue to make mistakes that impede overall fluency. Generally, such students rarely use conventional English education methods or technology-based educational resources. The key objective of this project was to meet this group's learning requirements in a motivating, very practical way. These videos were prepared with the diverse needs of students from rural backgrounds in mind. To make the language simple and easy to understand, simple scenarios were populated with real-life analogies in familiar, localized language. These videos were integrated with the existing mobile application, allowing access via mobile phones, since students primarily use their smartphones to access most of their study materials.

Team Roles

The collective efforts of educators, content developers, and video editors were instrumental in bringing the project to fruition. Every team member played a pivotal role in ensuring the project's success. The work roles were evenly distributed among team members to ensure the videos were effective.

Content Research

Team members researched the most common errors students make in functional English use and finalized several of them, which can be applied to the videos' storyline. They ensured the content was relevant and well-aligned with the target audience's needs, regardless of the scenario.

Video Production

As a next step, the project team conducted scripting and video production. They ensured that every video was within the one-minute limit, thus brief but adequately informative. To enhance accessibility and aesthetic appeal, captions, visual effects, and subtitles were added during editing. This change assisted students who would have difficulty processing audio by providing support as they learned the basic concepts.

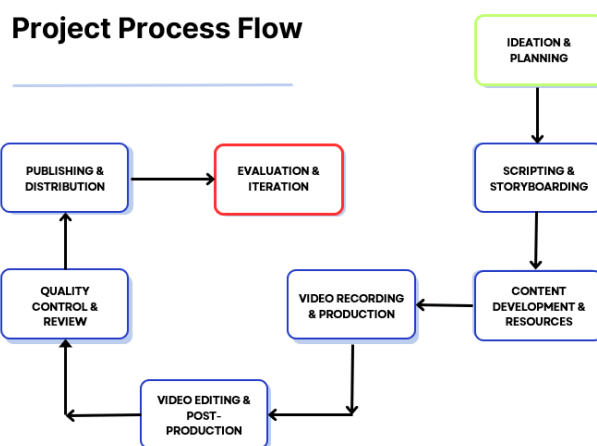


Figure 1 – Project Process Flow

Results and Discussion

The videos were disseminated to the target audience via commonly used platforms, which included Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, and Language Lab software. Thus, the videos were released in environments that assured a wider reach. The goal of this project was to enhance students' language-use competence in the classroom by providing easy access to appropriate language. These videos helped students recognize common mistakes by focusing on the errors and providing explicit corrections. These videos allowed students to learn at their own pace by enabling them to review any lesson whenever necessary to reinforce understanding. These learners were interested in the lesson due to its directness, and, most importantly, the examples used in those lessons were applied in their daily activities. The one-minute video's format worked well to attract the students. The short length of the videos allowed students to learn much in less time without becoming bored. The addition of images and subtitles to the videos helped the learners to recall more. Such graphic reinforcement of the topics enabled students to see what was right, making comprehension clearer.

Feedback and Analysis

Video series end surveys and informal interviews were conducted after each video series to obtain student feedback. Responses from 135 respondents showed that they both enjoyed and benefited from the videos. 70% of learners reported gaining confidence in their English after watching the videos, especially in writing and speaking. 82% of students said that the brevity of the videos allowed them to have fun without being overwhelmed. The respondents also felt they had the flexibility to watch the videos whenever they wanted and could identify errors immediately. Moreover, around 77% of the learners reported positive results. Continuous feedback from students and instructors was necessary to improve the content and ensure it met learners' needs. This feedback cycle ensured the team continually improved the project and its effectiveness. Thus, this project serves as a testament to the incorporation of future initiatives into educational reform.

Conclusion

The project tested the effectiveness of the short-form, video-based language-learning technique for improving students' college-level English proficiency. The one-minute videos provided a practical yet accessible way for students to correct common language mistakes, thereby generally improving their language proficiency. As learners indicated, the approach helped instill confidence and competence in English use both in and out of the classroom. The initiative focused on making educational resources accessible to students digitally. As technology advances, future projects will expand the scope of content and provide more interactive, accessible learning materials to meet the needs of students who are struggling to improve their English language competence.

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