
Engaging with YouTube kids: A network for English language acquisition

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Received: 17 March 2025 | Accepted: 23 May 2025 | Published: 10 June 2025

Abstract: YouTube Kids is an engaging and easy-to-use resource for young students who wish to study English. Its vast library of educational resources offers a rich and diverse learning environment, including engaging animations and interactive films. YouTube Kids fosters a welcoming and stimulating environment that enables children to quickly advance their English language proficiency by incorporating play and exploration into language training. This study employed a comprehensive narrative literature review as the qualitative approach. According to the pertinent literature examined, YouTube Kids offered advantages and disadvantages as a medium for learning English. YouTube Kids is an invaluable tool for young students attempting to learn English. However, there are some possible drawbacks as well. In particular, certain films might not use similar English customs or accuracy, which could lead children to poor pronunciation or grammar. Parents and teachers must cautiously choose and monitor the video material their children watch to safeguard their children's YouTube Kids content that aids their language learning objectives. Parents and teachers can minimize potential drawbacks and optimize the site's value as a tool for teaching young students English language skills through rigorous monitoring and curation.

Keywords: Educational content, English, Language acquisition, Review, YouTube kids

Biographical notes: Genesis Gregorious Genelza is currently a faculty member at the University of Mindanao Tagum College teaching General Education, Professional Education, and Major Subjects in English. He graduated with a Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English in 2016 and is a graduate of a Master of Arts in Education major in English (MAEd-English). He has been a Model United Nations ambassador and a delegate, receiving major awards for best position paper for UNHRC, UNICEF, and UNESCO; a special mention for WHO and UNESCO; and an honorable mention for UNICEF. Furthermore, his passion for learning and commitment to growing professionally, spiritually, and personally have been his constant priority and consideration.

1. Introduction

Kids nowadays are usually found using social media. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, YouTube Kids, and other social media websites are some examples. These websites provide a medium for amusement and conversation for kids. It is now critical for parents to understand the nature of social media websites because they do not provide a vigorous atmosphere for kids and teenagers (O'Keeffe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011). YouTube Kids is a separate platform for kids. Preschoolers (ages two to four), young children (ages five to seven), and older children (ages eight to twelve) make up its three age groups. There are three settings on YouTube Kids, each with varying degrees of limitation. For kids up to ten years old who are prepared to transition to the standard YouTube website, the platform's most restricted mode is "Explore." The children can view music videos, films, instructional videos, gaming videos, and more in this environment (Marcos, 2021).

YouTube Kids is an excellent resource for language learning because of its flexibility and accessibility. Unlike traditional classroom programs, YouTube Kids allows kids to pick and select what interests them and study at their own pace. Since kids are more likely to watch and rewatch videos they enjoy, autonomy can increase motivation and engagement. In order to guarantee that kids are exposed to a variety of linguistic inputs, parents and educators can also create playlists geared explicitly toward meeting learning objectives. Better language retention and comprehension are further supported by the features that allow users to pause, replay, and engage with the content.

All new technologies, including YouTube Kids, encourage children's social connection. Children with strong communication skills can develop pleasant and courteous relationships and interactions with others and learn how to compete socially (Ikhfi et al., 2020). Despite their many obstacles, they put much effort into overcoming them and

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completing their academic obligations (Dairo et al., 2023). Children who are adjusting to the increased demands on education have been seen to become agitated and anxious. An internet platform that aids in both educating and entertaining kids during this crisis is necessary. This need draws our attention to the potential use of YouTube Kids, which provides well-known videos on various subjects and is age-appropriate. While several studies have examined the safety of YouTube for children, very few have examined how children might utilize the app to guide their learning. In the age of technology, YouTube is mediating children's education. How children investigate the information is mainly determined by their degree of intelligence, learning, language, and focus. Each child responds to YouTube kids' music and videos distinctively. They think in distinct ways and with different intellectual abilities (Mawaddah & Halili, 2020). However, children's YouTube videos taught them a variety of vocabulary words. However, children's physical activity declined simultaneously, and YouTubers began negatively impacting their health in many ways (Irsa Ramzan & Iqbal, 2022). Hence, parents must control their platform utilization at some point and pay attention when using the app.

The psychological and behavioral effects of video games are examined by Peralta et al. (2025), which is similar to the worries about kids' screen time and exposure to content on websites like YouTube Kids. Even though YouTube Kids doesn't have interactive games, its algorithm-driven video recommendations can have a similar effect on kids' social skills, cognitive development, and attention span. This study contributes to the larger conversation about the consumption of digital content and its possible advantages and disadvantages for young users. Unlike the main YouTube channel, the YouTube Kids app gives parents peace of mind regarding their children's safety. Kids have more options for learning and entertainment thanks to the app. From now on, this app might be the greatest for children, particularly during the pandemic when most countries are closed to the public and many institutions. Children can learn informally or officially while entertained by YouTube Kids (Temban et al., 2021).

Indeed, YouTube Kids has become a handy tool for learning English, especially for younger students. A wide variety of engaging and interactive content created especially for kids is available on the site. Fun animations, enticing music, and repeated language patterns are standard in these movies, and they greatly assist children in learning new vocabulary and fundamental grammar. Children find comprehending and recalling new words and phrases simpler when the visual and auditory components are combined to support language development. Children are kept delighted while learning with the wide range of content available, which can be more successful than traditional classroom approaches. Examples of this content include educational cartoons and nursery rhymes.

The usefulness of Quipper as a digital learning platform in blended learning environments is the main topic of Cedeño et al. (2025), who also provide insights into how technology can help or hurt educational experiences. Despite its primary focus on entertainment, YouTube Kids is increasingly being used as a non-formal learning tool through instructional videos, which is consistent with conversations about digital pedagogy. This study demonstrates how crucial platform design, user engagement, and content quality are to optimizing the educational potential of digital tools like YouTube Kids.

Additionally, YouTube Kids offers an immersive language-learning environment that can mimic the process of learning a language naturally. Children can learn to recognize proper pronunciation, intonation, and conversational rhythms by being exposed to native speakers regularly and experiencing actual language use in various settings. Immersion experiences of this nature are essential for improving speaking and listening abilities. Additionally, children can be exposed to various English accents and dialects through the platform's broad cultural content, enhancing their appreciation and knowledge of the language. YouTube Kids helps young learners learn English more successfully by combining entertainment and instruction. This not only makes learning English more enjoyable for them. Hence, the researcher would like to find out through gathering findings and discussions from different published research if the platform used by kids these days is a good channel for English language acquisition and if there are also drawbacks and challenges in using them so that the researcher can give recommendations thereafter.

2. Literature review

2.1. The nature and functions of YouTube kids

The company introduced a child-friendly version of the leading YouTube platform, YouTube Kids, in 2015 to provide a safer online experience for kids. The app's features and design cater to the unique requirements of younger users, offering a safe environment where kids may explore a range of age-appropriate content. Calvert and Valkenburg (2019) claim that the app uses YouTube's extensive content library, strict moderation procedures, and filters to ensure kids only see amusing and instructive videos and do not come across offensive stuff. It is recommended that the platform be utilized, improved, and implemented to ensure the effectiveness of handling an English class (Batalla et al., 2023).

YouTube Kids may unintentionally host manipulated or misleading content that could mislead or harm young viewers. This is relevant to the study conducted by Fruto et al. (2025) on the rise of deepfake technology and its implications for digital media authenticity. When evaluating the safety and dependability of video content aimed at children, it is essential to comprehend how deepfakes operate and their potential to produce false realities. The widespread use of these technologies prompts questions about the necessity of more stringent content monitoring and AI-based detection systems on YouTube Kids and other children's media platforms

In addition, YouTube Kids strongly emphasizes entertainment, offering a wide range of media such as family-friendly series, cartoons, and music videos. The platform strives to balance entertaining and informative information to keep kids interested. Westermann (2021) claims that this strategy accommodates kids' wide range of interests, making

the app appealing to various age groups and tastes. YouTube Kids keeps kids interested by providing a variety of fun and informative videos, all while ensuring they are watching age-appropriate stuff.

Also, parents and teachers must guarantee that the content suitably integrates instructional strategies and practical exercises that enhance students' English language competency. Teaching the curriculum subject and being fluent in the instruction language will improve student control over what is taught in class and result in favorable academic achievements. These elements improve the student's exposure to and a chance to comprehend the content information (Genelza, 2022).

Finally, data security and privacy are prioritized in YouTube Kids' design. Compared to the official YouTube website, the platform gathers less data and has stringent privacy regulations to safeguard children's data. According to research conducted in 2019 by Montgomery and Chester, YouTube Kids conforms to regulations, guaranteeing that the app upholds strict guidelines for data protection. Thanks to our privacy-focused approach, parents can feel reassured that their children's online activities are protected from data misuse.

In their thorough analysis of child sexual exploitation and abuse, Manawatao et al. (2025) emphasize how digital platforms contribute to these dangers. This is especially relevant to YouTube Kids, which has come under fire for occasionally letting offensive or predatory content pass through its filters despite its kid-friendly branding. Their findings highlight the significance of parental controls and safeguards on platforms that kids use to avoid digital exploitation and guarantee their online safety.

Generally, YouTube Kids is a dedicated platform that offers a secure, regulated, and educational online environment to meet the needs of younger users. By providing children an environment for learning, exploration, and enjoyment, YouTube Kids answers parental concerns with carefully selected material, strong parental controls, educational tools, and entertainment options. The app's dedication to providing young audiences with a positive digital experience is demonstrated by its thorough approach to kid safety and content filtering.

3. Research methodology

This research study utilized a comprehensive narrative literature review as a research design method. In order to pinpoint research gaps, condense information, and draw conclusions about a topic, narrative literature reviews employ an integrated examination of the body of recent literature. To explain how new research fits into the overall research picture, one must thoroughly understand the present state of the literature. A literature review is an academic research piece published in an esteemed peer-reviewed publication. A literature review's primary goal is to objectively report the current knowledge about a subject using previously published research. A literature review gives the reader a thorough synopsis and context, which aids in understanding the topic (Green et al., 2006).

4. Findings and discussions

After reading the selected publications, the following important details and assertions ought to be highlighted in this article:

Table 1: List of Literature on YouTube Kids

References	Findings and Discussion
Kabooha, R., & Elyas, T. (2018). <i>The effects of YouTube in multimedia instruction for vocabulary learning: Perceptions of EFL students and teachers. English language teaching, 11</i> (2), 72-81.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The study's conclusions show that, on the posttest, the group who watched the YouTube videos performed better than those who did not. The findings unequivocally demonstrate that pupils' vocabulary development benefited from the statistically significant effects of YouTube. The assumptions show that the contributors had a promising view of using YouTube in the classroom. The results also revealed a significant improvement in the children's language achievement. The implications of the findings for foreign language instruction and acquisition are investigated.
Kilag, O. K. T., Heyrosa-Malbas, M., Arcillo, M. T., & Barcena, M. C. (2023). <i>The role of YouTube children's educational videos in enhancing early childhood English language proficiency: An investigation of parental perceptions. International Journal of Scientific Multidisciplinary Research, 1</i> (7), 833-846.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The study's findings show that parents believe YouTube kids' educational movies can be useful for enhancing their early English language proficiency. The research also exposed that parents use diverse films, including English songs and nursery rhymes, to teach their kids English vocabulary, grammar, and sentence structures. The study also discovered that children who watched educational YouTube videos had several benefits, such as increased motivation to learn the language and improved exposure to the English language. However, the study did identify many drawbacks, including the potential for exposure to improper content and the potential for children to get addicted to YouTube educational videos. The survey also identified problems with the quality and dependability of several instructional films.
Zucker, T. A., Jacobos, E., & Cabell, S. Q. (2021). <i>Exploring barriers to early childhood teachers' supplemental academic language curriculum implementation. Early Education and Development, 32</i> (8), 1194-1219.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">There are several ramifications for educators and policymakers regarding using YouTube's kid-friendly educational videos to improve early English language competency. First and foremost, educators and legislators must help parents choose suitable movies and monitor how their kids use them (Zucker et al.,

<p>Imaniah, I., Dewi, N. F. K., & Zakky, A. (2020). <i>YOUTUBE KIDS' CHANNELS IN DEVELOPING YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH: PARENTS' BELIEFS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS</i>. <i>IJLECR (International Journal of Language Education and Cultural Review)</i>, 6(1), 20-30.</p>	<p>2021).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recognized that the chosen network can enhance young children's vocabulary in the English language and help them communicate more effectively. Despite parents' control, YouTube is valuable for enhancing kids' communication aptitudes. The intellectual and social competence of early children is contingent on actual communiqué. Preschoolers absorb and respond appropriately to others and develop linguistic and message aids to transport their desires, views, and moods in communal situations. Individuals acquire social competence through proficient communication and cultivate courteous, affirmative exchanges and connections. As a result, children can learn about the world, themselves, and others.
<p>Tahmina, T. (2023). <i>Students' perception of the use of YouTube in English language learning</i>. <i>Journal of Languages and Language Teaching</i>, 11(1), 151-159.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The findings showed that while most students said watching instructional videos on YouTube helped them learn, they said the site had minimal effect on their ability to prepare assignments, pay attention in class, and become proficient in grammar. The majority of pupils stated that watching videos on YouTube improved their ability to learn vocabulary, made learning the language very interesting, made it easy to understand the content of the videos, provided them with relevant learning resources, improved their ability to speak the language by taking notes in a diary while watching videos, and improved their listening comprehension. Thus, it can be inferred from the study's findings that using YouTube improves EFL learners' English language ability in various ways.
<p>Adisti, A. R. (2022, March). <i>Investigating using YouTube as a virtual teaching medium in ELT among non-English students</i>. In <i>ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching</i> (Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 1-9).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ever since the COVID-19 virus struck this globe unexpectedly, events have taken an abrupt turn. In reply to this problem, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia created the Number 3 of 2020 Online Learning Policy on Prevention of COVID-19 in the Education Unit. Since YouTube is a popular medium in online classes, many educational institutions followed this approach by producing online resources to help students transition from in-person to virtual learning. The results demonstrate that YouTube Kids positively affects non-English speaking ELT pupils. The training of student test response pages, scholar imprint reviews, and further remarks regarding the content on the YouTube comment section reinforces this conclusion. Based on the respondents' poll results, it can be stated that YouTube Kids can be a useful computer-generated teaching tool among non-English speaking students at IAIN Salatiga.
<p>Chen, B., Wang, Y., & Wang, L. (2022). <i>The effects of virtual reality-assisted language learning: A meta-analysis</i>. <i>Sustainability</i>, 14(6), 3147.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's educational films on YouTube Kids can be a valuable resource for improving young children's English language skills. Children can improve their language abilities by watching these entertaining and interactive learning films.
<p>Sakkir, G., Dollah, S., & Ahmad, J. (2020). <i>Students' perceptions toward using YouTube in EFL classrooms</i>. <i>Journal of Applied Science, Engineering, Technology, and Education</i>, 2(1).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is indispensable to practice YouTube Kids videos in EFL lessons to see the requirements of the younger generation regarding education. While textbook resources have long been the standard, the use of YouTube videos in training and erudition has recently gained popularity due to the hasty progression of technology. A few studies have been done on how students feel about using YouTube to practice speaking English. The research's conclusions demonstrate that most students had a favorable opinion of YouTube and were eager to use it in EFL classes. Additionally, it was found that the students had been using YouTube to assist them in concluding their studies and course obligations. Consequently, it can be said that the students favored cultivating their English language skills by viewing English YouTube videos.
<p>Nofrika, I. (2019). <i>EFL students' voices: The role of YouTube in developing English competencies</i>. <i>Journal of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning</i>, 4(1), 56-73.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The research findings showed that students frequently viewed three types of YouTube videos: vlogs, social sciences, and art and humanities. Videos in the arts and humanities include music videos, lyric videos, films, speeches, sitcoms, and chat shows. Food, review, haul, beauty, and DIY videos are examples of vlogs. Videos for instruction and simulation are found in the social sciences. In summary, the students' YouTube viewing is determined by their interests. The outcome also showed that watching YouTube videos enhanced some

	parts of English. These include grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking abilities.
Wang, H. C., & Chen, C. W. Y. (2020). <i>Learning English from YouTubers: English L2 learners' self-regulated language learning on YouTube. Innovation in language learning and teaching, 14</i> (4), 333-346.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The findings indicate that the top three motivations for learning English on YouTube Kids were discovering additional educational materials, pursuing the allure of learning the language, and gaining insight into cultural practices. After seeing them, the students were more inclined to click "like" and "share" the YouTube films with their peers. Additionally, it was found that learning English on YouTube Kids was more flexible, engaging, and interactive than traditional classroom instruction; however, students who wished to enhance their English or get ready for exams found this informal learning method less successful. Based on the findings, the study's conclusion highlights the research's pedagogical significance and suggests using YouTubers' English-teaching videos in conjunction with traditional classroom instruction.

The table illustrates the pros and cons of YouTube Kids as a channel for learning English. YouTube Kids was created to provide families and children an enjoyable and family-friendly environment. The well-liked, kid-friendly YouTube Kids app offers a variety of fresh content as well as well-known kid-friendly videos. The ideal YouTube experience for your family is up to you.

Reading can be very difficult because there are so many things to consider. Nonetheless, some research indicates that there are strategies to help readers advance their reading skills (Federe et al., 2023). Although learning content is only a portion of the offers, children can discover uplifting and instructive themes that are readily applicable to school and everyday life. The design is user-friendly and intuitive, with various guides and links to other resources. The researcher reflects that YouTube Kids can be an effective educational resource. However, if it is being utilized for educational purposes, the instructor must be the one using it. There are too many distractions from the accessibility and interface for pupils to use.

5. Recommendation

For children, teens, and young adults, creating material for YouTube and streaming services can positively affect their academic performance and mental health. It can enhance mental health outcomes like stress reduction and self-esteem while assisting pupils in developing academic abilities like digital literacy and critical thinking. Content creation can be a potent tool for augmenting and improving learning and well-being, but it should not be viewed as a replacement for conventional classroom instruction or mental health care.

6. Conclusion

Although the content is appropriate, parents and teachers must monitor usage because the filters are flawed. Although most children would see most of the content as harmless, the app has previously generated controversy due to its inclusion of some blatantly improper videos and advertisements (including profanity, alcohol, and nudity). Adult supervision is essential because YouTube's selection method is not unblemished; Google publicly claims it is "a mix of automated analysis and user input." Commercials as such will be incorporated into some content, and advertisements may still appear while watching videos. Crucially, even if a wealth of high-quality educational content is available, there is also a wealth of subpar content videos and content that is simply inappropriate for the classroom.

Additionally, since they are applying the English language in the classroom, the students must actively engage in the open speech exercises designed to enhance their public speaking skills. They are urged to use English in various academic contexts (Genelza, 2021). Therefore, you must use the safelist feature, which allows you to curate from YouTube Kids and YouTube itself, if you want to be certain that your students will not encounter anything you do not want them to. Although having it is wonderful, it sometimes burdens people who want to let their children observe and develop in a secure environment.

7. Funding

This research paper received no internal or external funding.

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