VISUAL AND VERBAL CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH TEACHING FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS: A STUDY OF YOUTUBE CHANNELS

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze visual and verbal creativity in English teaching content on YouTube channels. Using a qualitative approach, it examines visual elements such as animation, graphics, and text, alongside verbal techniques including storytelling, humor, and intonation variation employed by content creators in educational videos. Content analysis was conducted by identifying and categorizing these elements across several popular YouTube channels focusing on English language teaching. The findings reveal that visual aids, such as flashcards and photos, help learners connect English vocabulary with real-life contexts, making abstract concepts tangible and enhancing comprehension. Verbal elements, including clear instructions, storytelling, and humor, engage learners and reduce anxiety, fostering a motivating environment. Rachel's English emphasizes interactive tasks supported by visuals, while Tiffany's channel employs structured steps to encourage consistent practice and fluency building. Both channels demonstrate how verbal and visual elements complement each other to enhance learners' understanding and engagement. This study highlights the significance of integrating visual and verbal creativity in digital media to facilitate effective English learning and offers recommendations for content creators and educators to improve the quality of digital teaching materials.

INTRODUCTION

The increasing use of digital technology in education has greatly enhanced the effectiveness of the learning process. As Meidasari (2016) asserts, access to internet-based teaching materials and digital technologies can significantly improve student academic achievement. This view is further supported by Ali et al., (2025) who emphasize that the use of digital technology in language learning not only enhances students' perceptions of their self-knowledge but also improves their engagement and use of the English language. Moreover, (Lee, 2023) highlights the importance of digital fluency, stating that it plays a critical role in how students use digital media to learn English, making them more adept at navigating the vast array of online tools available. (Muftah, 2024) further explores this idea, noting that social

media platforms, such as YouTube, do not just transform social interactions but also provide an interactive environment conducive to learning, especially for English language learners.

In particular, YouTube has become an increasingly popular digital tool for English language instruction. It provides a multimedia-rich learning experience that integrates both visual and verbal elements, facilitating engagement and comprehension. (Kohler & Dietrich, 2021) argue that YouTube's ability to combine visual presentations and auditory narration makes complex topics more accessible to a diverse range of learners. This view is echoed by Khan et al. (2023), who note that YouTube fosters an educational environment where the integration of visual and verbal content significantly enhances the learning process. Thumbnails on YouTube are one example of this visual-verbal synergy, where text and images work together to convey a clear and compelling message, drawing viewers' attention and improving their understanding of the video's content (Riyandi, 2022). Additionally, the use of visual grammar in thumbnails ensures clarity and alignment with the video's educational material (Riyandi, 2022)

The role of visual elements in language learning is widely recognized, with studies showing that visual cues can improve language acquisition by making learning more interactive and engaging. For instance, (Albahiri & Alhaj, 2020) emphasize that visual elements, such as videos, enhance students' language skills by providing a dynamic learning environment. Similarly, (Shen et al., 2022) argue that the visual components of YouTube videos, such as color schemes and design, capture attention and foster interaction, which is crucial in language learning. Furthermore, (Ryabokony et al., 2020) suggest that visualization techniques, like mind maps and graphs, promote cognitive activity and motivation, which are essential for processing and applying educational information. The combination of these elements facilitates the retention of knowledge and encourages active participation in the learning process (Glaser & Schwan, 2020). Despite the increasing recognition of YouTube's potential in English language learning, there remains a gap in research regarding the interaction between visual and verbal elements in educational content. (Abdul Aziz et al., 2022) acknowledge YouTube's effectiveness as a tool for language instruction but do not explore the synergy between visual and verbal components. Similarly, Faqeabdulla (2024) recognizes the value of YouTube in enhancing language skills but does not delve into the ways in which these elements work together to improve learning outcomes. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how the integration of visual and verbal creativity in YouTube videos contributes to the learning process for English language learners.

Research Questions

1.   How are visual elements used to support English learning in YouTube videos?

2.   How is verbal creativity applied to explain English concepts in an engaging way?

3.   How does visual-verbal interaction affect the effectiveness of learning content?

The objectives of this research are to explore how visual and verbal creativity are utilized in YouTube content aimed at teaching English to learners. First, this study seeks to analyze the use of visual elements, such as images, graphics, and layouts, to enhance comprehension and engagement in the English teaching process. Second, it aims to examine the verbal creativity demonstrated by presenters, including their use of language, tone, storytelling techniques, and interactive strategies to effectively convey educational material. Lastly, the research will investigate the interplay between visual and verbal elements, highlighting how their combination creates a dynamic and engaging learning experience that supports English language acquisition.

Digital technologies have fundamentally transformed education, particularly in language learning. Cognitive Load Theory (Skulmowski & Xu, 2022) plays a critical role in shaping effective digital learning environments by managing the cognitive load placed on learners. This theory stresses the importance of presenting information in a way that avoids overwhelming learners, thereby improving learning outcomes. Furthermore, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Pan, 2020) offers valuable insights into how users come to accept and utilize technology. TAM identifies perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use as key factors influencing the adoption of digital tools, making it relevant for understanding how students and educators embrace digital media in educational settings. In the context of digital learning, Connectivism, a theory proposed by Siemens (2005), highlights the role of social and technological networks in the learning process. Knowledge, according to connectivism, is distributed across a network of connections, and learning involves navigating these connections. Additionally, the Digital Learning Spaces Framework (Dalsgaard & Ryberg, 2023) categorizes digital learning environments into four distinct spaces—Individual Space, Working Group, Community of Interest, and Open Connections—each serving a unique role in facilitating learning. This framework is especially relevant in the context of YouTube as an educational tool, as it operates within the broader digital ecosystem that supports various learning styles and activities.

YouTube, in particular, has gained recognition as an effective educational tool. Kohli and Sharma (2021) note that YouTube not only connects academicians and educators globally but also provides engaging and informative content, transforming education into something more innovative and creative. Research focusing on English language learning highlights YouTube's effectiveness in improving student engagement and comprehension. For example, (Sirait et al., 2021) found that YouTube serves as a valuable medium for English learning, with both educators and students positively evaluating its use. Furthermore, in higher education, YouTube's role has been examined, revealing that instructors and students prioritize aspects such as accuracy, content creators' expertise, video duration, and style, which align well with educational objectives and facilitate effective learning experiences (Greeves & Oz, 2024). Creativity, both visual and verbal, is essential in enhancing language teaching and learning. Visual creativity involves the ability to generate original ideas and solutions through visual means such as art and design. In educational settings, fostering visual creativity helps enhance students' cognitive and perceptual abilities. As (Tyler & Likova, 2012) highlight, learning in the domain of visual art relies on a complex system of perceptual, cognitive, and motor functions, underscoring the significant role visual creativity plays in the learning process. Similarly, (Ulger, 2015) argues that visual creativity is a valuable educational tool, emphasizing its importance in developing students' higher cognitive functions.

Verbal creativity, on the other hand, pertains to the ability to produce novel and effective verbal expressions. This includes skills such as storytelling, problem-solving, and critical thinking. (Gao et al., 2023) define verbal creative thinking (VCT) as the ability to generate new and useful solutions through verbal forms, highlighting its relevance in educational contexts. Verbal creativity helps students enhance their communication abilities, fostering innovative thinking and improved language use. Digital technologies, including those employed in second-language teaching, also foster creativity. (Chik, 2015) explores how virtual reality can enhance oral English teaching, suggesting that the application of such technology improves students' interest and creativity. Furthermore, digital platforms facilitate collaborative creativity in language learning, as noted by (Selfa-Sastre et al., 2022), who state that digital tools provide platforms for joint problem-solving and content creation. This collaborative approach is crucial in language education, where creativity and interaction can lead to deeper learning. (Pikhart et al., 2024) further support this by concluding that digital learning environments can stimulate creativity by providing engaging platforms for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners. Additionally, (Woo et al., 2023) explore how natural language generation tools (NLG) enhance

creativity in English language writing. Their study reveals that students utilize various strategies when engaging with NLG tools, which influence both the generation of ideas and the quality of their writing, further highlighting the role of digital tools in fostering creativity in language learning.

(Paivio, 1990) Dual-Coding Theory posits that cognitive tasks, including memory, are influenced by two separate systems: the verbal (language) processes and the nonverbal (mental imagery) processes. According to Paivio, these two systems work together to improve cognitive performance and memory. In the context of language learning, this theory underscores the importance of integrating both verbal and nonverbal representations to enhance understanding and retention. The combination of visual and verbal elements, therefore, plays a critical role in supporting language acquisition, particularly when employed through digital media such as YouTube. Content analysis is a valuable qualitative research method for evaluating and interpreting various forms of communication, including text, images, videos, and audio. In the context of educational research, content analysis is particularly useful for assessing teaching materials and determining how effectively they convey educational content. This method enables researchers to categorize and identify recurring themes, structures, and patterns in the content, offering valuable insights into how different elements—such as language and visuals—contribute to learning outcomes. In English language teaching, content analysis helps researchers examine the verbal and visual creativity present in instructional materials. By evaluating how presenters use language and visual elements, such as graphics, images, or animations, content analysis provides a detailed understanding of how these elements interact to engage learners and facilitate comprehension. This approach also allows for a deeper exploration of how multimedia resources, including YouTube videos, can support language acquisition and offers valuable insights into the strengths and weaknesses of different teaching methods.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study will adopt a qualitative research approach, utilizing content analysis as the primary method. Content analysis allows for the systematic examination of the verbal and visual elements in educational YouTube videos, enabling a detailed understanding of how these elements support language learning. The data for this research will consist of videos from 3-5 popular YouTube channels dedicated to English language learning, such as *Steffany* and *Rachel's English*. The selection of these channels is based on their popularity, video duration,

and focus on English language education. These criteria ensure that the data represents widely accessible, educational content with a strong focus on improving English language skills. The data collection process will involve downloading and viewing videos from the selected YouTube channels that meet the inclusion criteria. The researcher will take detailed notes on the verbal and visual elements used in each video. Visual elements will include graphics, color schemes, animations, and charts, while verbal elements will focus on language use, intonation, storytelling techniques, and the use of humor in communication. The analysis will follow a content analysis framework, categorizing the visual elements (e.g., tables, animations, colors, and graphics) and verbal elements (e.g., intonation, storytelling, humor). A thematic analysis approach will be applied to explore the relationship between the visual and verbal components, identifying how they work together to enhance learners' understanding and engagement in English language learning. To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, triangulation will be employed by reviewing videos from various channels and cross-checking the observed elements. Additionally, discussions will be held with experts in English language education to validate the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the content analysis. This process will help enhance the robustness of the findings and ensure that the conclusions are grounded in credible insights.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rachel's English Channel

This study analyzed the content of a Rachel's English YouTube video through qualitative content analysis, focusing on the interplay between visual and verbal elements to understand how they support English language learning. The video utilizes a combination of interactive exercises and visual aids to engage learners and encourage active participation.

The visual elements in the video play a pivotal role in enhancing comprehension and retention. Flashcards are used to highlight objects, providing learners with a clear, focused way to associate English vocabulary with images. The inclusion of photos from everyday settings, such as a playground, kitchen, and picnic scene, offers relatable contexts for learners to practice describing verbs, adjectives, and nouns. These visuals are strategically integrated into the learning process, making abstract concepts more concrete and easier to understand. By leveraging elements such as graphics, animations, and detailed descriptions, the video appeals to visual learners and supports multisensory learning.

The verbal elements are equally significant in this video. The instructor uses clear, concise language to guide learners through interactive exercises, such as ten-second tasks for identifying verbs, adjectives, and nouns. These tasks encourage cognitive engagement by prompting learners to actively think in English rather than relying on translation from their native language. Storytelling techniques, such as personal anecdotes like "My son burned himself in the playground," make the content relatable and engaging. The use of humor and a conversational tone helps to maintain interest, while reassurance, such as "If your mind goes to your native language first, that's okay," reduces learner anxiety and promotes confidence.

The thematic analysis reveals that the video successfully integrates visual and verbal elements to create a comprehensive and engaging learning experience. By combining flashcards and photos with interactive verbal tasks, the video encourages learners to think critically and use their imagination to describe everyday objects and actions. This approach fosters a habit of thinking in English and enhances vocabulary acquisition. The exercises are versatile, allowing learners to practice anytime and anywhere, which makes the learning process highly accessible.

Tiffany English Teacher

The YouTube video titled "The Number One Way to Study English Every Single Day" by Tiffany provides a structured approach to English language learning, emphasizing five clear steps. Each step requires only five minutes, making the process accessible and manageable for learners. The first step focuses on vocabulary building, where learners reflect on their morning emotions and search for synonyms to expand their vocabulary. This step is reinforced by writing and repeating the word three times to solidify retention. The second step introduces English expressions, encouraging learners to think about their meals and find expressions that describe the food's taste, followed by repetition for fluency.

Step three highlights fluency practice by asking learners to write a sentence about an event at lunchtime, using the "five Ws" (Who, What, When, Where, and Why) to organize details. Similarly, step four promotes thought organization by encouraging learners to describe someone they met during the day, focusing on their clothing, personality, and job. The final step, fluency part two, requires learners to reflect on their entire day, using the "five Ws" again to create a comprehensive sentence about their day as a whole. Together, these steps aim to improve vocabulary, expression usage, and fluency in a systematic and engaging way.

In addition to the structured language learning steps, Tiffany incorporates storytelling to connect with her audience on a personal level. For example, she shares an anecdote about

staying with friends and encountering their dog, providing an engaging and relatable narrative. This storytelling technique demonstrates effective communication skills, blending humor and descriptive details to keep the audience engaged. The use of conversational tone, intonation, and humor makes the lesson approachable and enjoyable, catering to a diverse audience.

The analysis of this video reveals a strong interplay between verbal and visual elements. Verbally, Tiffany uses repetition, clear explanations, and relatable examples to ensure learners understand and retain the content. Her intonation and storytelling enhance engagement, while her use of humor fosters a friendly and motivating learning environment. Visually, the video likely supports the verbal instructions with graphics, text overlays, and appealing visuals, although these were not included in the transcript. This combination of verbal clarity and visual support aligns well with principles of effective educational content, making the video a valuable resource for English language learners.

The analysis of Rachel's English and Tiffany's videos shows how visual and verbal elements effectively support English language learning. Rachel's English uses visual aids like flashcards and everyday photos, such as playgrounds and kitchens, to help learners connect English vocabulary with real-life contexts. These visuals make learning more relatable and easier to understand, especially for visual learners. The video's interactive tasks, such as identifying verbs, adjectives, and nouns in ten seconds, engage learners actively, helping them think in English rather than relying on their native language. The instructor's storytelling, like sharing a personal story about her son, adds relatability, while her humor and encouraging tone, such as saying, "It's okay if you think in your native language first," reduce anxiety and build learner confidence.

In Tiffany's video, "The Number One Way to Study English Every Single Day," a structured five-step method helps learners practice English daily, with each step taking just five minutes. For example, the first step focuses on vocabulary building, where learners reflect on their emotions and find synonyms. Later steps include writing sentences about daily events and describing people using the "five Ws" (Who, What, When, Where, Why). This method encourages consistent practice and improves vocabulary and fluency. Tiffany also uses personal storytelling, such as sharing an anecdote about a friend's dog, to make her lessons engaging and relatable. Verbally, she uses repetition and clear explanations to ensure understanding, while humor and a friendly tone keep learners motivated. Although the transcript doesn't detail the visuals, it's likely that graphics and text overlays complement her explanations.

Both videos highlight different teaching approaches. Rachel's English emphasizes visuals and interactive exercises, helping learners understand vocabulary in concrete contexts. Tiffany's video focuses on consistent practice and structured reflection, helping learners organize their thoughts and build fluency. Both instructors use storytelling, humor, and conversational tones to connect with learners and create a supportive learning environment.

These findings align with the research method, which focuses on analyzing verbal and visual elements in educational YouTube videos. By studying multiple channels, this research highlights diverse strategies that make English learning engaging and accessible, ensuring the results are valid and applicable to a wide range of learners.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

This study highlights the significant role of visual and verbal creativity in enhancing English language learning through educational YouTube videos. By analyzing content from Rachel's English and Tiffany's channel, the findings demonstrate how the integration of visual aids and verbal techniques creates an engaging and effective learning environment. Visual elements, such as flashcards, photos, and potential graphic overlays, provide learners with tangible, real-life contexts that support vocabulary acquisition and comprehension. Verbal techniques, including storytelling, repetition, humor, and clear instructions, help to build confidence, reduce anxiety, and foster active engagement among learners.

Rachel's English emphasizes the use of interactive exercises supported by visuals to encourage learners to think critically and associate language with specific contexts. Tiffany's channel, on the other hand, focuses on a structured, step-by-step approach to consistent practice, helping learners organize their thoughts and improve fluency. Both approaches underline the importance of balancing visual and verbal elements to cater to diverse learning needs.

These findings underline the value of integrating visual and verbal creativity in digital teaching materials. They not only enhance learners' understanding and retention but also motivate them to engage actively in the learning process. Educators and content creators are encouraged to adopt these strategies to improve the quality of their digital resources and provide learners with more effective and enjoyable language learning experiences. Future research could further explore the impact of these techniques on learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

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