



Using YouTube Videos as a Teaching Resource to Improve Pronunciation in Intermediate-Level Students

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Abstract

English pronunciation remains one of the least explored components in academic research on language learning. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the use of YouTube videos as a pedagogical resource to improve pronunciation in intermediate-level students. A quantitative, pre-experimental design with a single group ($n = 28$) was implemented, in which pre-test and post-test measures were assessed using a pronunciation rubric and an observation checklist. The intervention combined selected YouTube videos with guided activities based on imitation and repetition techniques over a six-week period. The results indicate a statistically significant improvement in students' pronunciation ($p < 0.001$), although persistent difficulties were observed in intonation and the production of final consonants. The findings establish that the audiovisual contribution of YouTube videos alone does not explain phonological development; rather, their effectiveness depends on their integration within a structured pedagogical framework. The results provide empirical evidence on the conditions under which widely available digital resources can support pronunciation development in the English learning process, while acknowledging limitations related to the pre-experimental design and sample size.

Key words: YouTube in language learning; intermediate learners; pronunciation instruction; digital resources; speaking skills

Resumen

La pronunciación en inglés es uno de los elementos lingüísticos menos explorados en la investigación académica. Por ello, la presente investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar el uso de videos de YouTube como recurso didáctico para mejorar la pronunciación en estudiantes de inglés de nivel intermedio. Se implementó un diseño preexperimental cuantitativo con un solo grupo ($n = 28$), que utilizó medidas pretest y posttest evaluadas mediante una rúbrica de pronunciación y una hoja de observación. La intervención combinó el uso de videos seleccionados de YouTube con actividades guiadas basadas en la imitación, siguiendo una estrategia de sombra durante un período de seis semanas. Los resultados muestran una mejora estadísticamente significativa en la pronunciación de los estudiantes ($p < 0,001$), en la que también se observaron dificultades persistentes en la entonación y la producción de consonantes finales. Según los hallazgos, el aporte audiovisual de videos de YouTube por sí solo no explica el desarrollo fonológico; su efectividad depende, más bien, de su integración en un marco pedagógico. En consecuencia, los datos analizados proporcionan evidencia sobre las condiciones bajo las cuales los recursos digitales ampliamente disponibles pueden apoyar el desarrollo de la pronunciación en inglés como lengua extranjera, reconociéndose también las limitaciones relacionadas con el diseño preexperimental y el tamaño de la muestra.

Palabras clave: YouTube en el aprendizaje de idiomas; estudiantes de nivel intermedio; enseñanza de la pronunciación; recursos digitales; habilidades orales

INTRODUCTION

In the process of learning English with limited access to continuous interaction with competent speakers, students' pronunciation is insufficient to achieve the intelligibility necessary for communication. Evidence from Ecuador determines persistent difficulties in pronunciation, despite curricular expectations aligned with communicative competence (Coquinche et al., 2026; Levis, 2024). Teachers' teaching practices are currently not sufficient for the development of functional phonological performance.

English pronunciation involves both segmental accuracy and suprasegmental control, classroom practice prioritizes grammatical development and leaves aside relatively underdeveloped phonological formation (Hernández et al., 2025). As a result, students can achieve structural precision without achieving intelligible speech, which is insufficient in understandable oral communication.

The use of audiovisual resources such as YouTube videos as a means of addressing this limitation has been proposed because they provide access to immersive speech models. Research analyzing YouTube-based materials reports improvements in oral skills when students interact with information input (Cabañas & Mercado, 2024). Other studies conclude that processing demands associated with speech speed, lexical density, and discrepancy between input and proficiency level can limit comprehension and reduce the impact of instruction (Zhang et al., 2026). That is, exposure alone does not explain phonological development, which makes pedagogical accompaniment necessary.

Despite the expansion of digital technology in language teaching, previous research has focused only on listening or written comprehension, paying less attention to practice in oral production. This results in a limitation that is particularly noticeable in educational settings where classroom instruction is the main source of oral input.

Therefore, this study contributes by analyze the use of YouTube videos as a didactic resource to improve pronunciation in intermediate level English learners, in which the following research question is

addressed: ¿To what extent does a YouTube-based instructional intervention improve the pronunciation of intermediate-level EFL learners?

A quantitative pre-experimental design was employed to compare students' performance before and after the intervention to identify measurable changes in pronunciation within a controlled instructional environment.

The study provides English educators with data on how YouTube's effectiveness in pronunciation depends on its integration into a pedagogical framework to specify the conditions under which YouTube materials improve the language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

YouTube

The use of technological resources in education has gained importance in recent decades, especially in the foreign language learning process, which requires effective tools (Bernal, 2024; Gallegos, 2024). Among these resources are social media platforms due to their accessibility. One of the most widely used, according to Patiño and Valencia (2020), is YouTube, which users utilize to upload, share, and access a wide variety of videos from around the world. In particular, the platform's features make it a useful tool for language learning due to its diverse functions designed for instruction.

Studies such as that by Asary et al. (2024) report improvements in pronunciation thanks to exposure to YouTube, while Jalaluddin (2016) found that comprehension difficulties were due to speech rate and lexical complexity. The effectiveness of YouTube depends not only on exposure but also on pedagogical mediation.

Handi et al. (2020) and Shahzadi (2024) state that YouTube, as a platform used in education, integrates a wide variety of educational materials created by native speakers and language teaching experts. The incorporation of multimedia platforms into English language teaching responds to the need

to optimize learning in a context characterized by the digitization of oral communication. The exposure to the language provided by YouTube allows students to be immersed in the culture of the target language, achieving meaningful immersion without the need to visit or live in a country where English is spoken as a native language.

YouTube is a tool that impacts student motivation because, as reportated by Ziya, et al. (2025), the use of videos in language learning effectively captures learners' attention compared to conventional materials. The integration of technology into language learning has been shown in many studies to increase student interest and participation due to the visually appealing content (Yaqoob et al., 2025; Tuljannah et al., 2025).

YouTube, according to several authors such as Supendra and Amilia (2021) and Caldeiro et al. (2022), can enhance students' independent learning because they can access content at any time and repeat videos as many times as needed, since YouTube is a platform that can be used on all electronic devices with internet access. Digital tools give students greater control over their learning process (Asary et al., 2024; Fuentes & LaBad 2025). The flexibility provided by the digital platform allows each learner to progress at their own pace, which, in the long run, is reflected in their comprehension (Rosario & Macahuachi, 2021). Digital tools give language students greater control over their learning process.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that YouTube is an educational resource that can be used in the learning process to generate authentic content that fosters motivation and independent learning. Due to its audiovisual nature, it is a useful tool for developing language skills such as pronunciation.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation, according to authors such as Job (2025) and Coquinche et al. (2026), is considered one of the primordial components in foreign language acquisition, as it directly influences oral communication. Pronunciation plays a substantial role in intelligibility, understood as the ease with which

a speaker can be understood by others (Levis, 2024). However, students face difficulties producing sounds appropriately because there are significant differences between their native language and the target language, especially in contexts like Ecuador, where, in line with Coquinche et al. (2026), oral production remains a predominant limitation among learners.

Figueredo and Figueredo (2021) state that pronunciation is not limited to the articulation of individual sounds, but also includes linguistic elements such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. The linguistic elements effectively convey meaning in oral communication (Bihari, 2022). Therefore, mastering pronunciation involves a laborious process focused on correctly producing sounds and appropriately employing these elements.

On the other hand, Toledo and Carrión (2024) mention that pronunciation is closely related to communicative competence, which can be evidenced when students have a good command of grammar and vocabulary. They also add that communication can be affected if pronunciation is unclear. Hernández et al. (2025) argue that pronunciation should be considered an important skill within the language teaching process, and resources should be used to enhance it, given that it is the foundation of good communication.

The way a person speaks can influence how they are evaluated by others because it serves a communicative function and also affects social interaction, impacting the speaker's credibility, as Altun (2023) explains. Consequently, inadequate pronunciation can generate misunderstandings that often result in negative perceptions.

YouTube in the development of pronunciation

Seiz and Carrió (2025) suggest that the English learning process is currently linked to both technological resources and the development of linguistic skills, given their increasing importance. Aish et al. (2024) further point out that the use of digital platforms such as YouTube has become an innovative

tool that can support pronunciation improvement in English learners. Pronunciation learning requires constant exposure to appropriate speech models, which YouTube can provide.

Several studies have analyzed the use of YouTube videos in relation to pronunciation learning, such as the case by (Asary, Nadri, & Hassim, 2024) which has identified that YouTube is an effective tool for learning English, aimed at improving students' pronunciation, thanks to its varied and accessible content that can be used by learners to enrich the practice of oral skills.

Limitations in the YouTube application regarding pronunciation

In his study, Jalaluddin (2016) outlines some limitations to using YouTube in the classroom related to content comprehension. On the one hand, students may struggle to understand the language in videos spoken by native speakers at a fast pace. On the other hand, the language level of the audiovisual materials may be confusing or inappropriate for the students' level. In short, while YouTube can be an innovative resource that enhances language learning, it can also present disadvantages that may limit learners' linguistic development.

In short, based on the collected bibliographic information, it can be established that the use of YouTube in education is a platform that can be used for the development of pronunciation because through videos it can expose students to the accents of native speakers without the need for them to live in or visit another country; they can practice pronunciation from the comfort of their homes or anywhere and at any time they wish.

METHODOLOGY

In order to analyze the use of YouTube videos as a didactic resource to improve pronunciation in intermediate level English students, a quantitative approach was used with a pre-experimental design comprised of a single group with pre-test and post-test, as it did (Mukarrama & Fajriansyah, 2025). The pre-experimental design was selected due to contextual limitations that restrict causal inference. The

research is of an applied type, because it sought to respond to a specific need of the educational context related to the improvement of pronunciation in the learning of the English language. It also presented a descriptive and explanatory scope, since it described the initial oral performance of the participants and examined the effects generated by the intervention.

The study was carried out during the 2025-2026 academic year in a public educational unit in Ecuador located in Ventanas, Los Rios, where English is taught as a foreign language within the regular curriculum. The population considered was 354 students, of which 28 third-year students of technical high school were chosen through a census sampling technique used because the entire class participated in the study. The students were classified as intermediate level according to the standards of the national curriculum that classifies high school students at an estimated B1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Due to the fact that the research is quantitative, it was decided to apply pretest and posttest of pronunciation with a rubric pronunciation an observation sheet.

Pretest. It consisted of the application of an initial evaluation applied before the intervention in which the students performed one of a paragraph extracted from the book “The Little Prince”.

Posttest. It was applied at the end of the intervention with a structure equivalent to the pre-test, in order to compare the progress achieved after the use of videos from the social network platform YouTube.

Pronunciation Rubric. Oral performance was assessed using a pronunciation rubric structured around five criteria: articulatory clarity, vowel and consonant production, stress, intonation, fluency, and rhythm. Each criterion was evaluated using a five-point Likert scale, where 1 corresponded to initial performance and 5 to excellent performance. The instrument was applied in the pre- and post-test to measure students' pronunciation levels. The final score corresponded to the average obtained across the five criterio.

Observation sheet. It was used to record four dimensions such as participation, motivation, common pronunciation difficulties, and student interaction with the active material.

The validity of the content of the instruments was established through the judgment of three experts in English language teaching, who had between 10 and 15 years of professional experience. The specialists evaluated the relevance of the dimensions included in the instruments. They also made adjustments to the evaluation criteria and the material used in the pre-test and post-test. Finally, the internal consistency of the rubric was examined using Cronbach's alpha with an estimated value of 0.76, which is acceptable.

The intervention lasted six weeks with a start date from October 6th to November 14th with two weekly sessions covering three hours of class, with a total of 12 instructional sessions.

Stage 1: Administering the pre-test: In the initial incimu corresponding to the pretest, the students completed the initial pronunciation test to determine their initial level of performance.

Phase 2: YouTube-Based Instructional Intervention

Selected YouTube videos were incorporated into classroom instruction that included criteria such as:

- Suitability for intermediate students
- Clear pronunciation models by native or proficient speakers
- Short duration (3-8 minutes)
- Engaging and authentic content
- Subtitles where pedagogically appropriate

The intervention incorporated structured pronunciation activities focused on imitation and repetition techniques. Imitation of pronunciation patterns involved the controlled repetition of words and phrases after listening to a model, allowing students to focus on the precise articulation of sound production (Freire et al., 2025). In contrast, shadowing strategy required students to reproduce the audio

in real time, faithfully following the rhythm and intonation of the speaker in the videos (Vélez & Mendoza, 2024).

Stage 3: Administering post-test: When the intervention ended, the students completed the post-test composed of the same evaluation criteria as the initial test.

The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS software, in which descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean percentages, and standard deviation were calculated. The Wilcoxon signed rank test was also applied to compare the test scores and determine if there were statistically substantial differences after the intervention. Regarding ethical considerations, institutional authorization was obtained before data collection, for which a formal request was made to the rector of the educational institution in which it was established that the name of the educational entity would not be mentioned to maintain its confidentiality, only students would be considered to participate voluntarily.

RESULTS

Pretest and Posttest Results

Table 1

Comparison of pretest and posttest pronunciation scores

Measure	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standar Derivation	Mean Difference	Z	p-value
Pretest	28	4,50	6.40	5,44	0.56			
Posttest	28	6,40	8,50	7,38	0.60	1,94	4,84	< ,001

Note. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to compare related samples.

Table 1 shows an improvement in student performance after the intervention based on YouTube videos due to the fact that in the pre-test a mean of 5.44 is established, which increased in the post-test to 7.38, with a mean difference of 1.94 points; on the other hand, the Wilcoxon signed rank test reported a

value of $Z = 4.84$ and a p -value of $p < 0.001$, values that establish statistically substantial differences between the measurements of both tests.

Classroom observation results

Table 2

Student engagement in YouTube-based pronunciation activities

Observed Dimension	Low	Moderate	High
Student participation	11%	25%	64%
Motivation toward activities	7%	18%	75%
Interaction with YouTube videos	9%	21%	70%
Pronunciation performance during tasks	14%	33%	53%

Table 2 indicates favorable levels of student participation during the intervention, since they showed a high degree of motivation that was reflected in a positive interaction with the audiovisual materials used during the development of the sessions; consequently, a large number of students improved in their pronunciation during the oral practices, compared to a small group that remained at a low level.

Table 3

Main pronunciation difficulties

Pronunciation Difficulty	Frequency	Percentage
Word stress errors	10	35.7%
Vowel sound confusion	8	28.6%
Intonation problems	6	21.4%
Consonant ending omission	4	14.3%

According to the information presented in Table 3, the most recurrent pronunciation difficulty was related to the incorrect accentuation of words followed by confusion in the production of vowel sounds,

also to a lesser extent problems related to intonation and the omission of final consonant sounds also appeared, since suprasegmental features and vowel production are complicated for students.

DISCUSSION

The results of the research indicate a statistically significant improvement in the pronunciation of the students after the intervention based on YouTube videos, the increase in the mean from 5.44 to 7.38 and in the significance value ($p < 0.001$). The change in the results is limited to a quantitative variation that establishes a reconfiguration in the processes of phonological production, which are related to the recognition of prosodic patterns that focus on both rhythm and intonation.

Systematic exposure to authentic input is decisive in the learner's phonological adjustment, which contrasts with traditional materials, since the selected videos introduced variability in speech in both accent, speed and intonation, elements of pronunciation that expand the opportunities for auditory discrimination. The data obtained support Hernández's (2021) approach, because contact with real language models contributes to a more accurate understanding of the contextual use of language. However, the present study specifies that such exposure is effective when it is articulated with production-oriented tasks in order to prevent the student from remaining in an exclusively receptive role.

The qualitative findings are similar to those reported by Asary et al. (2024), they identify improvements in pronunciation from the use of YouTube. However, it is important to clarify that the approaches focused on free access to content, in this study the improvement is linked to the didactic structuring of the activities, accompanied by the guided practice of imitation of phonological patterns, which introduce a relevant distinction, where the impact of the resource does not depend only on the platform, but on the type of pedagogical mediation that accompanies its use.

On the other hand, the analysis of initial difficulties was used to understand more precisely the scope of the intervention, in which the most common errors in the students' pronunciation predominate in

the accent of words and in vowel production; that is, students' limitations in pronunciation focus on the management of suprasegmental and segmental features, a finding that coincides with what Figueredo and Figueredo (2021) stated regarding the complexity of the pronunciation components. The decrease in these errors after the intervention reaffirmed that the auditory models provided facilitated the identification of phonological contrasts that are not present in the mother tongue. Therefore, the persistence of difficulties in aspects such as intonation and the omission of final consonants in a group of students indicates that exposure to input, by itself, does not guarantee a uniform acquisition of linguistic patterns.

The behavior observed in the students during the intervention can be interpreted in light of what Fabra (2022) pointed out, the speed of speech and the complexity of the content can limit comprehension. Although in this study the materials were selected under pedagogical criteria, it is possible that individual differences in the auditory processing capacity of each learner have influenced the results, which introduces a critical nuance: the effectiveness of YouTube videos is conditioned by their quality, and by their adequacy to the student's level and also by the teaching intervention during their implementation.

The observation data deepen this relationship, taking into account that the high levels of motivation and interaction with the videos affirm that YouTube generates an environment conducive to the prolonged participation of students, but the fact that high performance in pronunciation during tasks reaches 53% reveals that motivation does not translate directly into phonological mastery. This finding questions the idea that the attractiveness of the resource is sufficient to guarantee learning and establishes that the development of pronunciation requires longer processes.

In this sense, although studies such as those by Ziya et al. (2025) and Yaqoob et al. (2025) conclude that the impact of audiovisual resources on student participation, the results of this study show that this impact acquires pedagogical relevance when it is channeled through strategies such as shadowing, which

has been widely accepted worldwide in improving pronunciation. Guided practice, in particular, is seen as a substantial component to transform exposure into effective production.

However, it is necessary to consider the limitations of the methodological design, which did not have a control group and restricts the possibility of attributing the observed changes exclusively to the intervention, in which the influence of external variables is not ruled out. The sample size and the duration of the intervention also limit the generalization of the results to other educational contexts because the elements must be considered in future research that incorporates quasi-experimental or experimental designs with greater control of variables.

Based on the above, this study provides important data on the use of YouTube videos, integrated within a structured didactic sequence aimed at improving pronunciation in intermediate level students, but its effectiveness does not lie in the resource itself, since it depends on the articulation between the exposure and guided practice of the educator.

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of YouTube videos within a structured pedagogical framework can improve pronunciation in English learners because it has been determined that the effectiveness of audiovisual resources depends not only on exposure but also on their alignment with guided instructional strategies, such as imitation and shadowing.

The analysis of students' initial performance revealed pronunciation difficulties associated with segmental and suprasegmental features, particularly vowel production and intonation. These aspects improved after the intervention, but their persistence in some students suggests that pronunciation development requires constant practice both inside and outside of educational institutions.

The value of YouTube as a teaching resource lies in its didactic integration, rather than in the platform itself. The combination of authentic input and structured activities is presented as a fundamental

condition for transforming passive exposure into active phonological production. Finally, despite the positive results, limitations related to the pre-experimental design and sample size restrict the generalizability of the findings; therefore, it is recommended that future research should adopt more robust experimental designs to examine in greater depth the impact of digital audiovisual resources on pronunciation.

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