*Follow Me! Does this Educational Material Still Motivate Modern EFL Learners*
*to Develop Their Speaking Skills?*

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## Abstract

In previous research, the use of videos was examined to determine its effectiveness in language classes, specifically the development of listening and speaking skills. It was found that videos still produce excellent results in this context. However, artificial intelligence (AI) is starting to dominate educational technology, requiring practitioners to have adequate technological knowledge and reliable Internet access. In contrast, the conventional use of videos, albeit outdated, is straightforward and requires very little technological competence. This study therefore re-examines the use of videos as teaching and learning aids, in order to ascertain the motivation of Saudi female EFL undergraduates to develop their speaking skills. Hence, a quasi-experimental approach was adopted. For one month, the reality TV series *Follow Me!* was used, determined as Intermediate level English. The students were assigned the task of watching episodes at home at their convenience and then submitting a voice-recorded synopsis of each episode to a WhatsApp group. An electronic survey was administered at the end of the study, adapted from Mhlongo et al. (2022) to cover five domains: Technology-specific motivational components, learner-specific motivational components (self-confidence/anxiety/self-efficacy), learner-specific motivational components (need for achievement/effort), course-specific motivational components, and integrative and instrumental motivational components. Finally, recommendations to reconsider the use of videos in the EFL context were made for stakeholders based on the results.

Keywords: Educational Videos, English Language, EFL, Speaking Skills, Saudi Arabia

# 1. Introduction

Rapid technological advancements have brought about a significant shift in many sectors, with an identifiable impact on education – major shifts in technology always require adjustments to education. Various educational technologies have been in use since the 1980s, especially following developments in audio-visual material at the time. However, such useful technology has gradually been abandoned in favour of more recent innovations. Nevertheless, while it is important to be able to embrace change, it is also necessary to acknowledge the benefits of certain old-fashioned tools, which have been tested in previous research and implemented successfully over time. One of these conventional technologies is television, whereupon old TV series can now be viewed in a number of convenient ways, for example, on a mobile phone. In particular, short videos are preferred, given the fast pace of contemporary life. Thus, the current study re-examines the use of conventional TV series by today's EFL learners, accessed via YouTube, in order to determine whether these learners are still motivated to adopt videos as a technological aid. In so doing, the study attempts to answer the following research question: *How does using videos impact EFL learners' motivation to develop their speaking skills?*

## 1.1 Significant Objectives of this Research

1. This study will re-examine the use of videos in foreign language classes following dramatic technological development.
2. This study will recommend the use of videos in EFL speaking classes as a means of presenting authentic material.

# 2. Literature Review

In this review of the literature, the topics of motivation in EFL and the benefits of using videos to help teach EFL language skills will be specifically addressed.

## 2.1 Motivation and Language Learning

Creating a suitable environment to encourage language learners to improve and develop their language skills is a necessity. This will ensure continuity of learning with a stronger chance of the learners acquiring the required knowledge. Most importantly, maintaining and developing the motivation of language learners will have a positive impact on their learning.

Various motivation scales have been proposed by linguists in the literature, whether developed for learners studying a second language (L2) or non-native speakers learning the official language (L1) of a country. For example, Mhlongo et al. (2021) developed their scale to measure the motivation of EFL learners in a multicultural environment. As such, Mhlongo et al. (2021) sought to build a more inclusive and sophisticated scale on the basis of Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), published in 1985, which is more suited to the Western context (Macintyre et al., 2019).

Using Mhlongo et al.'s (2021) scale, the motivation to learn is measured by considering the socio-educational model of language acquisition included in the AMTP. The model contains three main components of the motivation to learn: integrative orientation, attitude of the learners, and general interest in learning the language (Macintyre et al., 2019). The present

study will reuse this scale by identifying any changes in the motivation of EFL learners through the use of videos as an educational tool.

## *2.2 Revisiting the Use of Videos in EFL Language Skills Classes*

The implementation of technology has been a source of interest in the teaching of languages, already considered before the advent of personal computers and the Internet. In an early work by El-Araby (1974), the implementation of technology was already being proposed as a teaching aid. In terms of the four language skills, El-Araby grouped technologies as aids for listening, speaking, reading, and writing, on the premise that the use of language alone to teach languages can become tedious for learners. Consequently, teachers lose the attention of their students, with no means of regaining it. In contrast, when using various technologies as aids, learners are more actively engaged with the learning experience and what is learned in class can be applied in real life. Moreover, the material is presented in small units to facilitate the learners' understanding, and the framework for learning can be organized to allow each student to proceed at his or her own pace. Finally, the technologies used can incorporate tools to guide students in the right direction and provide encouragement at any time and in any location.

One of the multi-skill aids described by El-Araby is the use of closed-circuit television (CCTV) to broadcast video-taped material. Some Arab countries have adopted this method as a beneficial teaching aid. Thus, recorded material like films, TV series, or home videos can easily be transmitted as 'televised' language programmes. El Araby further added that real situations can be recorded using a video recorder and then replayed as required to learners, for example, revisiting material from live television. However, these days, video tapes are rarely used and no longer produced, and even discs have largely been superseded by downloads, streaming services, and online platforms. However, one of the best known online platforms for accessing all kinds of audio-visual material is the social media platform, YouTube.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) comprehensively describe the diverse use of technology in language classes, specifically computer assisted language learning (CALL). The above authors highlight that CALL enables social interaction, which helps construct students' knowledge, as each learner can draw upon the experience of his or her peers. Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) add that technology produces individualization, social interaction, and enhanced student motivation.

Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2013) further describe language as a fixed system that requires adherence to a process, which the use of technology can help learners to explore. In this regard, YouTube was mentioned as an important application of technology, described by the above authors as a website where a short video can be watched, downloaded, shared, or uploaded. Most YouTube videos are available to anyone with an adequate Internet connection. The topics of these videos cover a vast spectrum and include videos of actual language classrooms, lectures, and short vignettes from everyday situations. A further benefit of this platform is that students can enjoy a high level of autonomy while being guided by their teacher, thereby enhancing their motivation. Besides, through authentic videos, students can learn about the everyday life or culture of the speakers of the target language.

In the literature, several studies have examined the use of videos in relation to increased learners' motivation. In an early publication by Secules et al. (1992), the authors mentioned

that the videos permit language learners to witness the dynamics of interaction, as they observe native speakers interacting in real-life situations, using different accents, registers, and paralinguistic cues (for example, gestures). Goldstein and Driver (2014) mention that videos may be accessed by learners via tablets and smartphones, which helps shift the nature of instruction towards the 'flipped classroom'. Thus, the learners watch the videos at home and invest classroom time in practicing the material.

However, only a very limited number of studies since the 1990s have examined the impact of using videos in a language-teaching environment, and these were mainly conducted following the advent of the Internet. In 2017, an experimental study was conducted by Pisarenko (2017) to examine the use of self-constructed videos in developing the communicative competence of high school foreign language learners (including different skills, grammar abilities and knowledge, pronunciation and vocabulary, and skills in reading, writing, audition, and speaking). The results revealed a significant improvement in the competence of the experimental group, compared to a control. In a more recent study (Ilyas & Syarif, 2023), the researchers composed videos using the Canva application to teach EFL students, gathering their experiences at the end of the intervention. The results revealed that the students enjoyed learning in this way, and both the students and teachers found this to be an appealing approach to teaching and learning. The students also shared their thoughts that it was easier for them to learn English through videos.

Even though it may be observed throughout the literature that videos are enjoyable study tools, more advanced technology such as artificial intelligence (AI) and chatbots have since evolved. Therefore, this study will investigate the perceptions of undergraduate EFL students, with regard to the use of conventional videos uploaded onto YouTube, specifically the *Follow Me!* TV series for English language learners, which was produced by the BBC and Bayerische Rundfunk in the late 1970s.

## 3. Methodology

This part of the study explains the teaching and data collection procedures, the research tool, and the sampling procedures applied in the current study.

### 3.1 Implementation Process and Data Collection Procedures

This study investigates the use of the *Follow me!* series, available on YouTube, adopting a quasi-experimental approach. The videos selected were designed for Intermediate level English learners and include material such as greetings, personal introductions, and everyday conversations. These videos are around 10 minutes' duration, and the research participants were asked to watch them at their convenience (whenever or wherever they wanted), with no limit on the number of episodes viewed. They would then submit a voice-recorded summary of what they had learned, uploaded to a WhatsApp group.

The study was conducted in August 2024. The researcher posted links to the videos and research tools on the Blackboard account of the selected instructor's class. The recordings were sent to a WhatsApp group that the researcher could access, but without influencing the participants or making them aware of her presence in the group. These recordings were not to exceed two minutes per student, summarizing the main points gleaned from each episode of *Follow Me!*. However, there were no limits imposed on the number of summaries that could

be transmitted to the WhatsApp group over the course of the intervention. Therefore, a student could send just one or several summaries.

Approval to conduct this study was obtained from the Head of the relevant University Department, with no ethical approval required, as there was no risk of harm to any of the participants. Moreover, the researcher was not the participants' instructor, thereby ensuring objective results. Finally, the assignment was not counted as part of the course and was therefore not graded. Pre- and post-electronic surveys were administered using Google Forms to measure the students' motivation levels before and after implementing the videos. Participation was purely voluntary and so the participants had the right to withdraw from the experiment if and whenever they wished.

The students were undertaking an English Listening and Speaking course, as female Intermediate-level undergraduate EFL learners, having passed the standardized language ability test for acceptance by the English Department at the College of Languages and Translation. For the English Listening and Speaking course, they received two weekly sessions with their instructor.



Figure 1: Teaching and Study Procedure

### 3.2 Survey Components

The survey items were adapted from Mhlongo et al. (2021), making them more suitable for the purpose of the current study. In turn, Mhlongo et al. (2021) had developed the scale from Gardner's AMTB model from 1985, which was developed to cover the following domains (Macintyre et al., 2019):

Domain 1: Technology-specific motivational components, related to the use of technology in language classes to develop motivation and a more enjoyable learning environment.

Domain 2: Learner-specific motivational components (self-confidence/anxiety/self-efficacy), amounting to an education setting that reduces anxiety and increases self-efficacy.

Domain 3: Learner-specific motivational components (need for achievement/effort) that include learning a language for a specific purpose.

Domain 4: Course-specific motivational components, meaning that the method of delivering the course instruction is suitable for the learners.

Domain 5: Integrative and instrumental motivational components, which means learning the language for the purpose of achieving specific goals (instrumental) or engaging with the community and culture of the speakers of that foreign language.

*3.3 Sampling Procedure*

To select the sample, convenience sampling was applied, based on the course instructor's consent to help with implementation. The teacher was included after being granted permission by the Head of Department. She held a PhD in TESOL and had been teaching EFL at university level for more than 15 years. However, all the materials used for the experiment in this study were provided by the researcher.

The participating students (n=22) were all registered on an EFL speaking course with the same teacher attending the same section. All of the participants consented to participate in the research survey. The sample consisted of female undergraduates in their first year of study. Therefore, they had three or more years remaining before graduating with a major in English Language from the English Department of a College of Languages and Translation in Saudi Arabia. Their English language level ranged from Intermediate to Upper Intermediate, and they had been required to pass the Standardized Test of English Proficiency (STEP) with a minimum score specified by the Department, prior to acceptance on the English Language degree programme. The Standardized Test of English Proficiency is described by the Saudi Education and Training Evaluation Commission (2024) as:

> … similar to other well-known international tests (TOEFL and IELTS) [and] designed in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. [It] targets students who wish to join English language programs in Saudi universities, as well as scholarship programs [and] caters to programs which require a certain level of English language proficiency and individuals who wish to obtain evidence of English language proficiency.

## 4. Results

This study examines the impact of using videos on EFL learners' motivation to develop their English L2 speaking skills. Accordingly, the current study addresses the following question: *How does using videos impact EFL learners' motivation to develop their speaking skills?*

A reliability analysis will be conducted in this section, and the results relating to the above question will be presented.

*4.1 Reliability*

Reliability is a very important aspect of selecting a questionnaire instrument. It refers to the degree of consistency or stability found in the research results if the study is conducted with the same respondents on repeated occasions.

To evaluate the reliability of this study, Cronbach's alpha values were calculated for each dimension. Cronbach's alpha (α), is the most common estimate of reliability. It is based on inter-correlations between the observed indicator variables and results in values of between 0 and 1, with an acceptable range of between 0.7 and 1.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis

| Items | No. of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Domain 1: Technology-specific motivational components | 8 | 0.803 |
| Domain 2: Learner-specific motivational components (self-confidence/anxiety/self-efficacy) | 12 | 0.934 |
| Domain 3: Learner-specific motivational components (need for achievement/effort) | 8 | 0.826 |
| Domain 4: Course-specific motivational components | 10 | 0.872 |
| Domain 5: Integrative and instrumental motivational components | 9 | 0.860 |
| TOTAL | 47 | 0.966 |

The above Table demonstrates that the data passed the reliability test, as the Cronbach's alpha value for the questionnaire was .966 (more than 0.7) and therefore exceeded the acceptable value.

## 4.2 Data Analysis

The Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test results indicate statistically significant improvements in all motivational domains for EFL learners' speaking skills, after incorporating videos as part of their learning process. The analysis revealed significant differences across various motivational components, including technology-specific motivational components ($p=0.017$), learner-specific motivational components related to self-confidence ($p=0.\,010$), need for achievement ($p=0.001$), course-specific motivational components ($p=0.002$), and integrative motivational components ($p=0.031$). Overall motivation showed the highest statistical significance ($p=0.001$), with most learners reporting enhanced motivation and confidence in developing their English speaking skills after the intervention.

These findings suggest that using videos as an instructional tool effectively increased the EFL learners' motivation, thereby supporting the success of the programme in encouraging the learners to improve their L2 speaking skills. The programme demonstrated the successful integration of video content, thereby facilitating a more engaging and interactive learning environment, which likely contributed to the learners' increased motivation to enhance their speaking abilities. The following Table presents the participants' opinions, also illustrated in Figure 2.

<p style="text-align:center;">Table 2: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test (n=22)</p>

| Comparison | Rank Type | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks | Z | p-Value | Effect Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Domain 1: Technology-specific motivational components | Negative ranks | 5 | 10.70 | 53.50 | -2.376 | 0.017 | 0.507 |
| | Positive ranks | 17 | 11.74 | 199.50 | | | |
| Domain 2: Learner-specific motivational components (self-confidence/ anxiety/ self-efficacy) | Negative Ranks | 5 | 8.20 | 41.00 | -2.593 | 0.010 | 0.553 |
| | Positive ranks | 16 | 11.88 | 190.00 | | | |
| Domain 3: Learner-specific motivational components (need for achievement/ effort) | Negative Ranks | 2 | 1.50 | 3.00 | -3.709 | 0.001 | 0.791 |
| | Positive ranks | 17 | 11.00 | 187.00 | | | |
| Domain 4: Course-specific motivational components | Negative Ranks | 3 | 6.67 | 20.00 | -3.025 | 0.002 | 0.645 |
| | Positive ranks | 16 | 10.63 | 170.00 | | | |
| Domain 5: Integrative and instrumental motivational components | Negative ranks | 6 | 8.92 | 53.50 | -2.161 | 0.031 | 0.461 |
| | Positive ranks | 15 | 11.83 | 177.50 | | | |
| **Total** | **Negative ranks** | **3** | **6.00** | **18.00** | **-3.524** | **0.001** | **0.751** |
| | **Positive ranks** | **19** | **12.37** | **235.00** | | | |
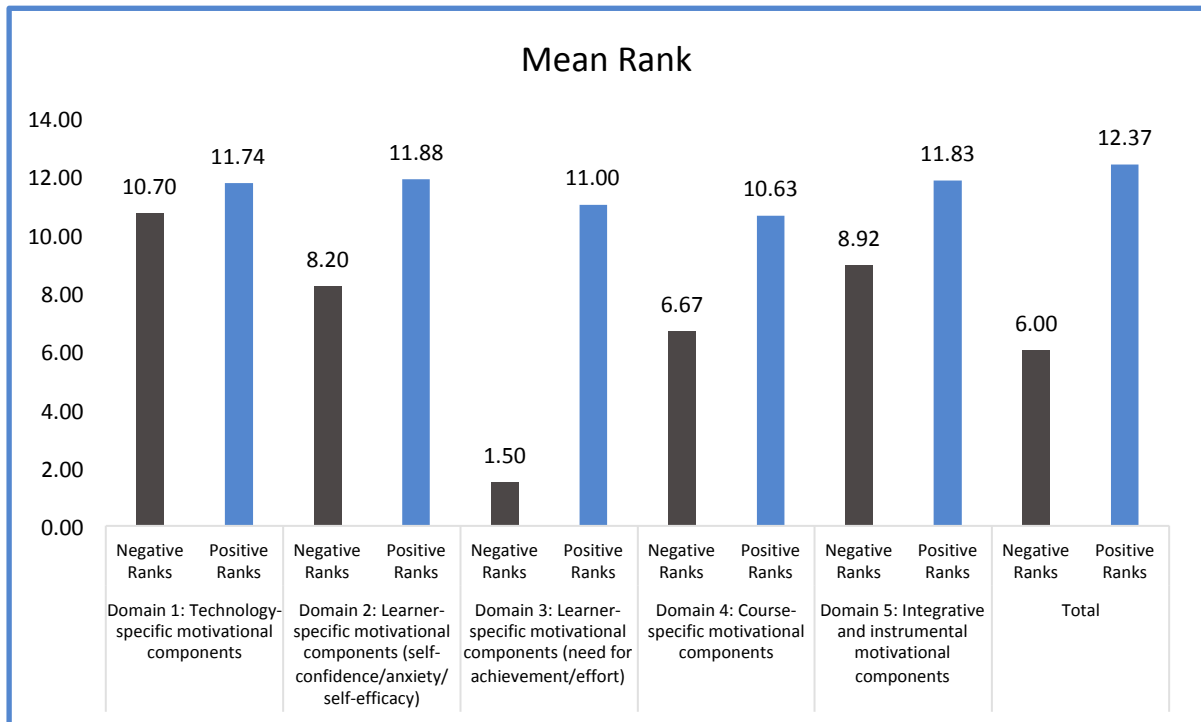
Figure 2: Mean Ranks From the Wilcoxon Test Results

## 5. Discussion

From the results, it was identified that the learners developed all domains impacting their motivation based on the theory adopted in this study. The first domain, 'Technology-specific motivational components', related to the influence of technology use on EFL learners' motivation for learning. In this study, YouTube videos were utilized, specifically a TV series called *Follow me!*, produced in the late 1970s. Positive enhancement was noted pre- and post-intervention, ascertained from the participants' responses to this domain. For example, the item, 'The better the kind of English used in the series videos, the more motivated I am to learn English', gained more agreement from the participants after the intervention, improving from 'Agree' to 'Strongly agree'. Meanwhile, responses to the item, 'I really like the English series', improved from 'Disagree' to 'Strongly agree'. This would indicate that modern EFL learners still enjoy using videos in their learning. Thus, they need to be given the freedom to watch them at any convenient time or place, although the video materials should be selected by the instructor to ensure their relevance to learners' needs and language level. This supports the use of videos as an effective technology for learning in the contemporary context. Videos especially support learners' autonomy, which is essential for their language development. This impact of technology is likewise supported by multiple studies in the literature (for example, Lai, 2022; Lengkanawati & Wirza 2021; Warni & Febriawan, 2018).

Regarding the second domain, 'Learner-specific motivational components (self-confidence/anxiety/self-efficacy), which relates to lowering learners' anxiety and raising their self-efficacy, the videos were used in a speaking class as an after-class supplementary tool. The students subsequently described what they had understood via a WhatsApp audio-text. For this domain, the responses to two essential items indicated a change from 'Disagree' to 'Agree', namely, 'I am afraid that other students will laugh at me when I speak English' and 'I find my English WhatsApp group threatening'. This implies that the learners became more confident about their knowledge and were happier to share their thoughts. It has been argued that the use of videos in education improves self-efficacy, but not especially in speaking

classes (Fan, 2022). Therefore, this study contributes to the literature in that it found videos helpful for improving self-efficacy in speaking, which played a role in enhancing learners' motivation.

Regarding the third domain, 'Learner-specific motivational components (need for achievement/effort)', which relates to learning a language for the purpose of completing a course, the teacher's classroom practices were of most relevance, although the teacher played no part in constructing the videos. However, the learners claimed that their teacher supported them by getting them to think independently. For instance, responses to the item, 'My English lecturer encourages me to think independently', changed from 'Agree' to 'Strongly agree' in the post-test. This was largely due to the learners' autonomy to choose the episodes to watch and when to watch them. Autonomy in technology use can support motivation (Isik & Balçikanli, 2020), as in the case of using videos for learning.

Regarding the fourth domain, 'Course-specific motivational components', the delivery of course components and the structure to teach speaking skills (two important items) indicated that the videos potentially enhanced delivery of the course: 'The course helps me to learn other important things not related to language skills' and 'The course design motivates me to learn English.' Both these items show that the videos contributed to motivating different aspects of learning the target language, including the cultural factors conveyed by native speakers of the target language in an authentic environment, wherein videos are necessary for providing such support (López et al., 2021). This helped enhance the learners' motivation to learn, especially while learning how to communicate in English in a foreign country where English was not the native language.

Finally in the fifth domain, 'Integrative and instrumental components', relating to the motivation to learn, a significant development was indicated by responses to the following integrative items: 'It is important for me to know English because one day, I want to become part of a native English-speaking community' and 'I want to learn English so well that it will feel natural to me when I use it.' The responses to this item changed from 'Agree' to 'Strongly agree', indicating the authenticity of the material represented in the videos.

## 6. Conclusion

This study represents an attempt to support the continued use of videos as a learning tool. Despite greater consideration being given to the use of AI and chatbots in language teaching, as a departure from more conventional technologies, social media sites such as YouTube have continued to disseminate and promote the short video instructional format. Moreover, the above platform continues to provide authentic material, enabling an enjoyable experience and enhancing motivation for learning. However, the use of videos must be handled wisely, giving students the choice of when, how, and what to watch, within parameters set by the teacher. For example, it is the teacher's responsibility to select materials that are suitable for the learners' level and needs. Therefore, it is recommended that stakeholders in the language learning sector continue to use such technology, encouraging its inclusion as supporting material for after-class activities and assignments.

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