Online YouTube Instrumental Music Background: It's Effect to Descriptive Writing Performance of Students

Enrico C. Riconalla, Ablin, Nizza Lynette C., Saura, Christy Mae C.,
Adelfa C. Silor, Sheenalyn M. Abangan

Abstract: This study aimed to analyze the effect of online you tube instrumental music in the descriptive writing performance of the students. The participants of this study were the diverse students enrolled in Ed109A-Developmental Reading during summer term 2013. There were fifty students enrolled in Ed109. So twenty five(25) students in control group and twenty(25) students in experimental group. The control group students learned the lesson in descriptive writing through traditional method lecture while the experimental group students learned the descriptive writing lesson through online you tube instrumental music background. Both control and experimental group students have the same evaluation writing skills using rubrics as the criteria of analyzing the writing performance of the students. The method used in this study was the one-shot design for control and experimental group. Only post-test evaluation through descriptive writing was given to the students after the discussion of the lesson. Both groups were tested for their level of descriptive writing performance in terms of content and mechanics. The result showed that the respondents in the experimental group have shown an improvement of their descriptive writing in terms of content and mechanics compared to the control group. The findings reveal that there was a significant difference between performance level of the students in the control and experimental groups. This implies that teachers should consider online YouTube instrumental background music as a tool to enhance the paragraph writing skill of the students.

Keywords: Online YouTube, Descriptive Writing, Performance

Introduction

It is obvious that students today are part of a different learning environment. They live and learn in an environment that uses technology which allows them to have easier access to different types of media. In this 21st Century, it has never been difficult to find students on any campus throughout the world who owns an iPod, mp3 players or some form of musical paraphernalia that fits conveniently in their ears. Moreover, most of these students routinely perform their tasks while listening to music and they even consider this as a way of helping them concentrate on their task on reading, studying or even writing. Consequently, this habit has raised the researchers' interest to find out whether this affects the students' performance in descriptive writing. Over the last ten years, College English writing has become an important debated topic. Literacy instruction and learning environment have become the main focuses of college students. A long and contentious debate continues on how and if college students writing, reading, and educational activities are affected positively or negatively while listening to background music (A. Nikolaidi, 2010). Some are concerned on how important music is for classroom instruction and needs to be incorporated into student learning, many, however, explain how vital it is to incorporate music in the classroom and how music has enhanced our brain development. For example, Mary Ann Davies described music as a teaching strategy that integrates the functions of both hemispheres and uses the natural design of the brain to make learning easier, faster, and more fun.

According to K.M Weiland, music can be a powerful tool. It can continually inspire you as you write.... by creating a mood it can fuel ones writing and drive it to places he might not otherwise go. Also, listening to music while writing can help the writer block out distractions—both physical ones demanding his attention, like people and noises, but also distractions in his head, random thoughts and things that need to

be done which usually fights for one's attention and tells him to stop wasting time writing stories. By listening to music, especially through headphones, one may find it easier to settle into the writing zone, to shut out those other distractions by filling his ears with sound and clearing his mind, especially with ambient or instrumental music." Nona King an independent writing professional for Angel Breath Books said that music is one of the key aspects of her writing process. King enumerates how music affects the writing process. Furthermore, she states that music encourages focus, enhances mood, promotes inspiration and encourages one to seek inspiration.

Although most college students would have to agree that they work in the same environment, there is still other half that need pure silence and cannot hear a peep or their concentration and focus will be disrupted. One of them is JK Rowling who claims that she never listen to music while writing because she finds music much too distracting. Aside from her, Philip Pullman believes that one can't write with music playing, and anyone who says he can is either writing badly, or not listening to the music, or lying. For him, he needs to hear what he's writing, and for that he needs silence. Furthermore, all students have found their own environment for writing. And we need to see how they are affected with noise, background music, while writing. Much has been discussed on the topic of music engaging students who want to write and learn in a more productive way. However, we need to know how college students' writing performance are affected by online youtube background music while writing.

In relation to this problem, this study tries to find out how effective is online youtube instrumental background music in the descriptive writing performance of the college students. Specifically, through this study, we found out that descriptive writing performance level of the students has been improved through using online youtube instrumental background music. This implies that students are already prepared for the 21st century education skills in using digital tool for learning. The result of this study enabled us to identify how effective it is to use online youtube instrumental background music in the descriptive writing tasks of the college students and such information be used for the improvement of language and education. Hence, the results of this endeavour could be a great contribution to the enhancement of curriculum and instruction through ICT integration.

Literature Review

Students are rapidly taking advantage of technology in the marketplace (Jones, 2009). MP3 players are widely used by teens and young adults being the choice of entertainment. According to Gee (2003) as the use of this technology becomes more visible this type of technology could soon be as a form of literacy. These types of technology generated pedagogies maybe more effective in teaching the students than traditional teacher-centered pedagogies (Gee, 2003). Being aware of student's use of technology with more frequency, it is apparent that educators would want to explore more ways to take advantage of this new form of electronic technology (Jones, 2009).

Students who listen to music from the MP3 player during quiet time in class have been noted to stay focused during class and further, to observe quiet time before and during class. This affords quiet to other students who require an environment free of noise (Stiler, 2007). It could be concluded here that music is providing relaxation to the student and the student can focus better as a result of listening to the music on the MP3 player. Use of MP3 players, iPods, Podcasts and such are felt by many educators to enhance creativity and higher levels of thinking. Catering to a more teacher driven restrictive didactic classes is stifling the abstract thinking of the students (Cantor, 2006).

For many college students, listening to music is an associative task. According to Darrow, Johnson, Agnew, and Rink (2006) an associative task is defined as "listening to music while engaged in other activities." The majority of college students engage in activities such as using the computer, completing homework, or studying for test while listening to music. Music is more pervasive at present than any other point in history. Its function is not only as pleasurable art form but it also serves many important psychological functions (MacDonald et al., 2002). Music has many benefits beyond simple listening enjoyment. Studies

have shown its positive effects on person's mood and memory recall (Oldroyd 2012). In addition, music has also been proven to have an effect on memory, an important factor for those who study while listening to music. Different types of music, however, may have varying degrees of effectiveness on memory depending on musical taste. (Brent 2012). To fully understand the effects of music we must account for the interaction between the listener, the music and the context within which the task is taking place (Miell and Hargreaves 2005).

The research paper of Elona Hartjes (2008) cites a study done by F. F. Cripe , L. Morton, J. Keshner and L. Seigel, conclude that music has a beneficial effect on students music with a prominent beat stimulates an increased arousal in students which overrides the effect of environmental distractors, repetitive beat produces a reduction in muscle tension, thus reducing hyperactivity, significant reduction in distractibility among students after being exposed to music. Short term memory was also beneficially affected by having to listen to music. (Johnson, 2012). According to Adam Gazzaley, MD, an associate professor of neurology, physiology, and psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco, "...even the simplest forms of multitasking can lead to glitches in the moment-to-moment processing of information known as working memory...taking a toll on our attention." (Sanders, 2012).A writer is influenced by many factors when he/she sits down to write a paper and many factors may disrupt the writer in the writing process. According to these authors' findings, many different aspects of writing are influenced by music and many positive attributes come from background music. On the downside, there are also negative effects shown from background music that strain the quality of the paper. All in all, the connection of music and literacy differs between ages, genres, and effectiveness, and needs to be seen at the college level for new research results. Most college students enjoy background music when engaging in their educational assignments, most importantly, writing (Nikolaidis,2010).

Experts in the field of neurology cite that there are physical differences in the brains of today's young people that make them better multi-taskers than their parents, but it does not mean "that they can more effectively learn while multi-tasking." (Sanders, 2012). The effect of music on studying depends to some degree on the student. Learning capabilities and styles vary. While some of us are auditory learners and may be soothed by music, others learn differently and therefore the impact of the music can also be different. Research does suggest, however, that any bad effects of listening to music while studying can be instant, triggering problems with memory, mood and other responses. (Sigafoos, 2012).

The new study suggests that studying for a test and putting on background music that you like seems like a good idea. But if you're trying to memorize a list in order - facts, numbers, and elements of the periodic table - the music may actually be working against you. The study found that participants performed worse while listening to music, regardless of whether they liked that music, and to the speech of random numbers. They did the best in the quiet and while listening to the repeated "three." The new study does not necessarily contradict those previous findings, but does suggests some limitations on the benefits of music in memorizing lists of things in order, the authors wrote. It may still be the case that listening to music before performing a task like that helps cognitive abilities. But this new research suggests that it might be better to study for an exam in quiet, or listen to music beforehand (Landau, 2010).

Nina Jackson in her article "Music and the Mind" suggests that although more research needs to be done, we can be cautiously optimistic about the potential benefits of listening to motivate students, improve concentration and study skills. Apparently, she supported the use of music in the classroom. In fact, she said music the new teaching tool for the 21st century. Moreover, she added that music plays with person's state of mind as the electrical energy generated by firing neurons creates brain waves. The music that a person chooses to listen to can influence the waves' frequency, and their state of mind. It's not only the mind that is influenced by music the body also responds. Energizing music can make your brain exercise longer and harder, it increases speed and workload capacity (Hartjes, 2008). Music with a strong steady beat can increase endurance, boost effort level, increase motivation and distract from discomfort and agitation.

Method/Design

The method used in this study was the one-shot design for control and experimental group. Only post-test evaluation through descriptive writing was given to the students after the discussion of the lesson. Both groups were tested for their level of descriptive writing performance in terms of content and mechanics. The result showed that the respondents in the experimental group have shown an improvement of their descriptive writing in terms of content and mechanics compared to the control group. We made a lesson plan on descriptive writing by analyzing the content of the short story. We conducted a one-hour class about descriptive writing. Then after the discussion, students read the short story entitled the elevator by William Sleator. This process was similarly done for experimental and control group. However, they differ in the part of learning evaluation. Wherein, after the lesson, the researchers asked the students to write a short story on their own. . For the control group, the respondents wrote a scary descriptive short story without any instrumental background music, only normal sound or noise from the environment was heard. On the other hand, for the experimental group, the respondents wrote a scary descriptive short story with scary instrumental background music using online youtube. The story needs to be something scary. A short story plan was given to the respondents for them to be guided on how they will write their own short story. This study was conducted on different days and was conducted separately.

Findings/Analysis

The following tables showed the level of descriptive writing performance of the control and experimental groups in terms of content and mechanics.

Table1. Level of Descriptive Writing Performance of the Control Group in terms of Content

Content Score	Frequency	Percentage
22 – 28	2	8.0
16 – 21	13	52.0
10 – 15	10	40.0
Total	25	100.0
Average Score = 16.16	**Minimum Score = 10**	**Maximum Score = 25**

As reflected in the table above, majority of the respondents in the control group have content score of 16 - 21. The group comprises of 13 or 52.0% of the total respondents. About 10 or 40.0% of the respondents have content score of 10 – 15 and only about 2 or 8.0% of the respondents have content score of 22 - 28. On the average, the respondents in the control group have 16.16 content score which was above the median for a total of 28 content score. The maximum content score of the respondents in the control group was 25 and the minimum content score for the control group was 10. This implies that the respondents were proficient enough in their writing skills since they are already junior and senior students. Their skills in organizing thoughts were harnessed through times. This is not their first time to write descriptive short story so they already had ideas in writing.

Table2. Level of Descriptive Writing Performance of the Control Group in terms of Mechanics

Mechanics Score	Frequency	Percentage
13 – 16	2	8.0
10 – 12	5	20.0
7 – 9	18	72.0
Total	25	**100.0**
Average Score = 9.16	**Minimum Score = 7**	**Maximum Score = 13**

As depicted from the table above, majority of the respondents in the control group scored between 7-9. It comprises of 18 or 72.0% of the total respondents. About 5 or 20.0% of the respondents have mechanics score of 10 – 12 and only about 2 or 8.0% of the respondents have mechanics score of 13 - 16. On the average, the respondents in the control group have 9.16 mechanics score which was above the median for a total of 16 mechanics score. The maximum mechanics score of the respondents in the control group was 13 and the minimum mechanics score for the control group was 7. This implies that the respondents needed to improve (Gromko, 2005) in terms of sentence structure, paragraph placement, conventions- spelling, punctuation, grammar and capitalization. They were not really exposed to the syntax usage because they are not English majors. The respondents were not considered competent enough in sentence grammar.

Table3. Level of Descriptive Writing Performance of the Experimental Group using online youtube instrumental Music in terms of Content

Content Score	Frequency	Percentage
22 – 28	7	28.0
16 – 21	15	60.0
10 – 15	3	12.0
Total	**25**	**100.0**
Average Score = 19.4	**Minimum Score = 13**	**Maximum Score = 28**

As evidenced from, the table above, for a total of 28 content score majority of the respondents in the experimental group have content score of 16 - 21. This constituted 15 or 60.0% of the total respondents. Three or 12.0% of the respondents have content scores of 10 – 15 and 7 or 28.0% of the respondents have content scores of 22 - 28. On the average, the respondents in the experimental group have 19.4 content score which was above the median of a 28 content score. The maximum content score of the respondents in the experimental group was 28 and the minimum content score for the experimental group was 13. The above results indicate that the respondents in the experimental group were better in descriptive writing in terms of content compared to the control group. This implies that some respondents were more proficient in their writing performance. They were knowledgeable enough and can relate to the topic. Music also has a big impact to the writing performance because music motivated (Nikolaidis, 2010) them and allowed them to be more imaginative. Through the use of music as a background, it probably aroused their senses to think critically on how to write short stories.

Table4. Level of Descriptive Writing Performance of the Experimental Group using online youtube instrumental Music in terms of Mechanics

Mechanics Score	Frequency	Percentage
13 – 16	4	16.0
10 – 12	9	36.0
7 – 9	12	48.0
	25	**100.0**
Average Score = 10.64	**Minimum Score = 7**	**Maximum Score = 16**

As shown in the table above, majority of the respondents in the experimental group have mechanics score of 7 - 9. The group comprises of 12 or 48.0% of the total respondents. About 9 or 36.0% of the respondents have mechanics score of 10 – 12 and only about 4 or 16.0% of the respondents have mechanics score of 13 - 16. On the average, the respondents in the experimental group have 10.64 mechanics score which was a little above the median for a total of 16 mechanics score. The maximum mechanics score of the respondents in the experimental group was 16 and the minimum mechanics score for the experimental group was 7. The above results indicate that the respondents in the experimental group have improved in descriptive writing in terms of mechanics. This implies that the respondents were proficient in terms of their mechanics: sentence structure, paragraph placement and conventions. Their performances were much better than the

control group. Music affects the descriptive writing performance of the students due to the collaboration of the ideas and context in their mind with the help of background music that arouses their emotions.

The following table shows the comparison of the experimental and control groups in the level of descriptive writing performance in terms of content and mechanics.

Table5. Computed t – Value for the Comparison of the Experimental and Control Group in the Level of Descriptive Writing Performance in terms of Content and Mechanics

	Experimental Group	Control Group			
	Mean Score	Mean Score	t – value	P – value	Remark
Content	19.40	16.16	-3.164	0.003	Significant
Mechanics	10.64	9.16	-2.374	0.022	Significant

Legend: If P-value is less than α = 0.05 (level of significance), then the test is significant (i.e., there is a significant difference); otherwise, the test is not significant (i.e., there is no significant difference).

As revealed in the table above, the computed t-value of -3.164 for the comparison of the experimental and control groups in the descriptive writing performance in terms of content implied that there was a significant difference. The result showed that experimental group is better in the descriptive writing in terms of content compared to the control group. On the other hand, the computed t-value of -2.374 for the comparison of the experimental and control groups in the descriptive writing performance in terms of mechanics implied that there was a significant difference. The result showed that experimental group is better in the descriptive writing in terms of mechanics compared to the control group. The results imply that the instrumental background music has an effect to the descriptive writing skills of the students. The experimental group was more motivated (Hartjes ,2006) in writing descriptive short story because of the instrumental background music which is something scary that really fits the topic that they must write. In fact, music is one factor (Cantor, 2006) that helps them to think new ideas and it also awakens the senses of the respondents. The five senses are important in writing descriptive stories because through your feelings and emotions you can write a lot.

Conclusion

Based from the findings of the study, online youtube instrumental background music directly affected the descriptive writing skills of third year and fourth year students of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology. The experimental group was highly motivated to engage writing when there was instrumental music in the background. Thus, instrumental background music definitely influenced and improved the descriptive writing skills of the students.

Online youtube instrumental background music can be viewed as a modern tool in enhancing the students' writing performance in the 21st century. We have concluded that music has positive effects on person's mood and memory by just simply listening. Music provides a total relief and relaxation to the students' mind that made them feel them more focused- becoming better on generating ideas and constructing sentences. Studies show that students' senses, emotions, imaginations and experiences are activated when music was incorporated. Music encourages and pursues their mood in writing. In relation to this is the Integral Theory's map of human experiences. This theory allows individual to explore and develop multiple aspects of themselves such as their physical body, emotional intelligence, cognitive awareness, interpersonal relationships and spiritual wisdom. Hence, music has a beneficial effect on a students' level of writing performance with a prominent beat that stimulates an increased arousal of the students. Music significantly enhanced the students' ability in writing descriptive short story and music increased their interest in performing academic tasks. According to Davies (2010), "Music as teaching strategy integrates the functions of both hemispheres and uses natural design of the brain to make learning easier, faster, and

more fun." It will be possible in the future that some teachers will utilize background music in their evaluation such as writing essay, story and poems for the students to improve their skills in writing. Students will be more motivated and eager to think critically and become imaginative and creative in building their ideas and thoughts toward writing. Based from the result of our study, background music has an impact in the writing performance of the respondents. Teachers, administrators and other stakeholders of education should help promote the use of online youtube instrumental background music as an innovative strategy in the attainment of quality curriculum and instruction.

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