LIGHTS, CAMERA, GRAMMAR: A CASE STUDY IN STUDENT-CREATED TUTORIAL VIDEOS AS ASSESSMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING

LUZES, CÂMARA, GRAMÁTICA: UM ESTUDO DE CASO SOBRE VÍDEOS TUTORIAIS CRIADOS POR ESTUDANTES COMO AVALIAÇÃO NA APRENDIZAGEM DA LÍNGUA INGLESA

LUCES, CÁMARA, GRAMÁTICA: UN ESTUDIO DE CASO SOBRE VIDEOS TUTORIALES CREADOS POR ESTUDIANTES COMO EVALUACIÓN EN EL APRENDIZAJE DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS

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Abstract

This case study investigates the impact of a student-generated video task introduced as an innovative assessment strategy in a compulsory first-year English linguistics course within a Foreign Languages and Cultures degree at ESE, IPP, Portugal. These students struggled to engage with traditional approaches to grammar instruction, perceiving it as abstract, overly technical, or irrelevant. To address this issue, a new assessment component was introduced, inviting students to create short (60–90 second) tutorial videos on key course topics, ranging from morpheme vs. word to sentence structure, parts of speech, and grammatical distinctions. Working from a curated list of 44 questions, each student selected a topic, conducted basic academic research, and created a peer-oriented video tutorial using accessible language and illustrative examples. Videos were uploaded to Moodle as a glossary entry and formed part of the continuous assessment scheme, contributing 6% to the final grade. Out of 94 enrolled students, 59 participated in this assessment pathway. Of these, 90% passed the course, compared with only 20% of students who opted for the final written exam. The top-rated videos revealed strong use of grammatical metalanguage, structural clarity, and creative multimodal elements. Findings suggest that low-stakes, student-created digital projects improve autonomy, digital literacy, and motivation, while reducing affective barriers to learning. This case study argues that peer-led, formative assessment tasks can enhance understanding and engagement with complex linguistic content in higher education.

Keywords: tutorial videos, innovative assessment, English grammar, demotivation, higher education.

Resumo

Este estudo de caso investiga o impacto de uma tarefa de vídeo criada pelos estudantes, introduzida como uma estratégia inovadora de avaliação numa unidade curricular de Linguística Inglesa do 1.º ano da licenciatura em Línguas e Culturas Estrangeiras da Escola Superior de Educação (ESE), do P. Porto. Diversos estudantes revelavam dificuldades com abordagens tradicionais ao ensino da gramática, que consideravam abstratas, excessivamente técnicas ou irrelevantes. Em resposta a este problema, introduziu-se um novo momento de avaliação: a criação de vídeos tutoriais curtos (com 60 a 90 segundos) sobre conteúdos programáticos chave da unidade curricular. A partir de uma lista orientadora de 44 questões, cada estudante escolheu um tema, realizou uma pesquisa académica básica e criou um vídeo tutorial destinado aos colegas, utilizando uma linguagem acessível e exemplos ilustrativos. Os

vídeos foram carregados na plataforma Moodle como entradas de glossário e integraram a avaliação contínua, com um peso de 6% para a nota final. Dos 94 estudantes inscritos, 59 participaram nesta modalidade de avaliação. Desses, 90% obtiveram aprovação na unidade curricular. Em contraste, entre os estudantes que optaram pelo exame final, apenas 20% conseguiram aprovação. Os vídeos melhor classificados evidenciaram um uso eficaz da metalinguagem gramatical, clareza estrutural e criatividade multimodal. Os resultados sugerem que projetos digitais de baixo risco, criados pelos estudantes promovem a autonomia, a literacia digital e a motivação, ao mesmo tempo que reduzem barreiras afetivas à aprendizagem. Este estudo de caso defende que tarefas formativas conduzidas por pares, podem melhorar a compreensão e o envolvimento com conteúdos linguísticos complexos no ensino superior.

Palavras-chave: vídeos tutoriais, avaliação inovadora, gramática inglesa, desmotivação, ensino superior.

Resumen

Este estudio de caso investiga el impacto de una tarea de vídeo creada por los estudiantes, introducida como una estrategia innovadora de evaluación en una asignatura de Lingüística Inglesa del primer curso de la licenciatura en Lenguas y Culturas Extranjeras de la Escuela Superior de Educación (ESE) del P. Porto. Diversos estudiantes manifestaban dificultades con los enfoques tradicionales de enseñanza de la gramática, que consideraban abstractos, excesivamente técnicos o irrelevantes. En respuesta a este problema, se introdujo un nuevo momento de evaluación: la creación de vídeos tutoriales breves (de 60 a 90 segundos) sobre contenidos programáticos clave de la asignatura. A partir de una lista orientadora de 44 preguntas, cada estudiante eligió un tema, realizó una investigación académica básica y creó un vídeo tutorial destinado a sus compañeros, utilizando un lenguaje accesible y ejemplos ilustrativos. Los vídeos fueron subidos a la plataforma Moodle como entradas de glosario e integraron la evaluación continua, con un peso del 6% en la nota final. De los 94 estudiantes matriculados, 59 participaron en esta modalidad de evaluación. De ellos, el 90% obtuvo la aprobación en la asignatura. En contraste, entre los estudiantes que optaron por el examen final, solo el 20% logró la aprobación. Los vídeos mejor valorados evidenciaron un uso eficaz de la metalengua gramatical, claridad estructural y creatividad multimodal. Los resultados sugieren que proyectos digitales de bajo riesgo, creados por los estudiantes, promueven la autonomía, la alfabetización digital y la motivación, al mismo tiempo que reducen las barreras afectivas al aprendizaje. Este estudio de caso sostiene que las tareas formativas realizadas entre pares pueden mejorar la comprensión y el compromiso con contenidos lingüísticos complejos en la educación superior.

Palabras-clave: vídeos tutoriales, evaluación innovadora, gramática inglesa, desmotivación, educación superior.

INTRODUCTION

Our experience of teaching grammar and linguistic description at a university level in Portugal has identified a persistent affective barrier among English L2 students: many students perceive these topics as difficult, irrelevant, or simply boring. This reaction is particularly acute in first-year undergraduate courses where students will encounter formal linguistic concepts for the first time and struggle to connect them with prior language learning experiences from secondary school. Many of these students – particularly those enrolled in English language degrees at *Escola Superior de Educação* (ESE) at the Polytechnic of Porto (IPP) – report having chosen their degree paths based on an interest in English and perceived proficiency derived from informal exposure, such as gaming or listening to music. As such, these are students who often seem to lack prior exposure to the appropriate metalanguage or technical descriptions of grammar in English, assuming that enjoyment and fluency alone will suffice for academic success. Within this context, traditional assessment formats, such as written tests, have pointed towards further disengagement and anxiety, reinforcing superficial learning and low levels of participation.

This article will present a case study in assessment redesign, implemented in the course *Descrição e Funcionamento da Língua Inglesa*, a compulsory subject in the Foreign Languages and Cultures degree at ESE. The course aims to introduce students to the theoretical foundations of linguistics, with a focus on descriptive aspects of the English

language, including phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics. While these topics are indeed considered foundational, they have frequently been met with resistance, especially in areas such as sentence analysis, parts of speech, and the distinctions between closely related grammatical forms.

To counter this trend of disengagement and generalized attitude of "I just don't like grammar", a new assessment strategy was introduced: students were asked to produce short, tutorial-style videos (60–90 seconds) explaining key concepts from the syllabus to their peers. Each video addressed a specific question, such as "What is the difference between a gerund and a present participle?", and required students to conduct light academic research, use accurate metalanguage, and explain the topic in a clear and accessible way. By shifting responsibility for explanation from teacher to learner, and by granting students creative control over the format, the task aimed to transform grammar from a passive, abstract subject into an active, collaborative learning experience.

The rest of this paper discusses the pedagogical rationale behind this kind of assessment, outlines how it was implemented in this course's classes during the academic 2024/2025, and evaluates its impact on student engagement and learning outcomes. It further reflects on the broader implications of student-generated video content as a form of inclusive and participatory assessment in language education.

1   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Only students who are exceptionally motivated and interested in a grammatical stance are likely to consider this area of study more positively, especially at a higher education level. Grammar instruction may create affective barriers, as students do often look at grammar as being too technical, too disconnected from real-world use, or simply unengaging. These perceptions are related to what Krashen (1982) termed the *affective filter*, defined as an emotional barrier that impedes language acquisition. When learners fail to perceive grammar as being meaningful and communicative, disengagement tends to follow (Dörnyei, 2001; Jean & Simard, 2011). As a possible way to counter this negative tendency, Hafner (2014) and Chakraborty (2019) explained that multimedia tools, including multimedia and digital video projects, can reduce perceived difficulty and enhance motivation, emphasising the importance of engaging teaching strategies that are intended to bridge grammar to students' life experiences. Accordingly, active learning approaches, particularly those involving peer teaching, have shown significant promise in addressing some of these challenges. Bonwell and Eison (1991) and Chi (2009) argue that students will deepen their understanding when they actively take on a teacher's role, thus engaging in metacognitive processes that reinforce learning. This is supported by Fiorella and Mayer (2013) and Topping (2005), who found that explaining content to others will improve both retention and comprehension. A recent meta-analysis by Malik, Woodrow, and Piech (2024) further confirms that peer tutors often outperform their peers in assessments. These findings are in line with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the zone of proximal development, where learning is scaffolded through social interaction and peer support.

The integration of student-generated videos into grammar instruction introduces multimodal learning, combining visual, auditory, and textual elements to enhance comprehension and engagement (Kress, 2010; Reinders & Hubbard 2013). Research by Brutman and colleagues (2024) and Mayer, Lee and Peebles (2014) highlights how well-designed multimedia can reduce cognitive load, making complex content more accessible. A key example from Portugal is that of Shafirova and Araújo e Sá (2024) who surveyed 212 University of Aveiro students and found that although only 22% produced videos, those who did reported benefits in motivation, collaborative skills, and multiliteracy—including language learning—supporting the value of student video creation in linguistic contexts.

Formative, multimodal assessments are well aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which advocates for multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression to support diverse learners (CAST, 2018; Fornauf & Erickson, 2020; Rose & Meyer, 2002). Creative, student-centred assessments not only foster inclusivity but also promote reflection and accountability, besides supporting learning (Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Rawlusyk, 2018). Malik et al. (2024) emphasize that peer-created videos, in particular, encourage metacognitive development through the reflective process of preparing and presenting content.

The case study report presented here builds on these theoretical foundations by identifying the characteristics of high-quality student-created grammar tutorials. These include clear, accessible explanations that balance conceptual accuracy with appropriate use of grammatical metalanguage, demonstrating both content mastery and

audience awareness. This aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) emphasis on scaffolded peer learning. The most effective tutorials followed a coherent pedagogical structure: a focused introduction, concise definitions, illustrative examples, and a summarizing conclusion. This kind of structure helps students manage their cognitive load and improves their ability to process difficult grammar concepts (Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2011).

When it comes to understanding and engagement, visual and creative components are also crucial. In keeping with Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) multimodal design principles, animations, colour coding, and real-world conversations will all contribute to the realism of abstract grammatical concepts. According to the self-determination theory cited by Ryan & Deci (2000), which highlights autonomy, competence, and relatedness as crucial means of fostering engagement, these are equally innovative decisions that support intrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, the peer-oriented style of these tutorials promoted a feeling of community and shared learning. Students became active co-constructors of knowledge by speaking to their audience in relatable terms and utilising well-known examples. Gyamfi, Hanna, and Khosravi (2021) found that peer evaluation of student-created content improves learning outcomes and engagement, which further supports the tenets of student-generated contents.

Last but not least, Mawardi et al. (2024) support the inclusion of digital literacy in the curriculum, which reaffirms the practices' applicability in contemporary higher education. Student-generated video tutorials provide an engaging, inclusive, and academically demanding substitute for conventional grammar instruction by fusing active learning, peer collaboration, and multimodal design.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Context and Participants

This study took place during the 2024/2025 academic year in the first-year course *Descrição e Funcionamento da Língua Inglesa*, part of the *Línguas e Culturas Estrangeiras* degree at a Portuguese public higher education institution. The students (N = 59) were distributed across two parallel classes: Class 1 (n = 27) and Class 2 (n = 32). These students were not formally diagnosed with learning disabilities but exhibited consistent disengagement with traditional grammar instruction, often describing it as too abstract, technical, or unnecessary.

2.2 Pedagogical Intervention

To address this motivational barrier and improve learning outcomes in areas such as parts of speech, syntax, and metalanguage, a video-based assessment task was introduced. Each student selected one of 44 pre-defined grammar-related content questions (see Appendix A) and created a 60–90 second tutorial video explaining the concept in an engaging, pedagogically accessible way. The objective was to promote active learning, digital multimodal production, and peer instruction.

Students uploaded their videos to Moodle using the platform's Glossary tool and were required to support their explanation with two academic references in APA 7th Edition format. They were free to choose the format (voice-over, silent video, animated slides, with or without camera presence) provided it was clear, accurate, and accessible to their peers.

A model tutorial video created by a teacher was made available on Moodle to illustrate the expected structure and tone. This sample demonstrated how to blend academic content and accessibility, using onscreen text and visuals without voice-over, and served as a scaffold for student production.

2.3 Assessment Outcomes and Comparative Data

In the 2024/2025 edition of the course *Descrição e Funcionamento da Língua Inglesa*, the continuous assessment model was updated to include a student-generated tutorial video. This new component was worth 6% of the final grade and complemented the existing assessment elements: an oral presentation with in-class discussion (30%) and two formal written tests (worth 30% and 34%, respectively). To be eligible for continuous assessment, students also had to attend at least two-thirds of the scheduled lessons.

Of the 94 students enrolled that year, 59 (approximately 63%) met the criteria and chose to complete the continuous assessment route. The remaining 35 students (37%) either failed to meet the minimum attendance requirement or opted for the final assessment model, which remained unchanged from previous years: a single written examination covering 100% of the course content, with a minimum mark of 9.5 out of 20 required to pass the course.

The tutorial videos submitted by students were evaluated collaboratively by a panel of three instructors using a simplified but transparent rubric. This rubric focused on content clarity, grammatical accuracy, use of appropriate metalanguage, quality and relevance of examples, creativity, structural coherence, and overall communicative effectiveness. While technical video quality was not a formal criterion, students were encouraged to focus on clarity of presentation and accessibility to peers.

Each instructor brought a distinct evaluative perspective. The first instructor reviewed all submissions and selected the ten strongest videos, awarding these a final grade of 16 out of 20. The second instructor, focusing on pedagogical clarity and presentation design, selected a separate top five and awarded these 18 out of 20. The course director then reviewed the full set and identified the best tutorial from each of the two class groups, assigning these videos the highest possible mark of 20 out of 20. As an additional form of recognition, these two students also received a bonus point on their final course grade for their exemplary work.

All other students who completed the video assignment received individual written feedback and were awarded a grade ranging from 12 to 15, depending on how well their submission met the core assessment criteria. Most students succeeded in meeting the pedagogical objectives of the task, even if their submissions did not reach the distinction level.

The results for the two class groups who followed the continuous assessment path in 2024/2025 are summarized in the table below:

Table 1

Summary of Continuous Assessment Groups

Group	Participants	Passed	Failed	Not Eligible
Group 1	27	21	5	1
Group 2	32	29	2	1
Total	59	50	7	2

These results are especially noteworthy given that the tutorial video task was introduced in response to long-standing patterns of student disengagement from grammar and linguistic description—areas often perceived as overly abstract or irrelevant. Among the 59 students who completed the video and met the other continuous assessment requirements, 50 passed outright. Of the remaining nine, three later passed the course by successfully completing the final exam, bringing the final number of successful students in this group to 53. This represents a final pass rate of approximately 90% among students who participated in the video-based continuous assessment model.

In contrast, the 35 students who opted for the final assessment demonstrated significantly lower levels of motivation and academic success. Many of these students did not attend the scheduled final exam, reinforcing earlier concerns about disengagement and avoidance behaviours. Of this group, only seven ultimately passed – three of whom had previously submitted tutorial videos but were disqualified from continuous assessment due to low attendance or poor test performance. These outcomes further underline the importance of active, formative assessment structures in supporting at-risk learners.

To assess the impact of this innovation more fully, it is useful to compare it with the results from the previous academic year, 2023/2024, when the assessment structure did not include a video component. That year,

continuous assessment comprised an oral presentation and class discussion (30%) and two formal written tests (30% + 40%), with the same attendance requirements and final assessment format as in 2024/2025.

In 2023/2024, the total number of students enrolled was 102, divided equally between two groups of 51. In Group 1, 34 students opted for continuous assessment; of these, 21 passed and 13 failed. In Group 2, 30 students chose the continuous assessment, resulting in 23 passes and 7 failures. Additionally, only three students who sat the final exam passed. This yielded a pass rate of approximately 67% among continuous assessment students, which is considerably lower than the 90% pass rate recorded in 2024/2025 after the introduction of the video component.

The contrast between these two academic years suggests that the inclusion of a student-generated video task did, in fact, have a measurable positive impact on student performance and engagement. Not only did the 2024/2025 cohort show a higher pass rate, but circumstantial feedback and tutorial video content also suggest improved abstract understanding and increased effort among students. The comparative data thus support the conclusion that integrating creative, multimodal assignments into continuous assessment can promote deeper learning, greater motivation, and higher rates of academic success, particularly in courses where students are typically resistant to abstract or technical content.

3. DISCUSSION

The results of this case study indicate that adding a low-stakes, student-made tutorial video to a linguistics course's continuous assessment framework can greatly increase student engagement, foster deeper learning, and boost academic performance. This intervention encouraged learners to invest more emotionally and cognitively in academic settings where grammar and linguistic analysis are frequently seen as abstract or daunting (Cook, 2023; Borg, 2017).

3.1 Reframing the Relevance of Grammar

The change in students' attitudes towards grammatical content is one of the study's key findings. Students changed from being passive recipients of knowledge to active mediators of it by choosing a topic, making it tangible and accessible, and developing a tutorial for their peers. This is consistent with the findings of Gyamfi, Hanna, and Khosravi (2021), who highlight that learner autonomy and metacognitive awareness are improved by peer-oriented digital production. The observed improvements in students' use of grammatical terminology and conceptual precision support this perspective.

Accordingly, the proposed video task enabled students to personalize their learning experience, incorporating humour, visuals, and creative storytelling. These methods have proved to increase motivation and retention (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). A number of highly regarded submissions included creative formats, like animated figures elucidating gerunds or humorous drawings depicting demonstratives, showcasing both inventiveness and a sophisticated comprehension of their target audience. By lowering emotional resistance to grammar, these techniques possibly made the subject more interesting and even pleasurable.

3.2 Engagement, Assessment, and Success

The most compelling evidence of the intervention's impact lies in the comparative performance data. Among the 59 students in the 2024/2025 cohort who completed the video task and met continuous assessment requirements, 50 passed directly, and three more succeeded via the final exam, yielding a pass rate of approximately 90%. In contrast, students who opted for the traditional final exam route had a pass rate of just 20%, with several not attending the exam at all. These results echo earlier concerns about disengagement and avoidance behaviours (Andrade & Cizek, 2010; Black & Wiliam, 2009).

Compared to the 2023/2024 cohort, the improvement is even more pronounced. Only 44 out of 64 students passed the continuous assessment that year, and only three students were successful on the final exam. This striking disparity implies that the video task-maintained student engagement throughout the semester in addition to enhancing academic performance. A sense of accountability and ownership in the learning process seemed to be promoted by having students explain a concept in their own words to a peer audience.

The tutorial task's structured yet low-pressure format aligns well with formative assessment principles, which emphasize feedback and growth over judgment (Andrade & Cizek, 2010). Students received personalized feedback, peer recognition, and the opportunity to see grammar as accessible and manageable. The chance to be selected as one of the "best tutorials" added a motivational and competitive dimension. This assignment acted as a developmental checkpoint, promoting introspection and conceptual improvement in contrast to summative evaluations, which frequently take place at the conclusion of instruction.

In this light, success in 2024/2025 was not merely statistical. It was equally experiential. The video task functioned as both an assessment and a learning opportunity, empowering students to take ownership of both the content and its communication.

3.3 Implications for Inclusive Practice

Although none of the students in this study were formally diagnosed with learning disabilities, many exhibited signs of academic disengagement. Traditional, lecture-based instruction frequently makes this problem worse by failing to accommodate the various needs of learners. By providing visual, oral, and collaborative modes of engagement, the tutorial video task helped lessen this difficulty. This was especially helpful for students whose strengths are not in traditional assessment formats.

This supports the claim that student-driven, differentiated, and innovative assessments can serve as inclusive tools that promote success among a broader range of learners (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Tanner, 2013). In addition to supporting students' understanding of grammar, the intervention fostered broader learning objectives such as digital literacy, learner autonomy, and collaborative meaning-making. According to Mawardi et al. (2024), incorporating digital literacy into the curriculum promotes inclusive pedagogical practices and increases student engagement.

By designing assignments that prioritise creativity, responsibility and student voice, teachers can start to challenge the notion that grammar is either unimportant or inaccessible. Instead, they can create an atmosphere in which learning grammar becomes a collaborative, achievable, and even pleasurable endeavour.

3.4 Limitations and Future Research

Although the results are promising, this study has several limitations that constrain the generalisability of its findings. Most notably, no formal data were collected regarding students' perceptions of the video task. While informal classroom feedback suggested that many students found the assignment to be both engaging and empowering, the nature and depth of this engagement remain unclear in the absence of structured responses, such as reflective questionnaires or interviews. A more systematic approach to gathering student perspectives would offer a clearer understanding of how they experienced the balance between creativity, academic rigour, and digital production.

Second, even though students who submitted tutorial videos had a high success rate (approximately 90%), this correlation does not by itself establish causation. Multiple interrelated factors – such as higher digital literacy, stronger baseline motivation, and more regular class attendance – may have contributed to their performance. For example, some students who had previously struggled with written tests and oral presentations demonstrated notable improvement in conceptual clarity through their participation in the video task. However, these gains may also reflect increased confidence developed over the semester or the influence of peer support during video production. Disentangling these variables would require a more controlled research design.

Third, the study examined a single course within a single institution, with a sample limited to 59 video participants across two class groups. Although the findings align with broader trends in learner-generated digital content, caution is warranted when attempting to generalise them. In particular, the institutional context of ESE – where students often come from diverse academic and linguistic backgrounds – may have shaped both the reception and completion of the task.

By incorporating structured feedback tools, such as Likert-scale surveys and semi-structured interviews, future studies could address these constraints and more closely examine how students perceive the tutorial video task. This would allow researchers to assess which specific skills students believe they have developed, such as audience

awareness, confidence, or clarity in using metalanguage, as well as to determine which elements of the task supported or hindered their learning.

Future linguistics courses could use longitudinal designs to monitor whether gains in metalinguistic terminology or grammatical awareness are sustained over time. Researchers could also explore whether students who made tutorial videos continue to show greater interest in tasks involving descriptive language. In addition to gauging immediate motivational impact, these follow-up studies would aid in determining the long-term effects of this assessment format.

Lastly, comparative research across several academic institutions or language programs could examine whether outcomes remain consistent across diverse learner profiles. Variables such as English proficiency level, prior digital experience, or familiarity with formal grammar may influence how students approach the task and what they gain from it. Experimental studies could also explore which elements—like humour, animation, or peer co-creation—have the greatest impact on understanding and retention.

3.5 Features of Best Student Tutorials

The top ten tutorial videos selected from both groups stood out for their clear explanations, well-structured content, and attention to the viewer's learning experience. For instance, several tutorials opened with relatable questions or examples, such as confusion between "their" and "theirs" or how to use possessive determiners, which allowed students to present grammar points in practical, everyday terms. The videos also showed how well the students could organise information, guiding the audience through difficult material with the use of visual cues, pacing, and direct address. These characteristics imply that when students are allowed to produce their own educational materials, they not only enhance their own comprehension but also make a significant contribution to classmate learning.

A notable strength across these videos was students' ability to explain grammatical distinctions with both accuracy and simplicity. In the tutorial on cardinal versus ordinal determiners, the student used relatable examples (such as "two cats" vs. "second cat") reinforced by clear onscreen text to distinguish between expressions of quantity and order. The pacing was measured and the voiceover calm and well-articulated, which helped reduce cognitive load. Likewise, the video comparing *their* and *theirs* used minimal pairs and contrastive sentences like "That is their book" vs. "That book is theirs," thus reinforcing the pronominal distinction in context. The clean layout and deliberate use of boldface text contributed to visual clarity. Additionally, dialogue balloons and colour-coded sentence components made structural distinctions immediately visible, echoing visual grammar strategies advocated by Kress and van Leeuwen (2006).

Throughout this section, we include selected screenshots from student-created videos, offering commentary on their pedagogical choices and multimodal design.

Figure 1

Thumbnail from a student-created tutorial video explaining the difference between cardinal and ordinal determiners.

Note: Unless otherwise stated, all figures are anonymised student-created visuals from a first-year linguistics course. They are reproduced here for illustrative purposes only and not intended for public dissemination.

Figure 2

Use of contrastive sentence pairs and visual emphasis to distinguish possessive pronouns from possessive determiners.
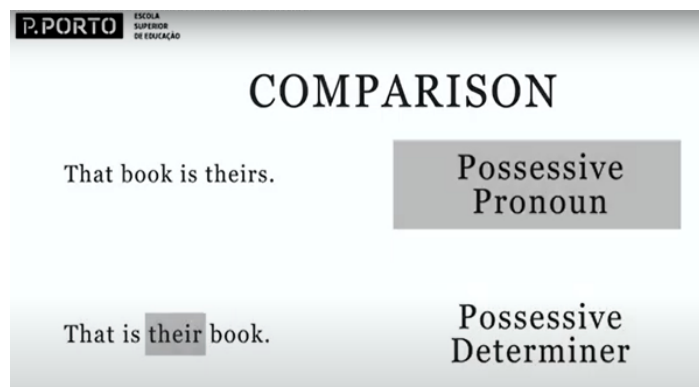
Creativity and humour were evident in the video exploring **'s versus s'**. The student began with a playful sketch involving misplaced possessives and continued with an annotated breakdown of common confusions such as "the girl's bag" vs. "the girls' bags." By integrating a mini-quiz and sound effects, the video struck a balance between entertainment and instruction, helping to sustain attention throughout. Meanwhile, the tutorial on **he, him, and his** was especially notable for its role-playing dialogue. Two cartoon characters engaged in everyday conversation, prompting learners to deduce whether the pronoun referred to the subject, object, or possession. These interactions were both engaging and pedagogically strategic, echoing research on visual storytelling and grammar retention.

Figure 3

Chalkboard-style summary used to clarify the distinction between 's and s' in possessive forms.
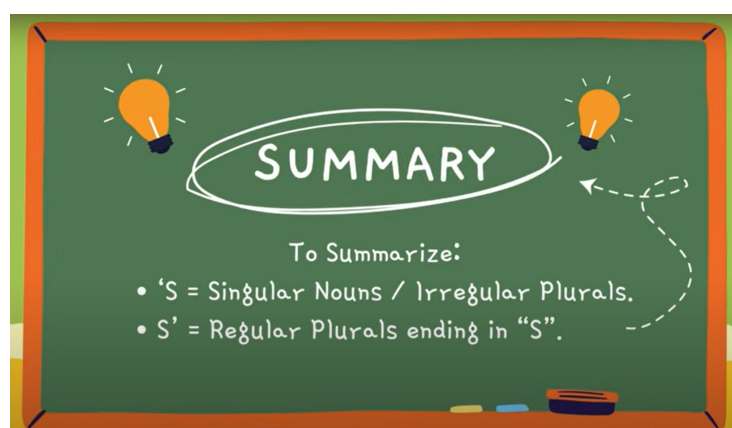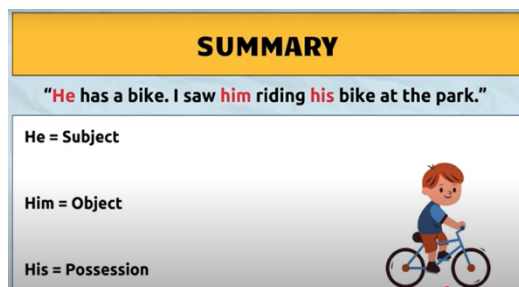
Figure 4

Illustrative sentence and summary used to distinguish between subject, object, and possessive pronouns.

Other top-ranked videos excelled through their design and structural logic. One strong example was the video on **adverbs of comment/opinion versus adverbs of manner**. The student categorised the adverbs into two types using a colour-coded chart, then contextualised them through humorous examples such as "Honestly, she danced beautifully." The distinction between sentence-level and verb-modifying adverbs was introduced gradually, making the abstract concept accessible to B1/B2 learners. Another standout was the tutorial on **possessive determiners vs. possessive pronouns**, where the student used parallel sentence pairs and helpful side-by-side tables to distinguish between "my/mine," "your/yours," and so on. The use of onscreen text was consistent and accessible, enabling viewers to revisit the material visually as it was being explained.

Figure 5

Visual comparison of adverbs of manner and adverbs of comment, illustrating functional distinctions through sentence structure and colour-coded labels.
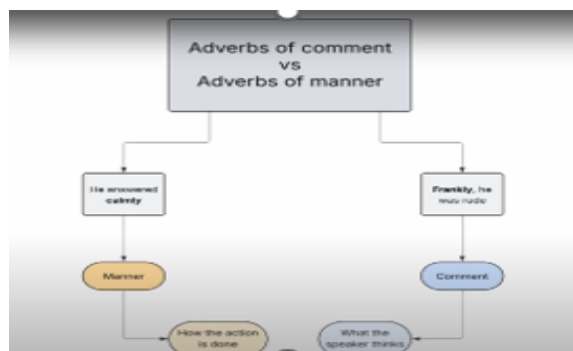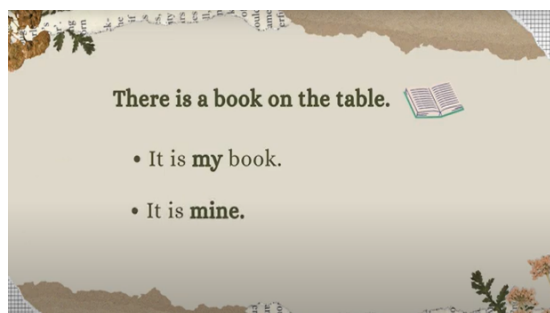

Figure 6

Example-based distinction between possessive determiners and possessive pronouns, contextualised through simple contrastive sentences.

The video titled **Is my wooden old Japanese salad bowl correct?** tackled a classic syntactic challenge: adjective order. Using a real salad bowl on camera, the student physically layered adjectives one by one (size, age, origin, material), before intentionally disrupting the sequence to illustrate common learner errors. This embodied, hands-on demonstration offered a memorable metaphor for a notoriously abstract rule, and aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles by grounding linguistic explanation in physical representation. Similarly, the tutorial on **What are idiomatic expressions?** used large-font, high-contrast text and audio examples to explore non-literal meanings. The student introduced common idioms, explained their figurative interpretations, and contextualised them with relatable scenarios, enhancing both comprehension and recall.

Figure 7

Clarification of adjective order in English using a corrected sentence and visual emphasis to support rule internalisation.
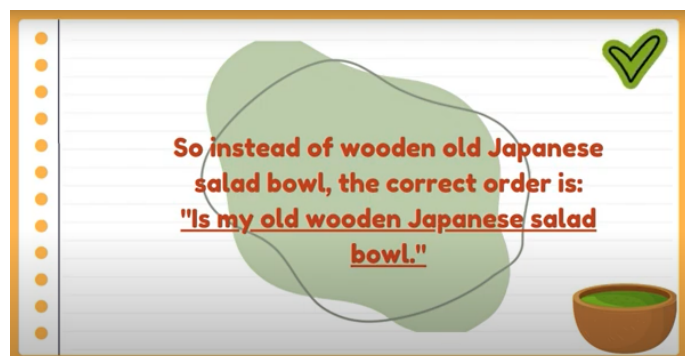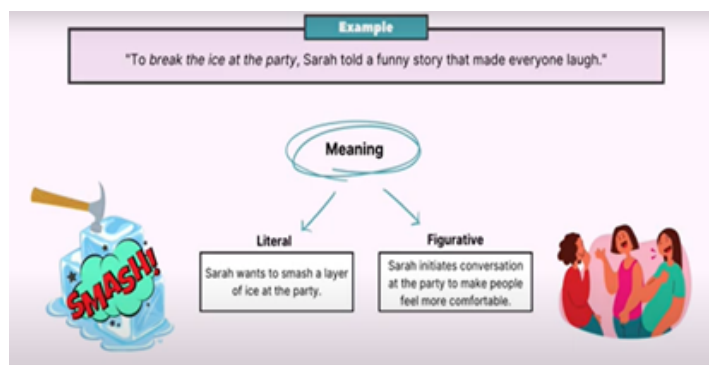

Figure 8

Visual comparison of literal and figurative meanings through the idiom "to break the ice," illustrating dual interpretation with supportive imagery.

The tutorial on *simple versus simply* provided a clear distinction between adjective and adverb usage through animated examples and sentence annotations. Key terms were emphasised visually with consistent colour coding, and a summarising slide at the end reinforced the main contrasts for quick review. Another tutorial video, *What is the difference between a morpheme and a word?*, addressed a more advanced linguistic concept by breaking it down into digestible parts. The student defined and exemplified morphemes (e.g., "un-," "-ed") and contrasted them with standalone lexical items, using visual morphing of word roots and affixes to guide the viewer. This balance of conceptual depth and clarity made the tutorial a strong candidate for reuse as a learning resource.

Figure 9

Clarification of the distinction between "simple" and "simply," using parallel definitions and illustrative example sentences.
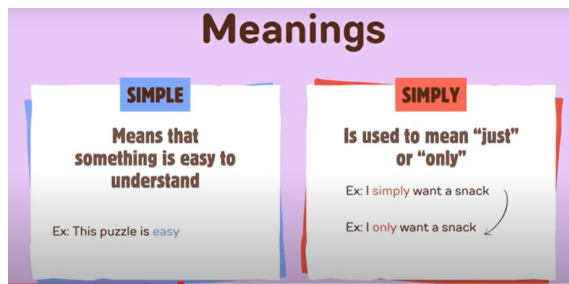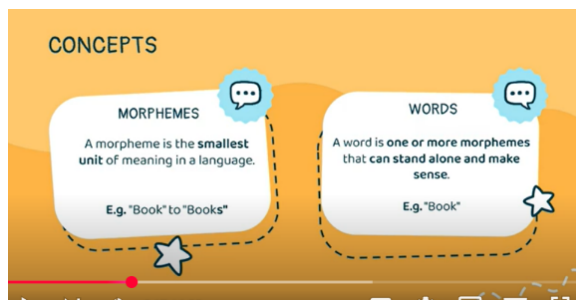

Figure 10

Definition-based comparison of "morpheme" and "word," using layout and iconography to reinforce key distinctions.

What united all the featured tutorials was their clear focus on the learner as an active participant. Students frequently addressed their peers directly, using inclusive phrases and often framing explanations as answers to common questions or misunderstandings (e.g., "You might ask why we use 'their' instead of 'theirs' here"). This conversational style created an inviting atmosphere that balanced friendliness with academic seriousness, encouraging viewers to engage with the material as fellow learners rather than passive recipients. Such an approach is in accordance with research on student-generated content, which highlights its role in promoting a sense of community and shared responsibility in learning.

Simpler productions weren't necessarily less successful, even though there were clear differences in technical sophistication—some videos were just narrated slideshows, while others included humour, animation, or props. The best-rated submissions stood out for their clear explanations of intricate grammatical concepts, their well-structured pacing, and their obvious dedication to making the subject understandable to peers. This was especially clear in tutorials like the one on adjective order, where a tangible object was imaginatively used to enhance comprehension. These results imply that effective student-produced materials rely more on audience-specific communication techniques than on flawless editing. As peer-generated learning resources, a number of these tutorials can be used again in later classes. This strengthens their ability to draw attention to a more collaborative and inclusive approach to grammar instruction.

CONCLUSION

The effects of incorporating a low-stakes, student-produced tutorial video into the continuous assessment framework of a first-year English linguistics course at a Portuguese university were investigated in this case study. To promote motivation, conceptual clarity, and collaborative learning, the intervention was created in response to recurring patterns of disengagement and poor performance, especially with regard to grammar and metalinguistic contents.

The results indicate that this student–centred, formative task significantly raised academic achievement. while only 20% of students who opted for the traditional final exam passed, 90% of the 59 students who completed the video assignment were successful. This discrepancy in participation and results highlights the educational benefits of using innovative, multimodal formats in assessment, particularly for topics that are frequently thought of as abstract or unapproachable.

Most importantly, neither prior digital experience nor technical sophistication was necessary for the task to be successful. Using easily accessible resources, students were urged to place a high value on conceptual explanation, clarity, and engagement. By redefining grammar as a communication tool, they could confidently share with peers, and this method assisted in lowering emotional barriers.

The evidence obtained from this case study indicates that student–made tutorials can serve as both diagnostic tools and motivational boosters, though more research is required to evaluate long–term effects and student perceptions. This approach, which is low–resource and scalable, provides valuable insights for teachers who want to encourage autonomy, inclusion, and long–term involvement in language and linguistics.

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Appendix A

TUTORIAL VIDEO GUIDELINES

- You will need to upload a 60/90-second video (similar to a YouTube tutorial) to explain the topic of your choice (from the list given) to your classmates.
- Your video MUST be **engaging** and **informative** and you have to keep to the time limit.
- The idea is to help your classmates understand issues that have been considered more challenging yet essential to grasp the *Description and Functioning of the English Language*.
- Your video must answer the question, explain the topic in a simplified, yet effective, way and give illustrative examples. Remember that the key idea is to make your classmates understand the topic better!
- You are expected to use the appropriate metalanguage throughout this tutorial.
- An example video (on the present simple vs present continuous) has been uploaded for you to get a clearer idea. Please, look at it carefully and be inspired!
- You do not have to appear in the video. Obviously, you may appear if you want to.
- You do not need to have a voice over but if you do it must be your own voice. You may equally just have background musical support.
- You may use any software of your choice.
- The first frame of your video should contain the following:

P.PORTO ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE EDUCAÇÃO

2025/2026
LCE1 or LCE2
Topic Number: ??
(i.e. number of the topic on the list you
chose the topics from)

Exact question/statement put up on list of topic options (A)

Name
ESE Student Number

- You will have to upload these videos in a Glossary task on Moodle before **25 April**. Remember that the submission deadline will be cut off at **23.55** of 23 April!

- Because this task must be submitted in a glossary format, you will have to upload it under a letter of the alphabet. The letter has already been given to you at the end of each topic/question in brackets. Make sure you submit your work in the right class/turma!!!

- You should do relevant research, but do not go overboard and sink rather than swim! Select **two** key academic references to ground your video on and include these two sources at the end (APA 7th Edition).

- Remember that blogs and random websites do not qualify as credible sources. You should aim for published articles/books.

- Here are some grammar references to get you going:

Ballard, K. (2013). *The frameworks of English* (3rd ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.

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TUTORIAL VIDEO TOPICS

1. What is the essential difference between a morpheme and a word? (M)
2. What is the difference between denotation and connotation? (D)
3. What are collocations? (C)
4. What are idiomatic expressions? (I)
5. What is the difference between *it's* and *its*? (I)
6. What is the difference between *there* and *their*? (T)
7. What is the difference between demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners? (D)
8. What is the difference between *their* and *theirs*? (T)
9. What is the difference between the definite and the indefinite articles? (D)
10. Explain what collective nouns are. (C)
11. Explain what stative verbs are. (S)
12. What is the difference between the gerund and the present participle? (G)
13. What is the difference between a pronoun and a determiner? (P)
14. What is the syntactical difference between a subject and an object? (S)
15. What is a sentence in English? (S)
16. What is a clause in English? (C)
17. What is a phrase in English? (P)
18. What is the difference between a name and a noun? (N)
19. What are modal verbs used for? (M)
20. What is the difference between adverbs of comment/opinion and adverbs of manner? (A)
21. What is the difference between *simple* and *simply*? (S)
22. What is the past participle and what is it used for? (P)
23. What are auxiliary verbs and what are they used for? (A)
24. What is the difference between adverbs of time and adverbs of frequency? (A)

25. What is the difference between countable and uncountable nouns? (N)
26. What is the difference between *he*, *him* and *his*? (H)
27. What is the difference between *me* and *mine*? (M)
28. What is the difference between possessive determiners and possessive pronouns? (P)
29. Are *in*, *on*, *at* prepositions of time or place? Explain. (P)
30. How are prepositions of place different from adverbs of place? Explain. (P)
31. What is the difference between cardinal and ordinal determiners? (D)
32. What are adjectives used for? (A)
33. How is a sentence in English essentially different to a sentence in Portuguese? (S)
34. What is the difference between *hard* and *hardly*? (H)
35. In broad terms, what are conjunctions used for? (C)
36. What is the difference between an adverb and an adverbial? (A)
37. What POS can the word *talked* be? Explain. (T)
38. Is *my wooden old Japanese salad bowl* correct? Why or why not? (A)
39. What is the difference between *who* and *whom*? (W)
40. Is the following sentence correct or incorrect? Justify your answer. (P)
    I am going to wash the hands straight away.
41. What's the difference between *'s* and *s*? Justify. (P)
42. When used in relative clauses, what is the difference between *that* and *which*? (R)
43. What is the difference between phrasal verbs and prepositional verbs? (P)
44. Is the following sentence correct? Justify your answer. (N)
    The travel to Lisbon usually takes 3 hours by car.