

Students' Perception on Youtube as a Tool for Learning English Speaking Skills Among English Education Students at Batanghari University

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ABSTRACT: This study looks into how students see YouTube as an extra tool to help them improve their English Speaking skills at Batanghari University. It focuses on four main aspects: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The research used a qualitative case study method, with interviews conducted with 10 students who actively use YouTube in their learning process. The results show that YouTube can support vocabulary growth, grammar awareness, and pronunciation practice through exposure to authentic language and engaging content. Its impact on fluency is mixed some students feel more confident and speak more naturally, while others still struggle with hesitation due to factors like fast-paced speech or unfamiliar accents. The results of the research are students perception on the use of YouTube for learn English is positive, from YouTube they can learn anything especially for speaking skills. Also YouTube can make students good pronounce, increase students vocabulary, it helpful for grammar but less helpful for fluently. Overall, YouTube is considered a useful addition to learning, especially when paired with interactive practice and teacher guidance.

Keywords: Students' Perception, YouTube, Speaking Skill.

INTRODUCTION

Speaking is widely recognized as one of the most important aspects of language learning, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Mastery of speaking allows students to express their ideas, interact effectively, and participate in global communication. Unfortunately, speaking also tends to be one of the most challenging skills to develop because it requires not only linguistic competence but also confidence, spontaneity, and fluency.

At Batanghari University, many English Education students have admitted that they struggle with speaking in front of others. They often hesitate, worry about making grammatical mistakes, or cannot find the right words. Even when they know the vocabulary, they sometimes fail to pronounce it clearly, which reduces their confidence. Moreover, classroom time is often limited, and students do not always get sufficient opportunities for oral practice. Teachers may focus more on written assignments or theoretical understanding, while speaking activities receive less emphasis. This situation creates a gap between what students learn in class and what they need for real-life communication.

Technology, particularly online platforms, offers new ways to overcome these limitations. Among them, YouTube has become one of the most influential media for young learners. Its role extends beyond entertainment; it now serves as a resource for education, including language learning. YouTube provides authentic materials, exposure to various accents, interactive content, and opportunities to imitate natural speech. Students are not restricted by classroom schedules and can access learning anytime and anywhere.

Although many studies have highlighted YouTube's benefits for language learning, most research has been conducted in broader contexts, such as general listening or motivation. Few studies have focused specifically on how university students in Indonesia perceive YouTube as a tool for improving their speaking skills, which include four core components: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Perception, as described by Goldstein (2023) and Eysenck & Keane (2023), is an active cognitive process that shapes how learners interpret their experiences. Students'

perception of learning tools influences their motivation and success.

Media in education, especially digital platforms, play a crucial role in supporting diverse learning styles (Baran, 2019). YouTube, according to Burgess & Green (2023), has become a participatory culture that allows learners to access real language use. Mayer's (2009) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning also supports YouTube's role, showing that students learn better when they receive information through both audio and visual input.

Speaking skills, as outlined by Harmer (2023) and Nunan (2023), consist of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency. Mastery of these components allows learners to express ideas effectively.

Previous research (Khan et al., 2022; Alharbi et al., 2021; Sari et al., 2020) found that YouTube boosts students' confidence, provides authentic accents, and improves vocabulary and pronunciation. This study adds to that body of work by exploring the perceptions of Batanghari University students, who often use YouTube independently outside class.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a qualitative descriptive approach to explore students' perceptions of YouTube in learning speaking skills.

- Setting: Batanghari University, Jambi.
- Participants: 10 second-semester English Education students selected through purposive sampling.
- Instrument: Semi-structured interviews.
- Data Collection: Interviews were conducted after class. Students were asked about frequency of use, types of content accessed, and the impact of YouTube on vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.

- Data Analysis: The process followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) model: data reduction (coding and categorizing responses), data display (narrative summaries), and conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are drawn from in-depth interviews with ten students of the English Education Department at Batanghari University. All participants had experience using YouTube as part of their learning process and were able to provide detailed reflections on how the platform influenced their speaking development.

Before discussing each speaking component individually, it is important to note that students generally considered YouTube as an accessible and motivating tool. They emphasized that learning through YouTube felt less formal and less stressful than in classroom situations. Several students also explained that they often watched YouTube in their free time, which made learning feel more natural rather than forced. This suggests that YouTube learning is not only supplementary but also fits into students' daily routines and lifestyles.

Another theme that emerged was self-directed learning. Unlike in classrooms where teachers usually control the learning materials, students could choose the type of YouTube content they preferred—such as music videos, interviews, tutorials, or vlogs. This autonomy increased their motivation and allowed them to focus on the language aspects they personally wanted to improve.

From the interviews, four major areas of speaking were highlighted: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and fluency. The following sections present the detailed findings.

1. Vocabulary

Every student reported encountering new vocabulary while watching YouTube videos. Some preferred daily vlogs and casual conversations to learn natural expressions, while others watched storytelling or tutorials. Students described strategies such as pausing videos, writing down new words in notebooks or phone notes, and repeating the words out loud to remember them. A few also mentioned trying to use the words in conversations with friends or self-practice. This shows that students were not passive viewers but actively engaged with the content.

2. Grammar

Eight out of ten students agreed that YouTube helped them understand sentence patterns and grammar structures in real communication. They observed how native speakers linked ideas and used tenses naturally, which they considered more effective than memorizing grammar rules. However, two students expressed doubts, stating that YouTube's informal style sometimes confused them because it did not provide structured explanations. This indicates that while YouTube supports implicit grammar learning, it may not fully replace formal instruction.

3. Pronunciation

Most students highlighted pronunciation as one of the strongest benefits of using YouTube. They practiced "shadowing" methods, imitating native speakers' pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Several students reported pausing videos, repeating sentences multiple times, and even recording themselves to compare their speech with the original. This consistent imitation boosted their confidence and made them sound more natural. Only one student admitted difficulty due to varied accents but still considered YouTube helpful overall.

4. Fluency

Seven students stated that their fluency and confidence improved through exposure to natural speech on YouTube. They felt more

familiar with conversational flow, idiomatic expressions, and spontaneous responses. For instance, one student mentioned imagining themselves speaking like their favorite YouTubers, which encouraged them to practice more. However, three students still struggled, especially with fast-paced conversations or unfamiliar accents. They felt that YouTube provided input but not enough practice to ensure smooth delivery.

5. Overall Perceptions

When asked directly about their overall perception, almost all students considered YouTube an effective, accessible, and motivating tool for learning English. They emphasized its advantages: free access, authentic language exposure, flexible learning pace, and engaging content. Some even described YouTube as their "personal tutor" available anytime. Yet, they also acknowledged limitations, particularly the need for teacher guidance to ensure accurate grammar and structured speaking practice.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that students perceive YouTube positively as a supplementary learning tool. Their active engagement in vocabulary note-taking and imitation practices reflects Mayer's multimedia learning theory, where audio-visual content enhances retention. The benefits in pronunciation also align with Derwing & Munro's (2017) emphasis on the role of imitation in pronunciation training.

However, grammar and fluency outcomes were less consistent. Informal or slang-heavy content sometimes hindered grammar acquisition, while fluency required more than just exposure—it needed active speaking opportunities. This supports Li & Ni's (2018) claim that traditional classrooms often lack sufficient speaking practice, making YouTube useful but not fully sufficient.

Overall, YouTube acts as a bridge between formal classroom learning and authentic real-world English use. It motivates learners and provides input, but structured teaching remains necessary to maximize its effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

Students at Batanghari University have a positive perception of YouTube as a tool for learning English speaking skills. They consider it especially effective for vocabulary and pronunciation, moderately helpful for grammar, and less consistent for fluency. The platform is valued for its accessibility, variety, and authenticity, which make learning more enjoyable and motivating.

However, to achieve balanced outcomes, YouTube should be combined with teacher guidance and interactive speaking practice. In this way, students can not only absorb input but also practice output effectively.

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