

## The Use of YouTube in Developing Speaking Skills Among Undergraduates in Malaysia

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### Abstract

Speaking skill is one of the most important skills in learning the English language as it allows us to bridge the gap between international speakers and communicate with people from various countries. However, it can be observed that a number of undergraduates in Malaysia are still struggling to speak English in the class, despite majority of the university programs are using the English language as the medium of instruction. Due to the advance of technology, language learning can be done with various sources of platforms and YouTube is considered as one of the leading platforms that is vastly utilized due to its useful benefits in improving the students' speaking skills alongside the educational video contents that have greatly aid students nationwide in learning the English language. The purpose of this study is to identify the use of YouTube in learning the English language among the undergraduates and YouTube as a platform in developing their speaking skill. A total of 106 undergraduates have participated in completing the questionnaires and the results revealed that majority of the undergraduates had implemented YouTube as a platform to learn the English language while simultaneously enhancing their speaking skill through the various channels provided in the YouTube application. This indicates that the application of YouTube is beneficial in the aspect of refining the learners' English speaking skill as well as learning the language efficiently.

**Keywords:** *YouTube, English language, speaking skills, undergraduates*

### Introduction

Nowadays, the entire world has become a global village, and people communicate with one another in a common language, namely English. The English language is widely spoken throughout the world, and it has achieved the status of global language.. In fact, communication is essential in attaining success, regardless of the fields as an effective communication skill is vital in ensuring a harmonious exchange of ideas. Language is utilised as a communication tool and people would be unable to interact effectively without the usage of the language. Speaking skills are an essential skill to acquire when learning a foreign or second language and according to Brown et al. (1983), speaking is the skill that students will be judged on the most in real life situations. Speaking is a method of communicating ideas, knowledge, and feelings to others as it is the fundamental means for a speaker to express him or herself through the language. Speaking is an interactive process of meaning construction that involves producing, receiving, and processing information (Brown et al., 1983). According to Harmer (2001), the ability to speak fluently means someone can utilise

their knowledge and information to relay something on the spot. Students must have this speaking skill because the success of learning can be measured by their ability to convey their ideas orally.

Learning media has a significant impact on student learning, including the improvement of speaking skills (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020; Ali & Patombongi, 2016). In this era of globalisation, the newly introduced internet-based mode of learning is described as a reliable platform for language learning. YouTube first appeared as a video broadcasting service in February 2005. It is a video sharing website where users from all over the world can upload, like, share, and comment on videos. Traditional learning methods have failed to survive in the modern world of information, and YouTube has emerged as a good digital pedagogical tool to cater to the needs of the current generations which are the generation Z and generation Alpha. YouTube provides an extensive variety of contents ranging from entertainment to education. It is considered as a one-stop center for the public to utilise for any kinds of purposes. YouTube provides quick and easy access to instructional and entertaining videos from all over the world that we could not reach personally. A majority of the videos on the platform serves the dual purpose of entertainment and education. For instance, apart from being entertaining to watch by the public, the contents on the YouTube could be employed as an effective learning medium that would greatly draw the attention of the students in understanding the subject matter contents.

## **Research Objectives**

In order to achieve the aim of this research, the following research objectives have been prepared:

1. To investigate the use of YouTube in learning the English language
2. To identify the use of YouTube as a platform to learn speaking skills

## **Literature Review**

Language is an indispensable tool in a human's life because it is used to communicate as well as to improve one's speaking abilities. Due to skill, the message to be conveyed verbally will be conveyed effectively and efficiently, improving communication with others. It has been established that the English language consisted of four skills which are listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Adam, 2020). Learning to speak also necessitates a great deal of practice and attention; when students can communicate effectively, they have achieved their goal of mastering the speaking skill. Speaking, as defined by Mandasari and Aminatun (2020) is the ability to pronounce articulation sounds or words in order to express or convey thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Speaking in general, according to Pranoto and Suprayogi (2020), is described as the delivery

of one's intentions, ideas, thoughts, and hearts to others through spoken language. According to Aljumah (2011), speaking has always been reported as a problem for Saudi EFL learners. The traditional methods of teaching used by English teachers in secondary school classes in Saudi Arabia had resulted in speakers who performed poorly and are unable to engage in extended conversations with others (Alhamami, 2013).

Furthermore, among the difficulties that students face during the learning process is the inability to communicate confidently in front of others, and also to ask and respond to inquiries from their peers and instructors. Because of their lack of desire and confidence in their ability to communicate, English language students' burgeoning speaking skills are constantly perceived as complex and challenging, necessitating a significant deal of effort to sustain (Aziz & Kashinathan 2021). Aside from that, students struggle to communicate effectively in English, since English is not their first language. For example, Andriani (2019) stated that most students cannot pronounce words correctly and have a limited vocabulary, making it difficult for them to speak English confidently.

Due to the advancement of technology, language learning not only can be done with one source of platform but today, learning resources can be found everywhere online. According to Bull and Ma (2001), technology offers unlimited resources to language learners. Clements and Sarama (2003) mentioned that suitable technological materials can be useful for learners. Harmer (2007) and İlter (2015) emphasised that teachers should encourage learners to find appropriate activities using computer technology in order to be successful in language learning. Furthermore, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011) agreed that technology provides instructional materials and brings learning experiences into the world of learners. Several realistic materials may be offered to learners through technology, and they can be motivated to learn language. In the world of technology, YouTube is regarded as one of the valuable internet-based resource for learning language. Established in 2005, YouTube is an internet-based teaching platform that allows students to easily update contents and motivates children to study through the videos and images it provides (Deng & Yuen, 2010). It is a video-sharing website that features video clips, TV clips, music videos, movie trailers, and other contents such as video blogging, short original videos, and educational videos (Jalaluddin, 2016). YouTube is available in over sixty languages and in many nations across the world (Silviyanti, 2014). One of the most notable characteristics of the YouTube platform is that it contains numerous videos on a variety of topics and in a variety of languages.

According to Alobaid (2021), YouTube is a web-based multimedia platform that delivers multimedia elements such as pictures, spoken texts, graphics, and videos that can be incorporated into language learning environments. Today, YouTube is undeniably the most popular online video platform for language learning. It is an example of information technology (IT) progress in the globalization era. Numerous studies have been conducted on the efficacy of YouTube videos in enhancing language skills. Miller et al. (2012) Universiti Teknologi MARA, Vol. 7, No. 3, 2023

explored the influence of YouTube on the development of secondary school students' speaking skills in Singapore. In speaking classes, pupils were taught for three months using YouTube. Following the integration of YouTube in the classroom, pupils were given an exam on their competency and according to the study, YouTube is a good medium for students to communicate with their classmates and improve their speaking abilities. In addition, the pupils were significantly better in their ability to self-reflect on their proficiency. The key outcome was that the students reflected on their classwork and were able to express their thoughts with their classmates. Previous research also shows that YouTube is indeed a valuable tool for English language learning as it helps students to feel motivated and engaged when YouTube videos are used in their English language classroom. Likewise, English language teachers also have positive perceptions of using YouTube in developing students' speaking skills as they expressed that YouTube videos help students guess the meaning of unfamiliar words, assist them in improving their speaking skills, as well as preventing them from going astray while speaking and listening to the videos (Albahlal, 2019). Students can practice what they had learnt in the classrooms by watching or downloading videos available on the platform alongside having the opportunity to create their own videos in relation to their subject matter on their YouTube channel (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018).

There are numerous tutorials and contents available on YouTube that could assist students in learning the skills to be effective and great public speakers. Students, for example, can learn how to argue effectively by watching debate videos. Students can also directly practice tutorials provided on YouTube as well as recording and uploading their own tutorials on the platform (Muliyah & Aminatun, 2020). Plaza Martínez (2022) reported that YouTube can improve students' communication and understanding, which in turn enhances their listening skills. Susanti et al. (2022) correspondingly observed an increase in motivation as well as confidence in speaking among their research participants after incorporating the YouTube application and role plays inside the classrooms.

## **Problem Statement**

The expectation for this research is that students are able to improve their speaking skills by watching YouTube videos as a platform in enhancing their speaking skills. It is worthy to note that the success of learning to speak can visually be assessed by their ability to convey their ideas orally. During conversations with the other speakers, students would be able to express what is on their minds as well as their feelings, in the attempt to ensure that the other interlocutor could understand (Qodriani & Kardiansyah, 2018). It is observed that most undergraduates still struggle to speak English in class despite majority of the courses in tertiary institutions using the English language as a medium of instruction. In fact, English is frequently used during presentations and, hence, heightens the significance of speaking skill within the education field.

Learning to speak coherently and accurately requires a lot of practices and attention by the learners and therefore, individuals who can master the speaking skills are able to communicate successfully with other speakers during interactions. In addition, there are several possible factors that lead to the existing study. If students are not good with their speaking skills, it will surely affect their communication particularly during presentations as they would not be able to convey their thoughts and ideas effectively. This denotes the importance of the speaking skills for students due to its usage in their daily lives. One of the factors that lead to the existing study is the lack of motivation to learn or to speak English among the students as some may assume that speaking English is not essential and does not have any needs to use the language on a daily basis. Apart from that, it could be seen that a lack of general knowledge may be a contributing factor that led to the students' reluctance in using the English language as they might not be exposed to the various ways of learning the English language. Apart from the traditional method in learning, another alternative could be applied such as by the integration of the YouTube platform. YouTube is a useful tool for improving students' public speaking skills through its attention-grabbing videos that are in-line with the students' interests. In addition to being motivating and interesting, YouTube enables students to listen carefully, pronounce words correctly and organize their ideas while speaking. Besides that, watching YouTube videos is the easiest and cost effective way to help improve their speaking skills and encourage students to speak English. In the modern, globalised world, effective communication is essential for success in all endeavors. Speaking skills is one of the most important skills one must master in order to learn the English language effectively and hence, YouTube is deemed as one of the social media platforms that is excellent in enhancing one's English language learning experience. Despite its benefits, the research on the effectiveness of YouTube on students' learning has not been extensively researched among Malaysian students, alongside its implementation in developing their speaking skills. Thus, this prompted the researchers to carry out this current study as to fill in the gap discovered with regards to this particular issue.

## **Methodology**

In this study, the researchers employed a quantitative research approach by conducting an online survey questionnaire on the targeted respondents. Random sampling is implemented as an unbiased representation of the entire population could be achieved. The researchers randomly selected a subset of participants from a population and thus, the targeted respondents are undergraduates from various universities in Malaysia. In this study, the researchers employed a questionnaire which consisted of 16 questions via the Google Form application and a total of 106 respondents participated in completing the questionnaires. These questionnaires were divided into three sections namely; Section 1: Demographic of the Respondents; Section 2: The Use of YouTube in Learning English, and Section 3: The Use of YouTube as a Platform to Develop Speaking Skills. The questionnaires have been distributed via various social media platforms such as

WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. The descriptive statistics of the SPSS application is used in analysing the data collected.

## Findings

### Section 1: Demographic of the Respondents

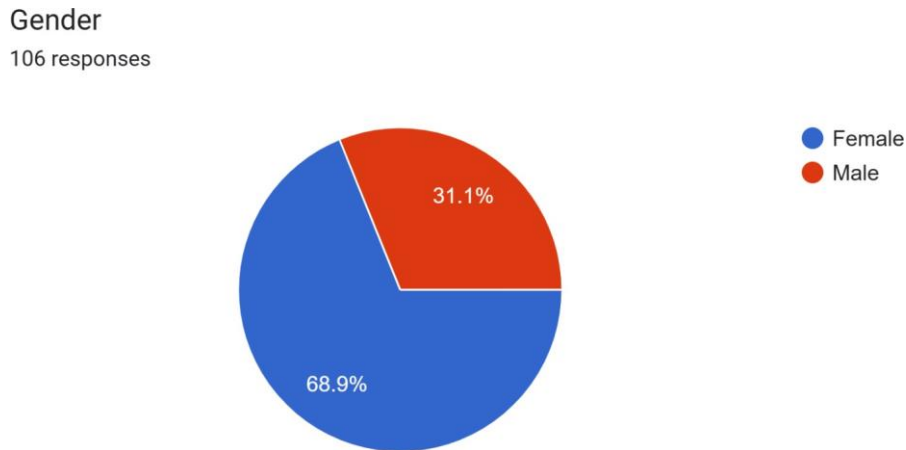


Figure 1: The percentage of the participants based on their gender

A total of 106 respondents participated in answering the survey questionnaire with the majority being female students (68.9%) while male students recorded the remaining percentage of 31%. Above is the chart for the first demographic question.

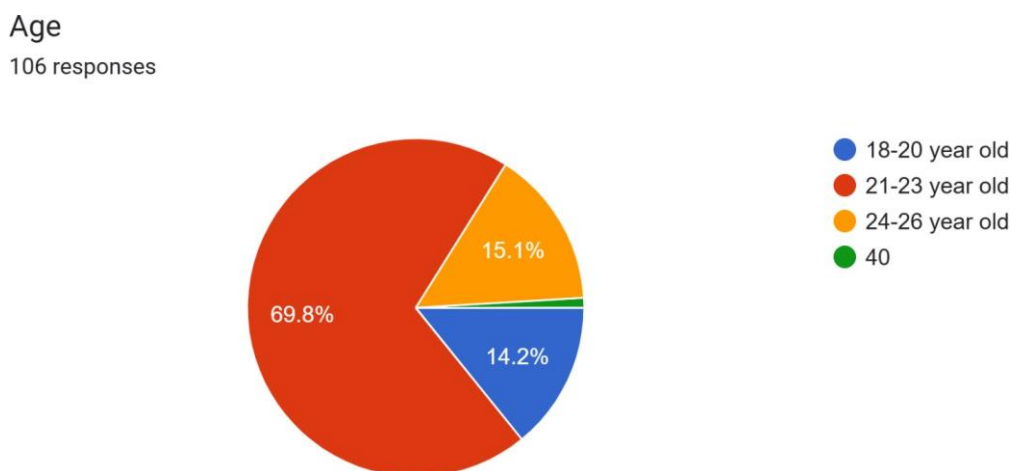


Figure 2: The percentage of the participants based on their age

Next, based on the pie chart above, it can be seen that the majority of undergraduates are between the ages of 21 to 23 years old (69.8%). They were followed by 15.1% of respondents within the age range of 24 – 26 years old and 14.2% of respondents aged between 18 – 20 years old. The lowest percentage of 0.9% with only one undergraduate consisted of only one student at the age of 40 years old.

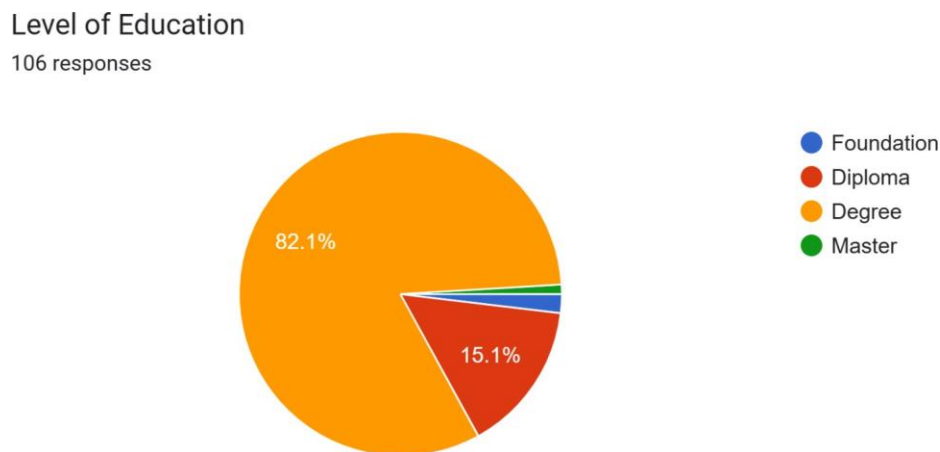


Figure 3: The percentage of the participants based on their education

Finally, the chart above shows the demography of the respondents in terms of the level of their education. According to the chart above, the undergraduates partaking the Bachelor's degree recorded the highest percentage with 82.1%. This is followed by the undergraduates pursuing their Diploma with 15.1%, two foundation students with the percentage of 1.9% and lastly a Master student which recorded the lowest percentage of 0.9%.

## Section 2: The Use of YouTube in Learning English

In relation to the first section which discussed the use of You Tube in learning English, the majority of the undergraduates believed that You Tube is a beneficial tool for learning English effectively as they 'strongly agreed' with the statement with a mean score of 3.82 from the overall population. Additionally, majority of them also remarked that watching YouTube makes the learning catchy and interesting with a mean score of 3.75 and this is followed by the subsequent item which revealed that a high score was rated by the undergraduates in expressing that felt more comfortable watching YouTube videos to learn the English language effectively. Besides, in the fourth item which prompted their opinion on whether they would regard watching YouTube videos as affecting students' learning outcomes in learning the English language,

almost all of them agreed that indeed watching YouTube videos has an effect on the English language learning outcomes.

Table 1: The Use of YouTube in Learning English

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
YouTube is a beneficial tool for learning English effectively.	106	1	5	3.82	1.358
Watching YouTube videos make learning English very interesting and fun.	106	1	5	3.75	1.344
I feel more comfortable in using YouTube videos to learn English Language effectively.	106	1	5	3.68	1.377
In your opinion, does watching YouTube videos affects students' learning outcomes in learning English language?	106	1	5	3.71	1.359
Valid N (listwise)	106				

The findings above illustrated that the respondents use the application YouTube to learn the English language. It was shown that the respondents have a positive perception towards the use of YouTube in learning the English language. It shows that this application is a beneficial tool for the undergraduates to learn the English language. Based on Table 1, Question 1 has recorded the highest mean ( $M=3.89$ ;  $SD=1.358$ ) compared to the other questions. This result indicates that the undergraduates were using the application YouTube as a method for them in learning the language particularly by watching various contents on the YouTube platform. Hence, it was demonstrated that the participants believe that using YouTube is beneficial in learning the target language as well as indicated that they feel at ease in using the YouTube platform in learning the English language effectively.

### Section 3: The Use of YouTube as a Platform to Develop Speaking Skills

This section of survey questionnaires comprises items that identify the use of YouTube as a platform to develop speaking skills among the undergraduates in Malaysia. This section consists of 8 questions and the respondents' answers are presented in Table 1.

Continuing on the discussion, Section 2 probed on the use of YouTube as a platform in developing speaking skills and the first item revealed that all of the undergraduates agreed that watching YouTube videos helps to develop their speaking skills and the following question shown that the undergraduates definitely believed that the implementation of the YouTube tremendously helped them in speaking the English language faster and better through the variety of videos available alongside the authenticity in



using the language in an assortment of contexts. Moreover, the subsequent item also revealed that the undergraduates remarked that the usage of YouTube platform had assisted them in speaking the English language in a fluent and confident manner as well as adding that through these various videos on the YouTube platform, their speaking skills had been improved greatly which helped in boosting their confidence in practicing the language. Further elaborating on this, they indicated that they felt more comfortable in using the YouTube platform in enhancing their English-speaking skill for the reason that they had the opportunities to watch fascinating contents for instance the travel vlogs, Ted Talks, podcasts alongside English movies. It is undeniable that these stimulating contents were of the interests of the current generations and that they would be more attracted in learning the language through these mediums instead of the traditional chalk-and-talk method in the classrooms. In relation to this, they also had remarked on the effectiveness of these means in influencing one’s speaking skills and that they believed the imitation of these YouTubers’ pronunciation style in speaking indeed had impacted their speaking skills even to the extent of influencing their accuracy in speaking. Depending on the contents that they consumed, they could either be affected positively or negatively if they religiously imitated these individuals. However, in the context of this study, the undergraduates signified that they positively influenced by the videos that they had been watching. The last item probed on their opinions with regards to utilizing the YouTube platform in the activities such as watching speeches, listening carefully, taking notes on new vocabulary alongside practicing sentences and they had agreed that these activities facilitated their journey in developing their speaking skills.

Table 2: The Use of YouTube as a Platform to Develop Speaking Skills

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Watching YouTube videos help me develop my speaking skills effectively.	106	1	5	3.71	1.338
I learn speaking English faster and better by watching YouTube videos.	106	1	5	3.72	1.300
Watching YouTube videos help me speak English fluently and confidently.	106	1	5	3.70	1.303
Watching YouTube videos helps me to improve my speaking skill.	106	1	5	3.66	1.301
I feel more convenient in using YouTube as a platform to enhance my English-speaking skills by watching English content such as travel vlog, Ted Talk and news.	106	1	5	3.71	1.345

Do you think watching YouTube content will affect students' speaking as news as news shows, Ted Talk, podcasts and English movies?	106	1	5	3.79	1.217
In your opinion, imitating someone exactly as shown on YouTube will affect students' speaking skills such as pronunciation style, accuracy in speaking?	106	1	5	3.73	1.254
Activities such as watching speeches on YouTube, listening carefully, taking notes on new vocabulary, practicing a few sentences, do you think the above activities will help you improve your speaking skills?	106	1	5	3.75	1.351
Valid N (listwise)	106				

## Discussions

To conclude, a huge number of the undergraduates agreed that YouTube is beneficial as a platform in developing their speaking skills. Most students use YouTube to consume various contents such as podcasts, an assortment of videos including Ted Talks and English news and shows in an attempt to enhance their speaking skills. Furthermore, from Table 2, it can be clearly seen that the majority of the undergraduates gave positive responses towards the survey questionnaire. Majority of the undergraduates chose “Strongly Agree” on the survey questionnaires which leads to the highest mean score. This signifies that the undergraduates did employ YouTube as one of the tools in developing their speaking skills as well as making their English language learning more efficient and appealing. As indicated in the previous literatures, the videos on YouTube had tremendously aid in making the process in practicing the language simpler and this is evidently reflected in the current study (Puspaningtyas & Ulfa, 2020). This is further being supported by Wahyuni and Utami (2021) where they noted the versatility of the YouTube application as a learning medium for a variety of fields, including improving English speaking skills. To sum up, it can be determined that majority of the participants agreed on the beneficial use of YouTube as a platform in learning the English language alongside developing the speaking skills among undergraduates in Malaysia and that this platform has a great potential to be extensively integrated within the curriculum. Besides, the effectiveness of YouTube is also being supported by Susanti et al. (2022) wherein the students’ motivation and confidence had drastically increased after they incorporated the platform and role plays during their lessons.

However, there are limitations in this research as the research only focuses on the use of YouTube in improving the undergraduates’ English speaking skills in general and not exploring on the specific contents of the videos or the impact of the contents on the undergraduates’ English language competence.

Additionally, this current study did not specifically target on any undergraduates' programs and instead, it is conducted on undergraduates that partaking various programs in the local institutions within Malaysia. These two limitations could be refined for future researchers by investigating further on the impact of the contents of the YouTube videos on the learners' English language proficiency as well as being conducted on a specific group of undergraduates' programs in order to achieve a better set of findings.

### **Contributions of the Study**

The findings of this study would contribute in the field of knowledge through its apparent results that revealed the undergraduates' interests and fascination with the implementation of YouTube as a platform in their language learning processes. As it is evident that the undergraduates had signified their agreement in utilizing the YouTube as a medium in learning, the educators particularly the lecturers in the tertiary education should extensively practice and adopt the platform in their curriculum. The traditional method of lecturing may not be effective to any further extent as the newer generations are no longer interested in listening to hours long of lectures by their instructors. As the implementation of technology in the classroom has already been vastly practiced in the classrooms especially in the universities, the academicians must be proactive in meeting to the students' needs and interests by carrying out the lessons with the supplementation of the materials and contents from the YouTube platform. The contents must be carefully chosen in ensuring the adaptability into the education context and this would be excellent as exposing the students to the authentic materials particularly from native speaker's creators would greatly polish the undergraduates' speaking skill. As the employment of native speakers in our local institutions is rather scarce, thus, the application of YouTube as a medium in the classrooms practice would be a notable effort in providing authentic resources for the learners which ultimately would positively have some bearing on their English language learning experience.

### **Conflict of interest statement**

The author agrees that this research was conducted without any self-benefits, commercial or financial conflicts and declare the absence of conflicting interests with the funders.

### **Author's Contribution**

The author is the sole author of this research.

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