

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

YouTube is a platform where content creators generate videos on various topics: cooking, car repair, games, entertainment, documentaries, drama, movie trailers, and more. This vast platform is widely accessed by viewers internationally. Consequently, content creators from diverse countries produce videos in English, resulting in an extensive collection of English-language content. As a result, an abundance of English videos is available for viewing. This accessibility has led to many students watching English videos on YouTube. Research has increasingly recognized YouTube's educational potential for language learning. According to a report published by YouTube (2019), English is the platform's most-used language for educational content, with over 500 million daily views. This statistic underscores the significant role YouTube plays in supporting language learners worldwide.

In a survey conducted by Smith and Johnson (2020), many students acknowledged YouTube as a valuable resource for learning English. The platform's convenience, accessibility, and flexibility were cited as crucial factors that make YouTube a preferred choice for language learners. YouTube has become a popular tool for English language learners due to its diverse video content range. Students can watch videos covering various topics and difficulty levels, enhancing their listening and comprehension skills. Many students consider YouTube a valuable resource for learning English, appreciating features

like the ability to pause, rewind, and replay videos to grasp the material thoroughly. Moreover, the platform's recommendation algorithms can suggest pertinent videos to learners based on their interests and viewing history.

YouTube's recommendation algorithms, rooted in users' viewing history and preferences, are pivotal in enhancing the language learning experience. These algorithms recommend related videos aligned with learners' interests, exposing them to a wide range of content pertinent to their learning objectives. This personalized approach not only diversifies their exposure to different accents, speech patterns, and vocabulary but also maintains their engagement and motivation to explore new subjects (Gromik, 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has further reshaped the way we approach learning. During this period, the number of students watching YouTube has surged. With the proliferation of online and integrated classes, learning materials are often accessed through YouTube. The pandemic's initial phases, characterized by lockdowns and restrictions, contributed to a surge in YouTube viewership. YouTube's popularity has also transcended traditional television due to its unparalleled convenience and flexibility. Sherman (2003) underscores the prevalence of video as a contemporary medium, emphasizing people's increased engagement with audiovisual content compared to printed materials.

Like children learn languages through observation, YouTube facilitates language learning through online observation. We consistently encounter English words and sentences when we watch YouTube videos in English. Consequently,

our brains actively engage with and analyze these words' meanings, enriching our vocabulary. This continual exposure to English-language content immerses us in an English-speaking environment, fostering the development of language skills. While we may not speak English directly, this immersion prepares us to respond effectively when situations require us to communicate in English. Our personality, image, knowledge of the world, and our ability to express our thoughts are reflected in our speaking performance (Luoma, 2004).

As the largest video-sharing platform on the internet, YouTube has emerged as a popular tool for language learners. YouTube allows learners to access various video resources in different languages, including English. According to a report by YouTube, English is the most popular language used for educational content on the platform, with over 500 million views per day (YouTube, 2019).

However, despite the growing popularity of YouTube for language learning, there still needs to be more research exploring the suitability of YouTube as a language learning tool, particularly from the perspective of learners. The existing research has focused on the impact of YouTube on language learning outcomes and using YouTube videos in EFL classroom materials or from a teacher's perspective on how YouTube can be a more exciting learning medium for students. Still, little attention has been given to students who watch random YouTube videos in English based on their interests or needs or just for entertainment.

Therefore, this study aims to explore students' perceptions of using YouTube for overall English language proficiency. The study will focus on whether students believe that watching English YouTube videos can enhance their English proficiency and the aspects that guide the learners' decision to use YouTube. The findings of this study will provide insights into the potential benefits of watching English YouTube videos and the considerations that lead them to choose this platform. They will contribute to developing effective language learning strategies incorporating digital media.

1.2 Research Question

This thesis aims to explore students' perceptions of YouTube as a tool for English language learning. Specifically, this study will find out an answer to the following research questions:

1. What is students' perception on YouTube's as an English language learning medium?

1.3 Research Aims

This thesis aims to comprehensively understand how students perceive YouTube as a tool for learning English and how it can be effectively utilized in language learning settings. By doing so, this study can offer valuable insights into the potential of technology in enhancing language learning experiences and promoting language proficiency.

This thesis aims to get student perception of whether watching YouTube videos improve their English proficiency.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The study can give significant information to similar video-sharing platforms about the possible reason which makes YouTube more popular among students for using YouTube as an English learning medium if other similar platforms want to be more user-friendly for English language learners. This study will allow them to get ideas for improving their platform features and guidelines. This study can also inform students and teachers that watching YouTube can be very beneficial for improving English. The study can also contribute to the body of knowledge on student-centered learning and the role of technology in promoting learner autonomy and motivation.