

Saudi EFL Students' Perceptions Towards the Impact of YouTube on Improving Speaking Skills

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Received: September 4, 2023

Accepted: January 15, 2024

Online Published: February 13, 2024

doi:10.5430/jct.v13n1p151

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/jct.v13n1p151>

Abstract

The significance of integrating technology in education, especially the widely and frequently used platform “YouTube”, is found in its ability to provide accessible and various educational resources, meeting the needs of diverse learning styles and enhancing active engagement. Since YouTube is one of the preferred applications utilized by Saudi individuals, this study investigated the impact of using YouTube on enhancing the speaking skills of EFL male and female Saudi students from different Saudi universities. This study was conducted during the first semester of the academic year 2021- 2022. A questionnaire was used as the study instrument. It was adapted from Binmahboob's (2020) study and modified according to the study's purposes. The questionnaire contained 17 items divided into two sections. 79 EFL students from different Saudi universities participated. Fifty-nine of them were females, while 20 were males. The findings of the study revealed that YouTube videos had a high positive perspective from the participants. In other words, it can be concluded that YouTube videos enhance the speaking skills of EFL university students. Based on these finding, some recommendations and implications were provided.

Keywords: YouTube, videos, speaking skills, technology, social media, EFL

1. Introduction

Nowadays, internet applications are considered a part of our daily routine and are used for several purposes, such as chatting, sharing media, meeting, and even learning. Internet applications give access to knowledge and experience from different places with minimal effort and risks. For example, an individual can conduct a scientific experiment through simulation or even contact his friends from any site. This convenience and flexibility offered by internet applications have made life easier. YouTube is one of the most famous applications used all over the world. It is an American online application founded by Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim. It was launched in February 2005 (Hosch, 2023). It is a platform where videos are shared, and users interact with others through comments and live streaming. This platform provides a lively community where an individual can find different races, languages, thoughts, contents, and fields in one platform. It contains different kinds of videos including, cooking, gaming, vlogs, DIY (Do It Yourself) tutorials, music, stories, educational videos, and more. It is considered an insightful teaching tool where they gain new knowledge in a comfortable zone with no limits, pressure, or deadlines. It helps EFL students enhance their knowledge and develop their speaking skills through listening (Lewis, 2020).

However, lack of confidence is a significant factor inhibiting EFL students' speaking skills, as they may feel incapable or afraid of making mistakes in real-life situations (Tridinanti, 2018). Moreover, an EFL student needs to be exposed to the language to realize accurate pronunciation and speak fluently. Furthermore, some studies conclude that YouTube helps EFL learners enhance their speaking skills since they become able to contact English native speakers (McLellan, 2019), and this is particularly crucial as English is not the official language in the Saudi EFL students' environment, making fluency in English a challenge. Therefore, this study aims to examine the perceptions of Saudi EFL students from various Saudi universities regarding the impact of YouTube on improving their speaking skills. Investigating Saudi EFL students' perceptions sheds light on to which extent YouTube is effective as a tool for language learning in the Saudi EFL context, as it has been revealed that Saudi Arabia has the highest mobile viewership of YouTube globally. With over 90 million daily views, Saudi Arabia is the largest consumer of YouTube content (Khalife, 2019). This highlights the potential of YouTube as an educational and entertainment tool in the

country.

2. Literature Review

Nowadays, technology is widely used in all days in every part of the world. It plays a vital role in facilitating the life pace and accomplishing tasks more efficiently. Furthermore, it has made life easier and more flexible, enhancing the level of productivity (Gorman, 2001). Social media is integrated deeply into all aspects of people's lives, such as communication, education, entertainment, etc. Social media platforms, such as YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook, enable people from different places at any time to communicate and gain and share knowledge. According to Robins and Crystal (2023), those platforms influence language skills, particularly speaking skills. Speaking is essential for communication, allowing people to express ideas, engage in conversations, and share thoughts. It is crucial in our daily interactions, facilitating clear communication and often accompanied by non-verbal cues (Lucas, 2018).

2.1 YouTube

YouTube is a platform that provides users with the ability to watch a wide range of videos, including live-streamed content and pre-recorded videos. Additionally, users can actively participate by leaving comments and engaging in discussions related to the videos they watch. YouTube has been proven to be valuable for students in developing their knowledge and language skills, particularly for those learning a language not spoken in their community (Lynch, 2016). YouTube is the second largest search engine after Google (George, 2019), emphasizing its significance to be used. Statistically, in 2022, YouTube had 25 million active users (Aslam, 2023). These statistics highlight the widespread use of YouTube, which it provides a wide range of videos that can be directed to users of different ages, including kids, teenagers, and adults, and of various professions, such as doctors, teachers, engineers, and students. For EFL students, through YouTube, they can develop their language skills, especially speaking skills, and easily find native speakers of their target language to communicate with.

Additionally, YouTube has several advantages, such as being easy and free to use, backlink-generated, and accessible to users of all age ranges without any cost, allowing them to share knowledge and experience with others and make money through their videos. However, regarding the disadvantage of YouTube, everything is public, and video content can be seen by anyone, this can lead to copyright issues. Also, any advertiser can put an ad on another user's video, hurting the content creator himself (Jong, 2019).

2.2 Studies Related to the Influence of YouTube on Speaking skills

Numerous studies have focused on the impact of YouTube on improving the speaking skills of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Saed, Haider, Al-Salman, and Hussein (2021) conducted a study in Jordan with two groups: one group used YouTube videos for instruction, and the other followed traditional methods. The experimental group showed significant improvement in speaking skills. Similarly, Kristiani and Pradnyadewi (2021) found that YouTube effectively enhanced students' speaking abilities. Anggraini (2021) observed progressive improvement in speaking skills when using YouTube videos in language courses. Riswandi (2016) conducted a study with seventh-grade students and found that YouTube improved fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and content. Tristianiana and Swondo (2020) investigated the impact of YouTube content creation and found that it led to significantly better speaking skills. Albahlal (2019) surveyed English language teachers, and the result asserted positive perceptions of using YouTube for speaking skills development. Syafiq, Rahmawati, Anwari, and Oktaviana (2021) found that YouTube videos improved college students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and content. Binmahboob (2020) revealed that English instructors considered YouTube helpful for developing students' speaking skills. These studies highlight YouTube's potential as an engaging and accessible resource for enhancing speaking skills in EFL education.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design

In this study, a quantitative research approach was employed, focusing on analyzing the perceptions of Saudi EFL students regarding the impact of YouTube on developing their speaking skills. The research design was tailored to address the study's question.

3.2 Participants of the Study

The study comprises EFL students enrolling in different Saudi universities from various educational levels. A total of Seventy-nine participants responded to the questionnaire; 59 were females, while 20 were males.

3.3 Instrument of the Study

The study utilized a questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire consisted of 17 statements and was divided into two sections. It was adapted from Binmahboob's (2020) study titled "YouTube as a Learning Tool to Improve Students' Speaking Skills as Perceived by EFL Teachers in Secondary School." The statements of the questionnaire were modified to fit the research purpose. The questionnaire used a Likert rating scale with five response options which were strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.

3.4 Reliability of the Study Instrument

Table 1. Reliability of the Study Instrument (ANOVA test)

Summary	Count	Sum	Average	Variance
Row 1	17	85	5	0
Row 2	17	66	3.88235	0.73579
Row 3	17	57	3.35294	0.24265
Row 4	17	76	4.47059	0.38971
Row 5	17	68	4	1.125
Row 6	17	60	3.52941	1.01471
Row 7	17	64	3.76471	1.31618
Row 8	17	67	3.94118	0.93362
Row 9	17	77	4.52941	0.38971
Row 10	17	66	3.88235	0.86029
Row 11	17	66	3.8823	0.23529
Row 12	17	64	3.76471	0.44118
Row 13	17	41	1.41176	2.25735
Row 14	17	70	4.11765	0.48529
Row 15	17	44	2.58824	0.38235
Row 16	17	70	411.755	1.23529
Row 17	17	77	452941	0.51471
Row 18	17	65	3.82353	0.52941
Row 19	17	85	3.88235	0.86029
Row 20	17	66	3.41176	0.88235
Column 1	20	82	41	0.72632
Column 2	20	86	4.3	0.95789
Column 3	20	86	3.95	0.78684
Column 4	20	79	3.65	0.87105
Column 5	20	73	3.5	1.10526
Column 6	20	70	3.8	1.01053
Column 7	20	76	4.35	0.55526
Column 8	20	85	4.23	0.61842
Column 9	20	72	3.6	0.88421
Column 10	20	71	3.55	1.31316
Column 11	20	64	3.2	1.01053
Column 12	20	89	4.45	0.68158
Column 13	20	78	3.9	1.04211
Column 14	20	73	3.65	1.08158
Column 15	20	68	3.4	0.98947
Column 16	20	77	3.85	1.50263
Column 17	20	77	3.85	1.50263

According to Artstein and Poesio (2008), the instrument is considered reliable if Cronbach's Alpha score reaches 80% or higher. Given that the obtained result is satisfactory (0.897), it can be concluded that the instrument of this study is reliable. (Tables 1 & 2).

Table 2. Reliability of the Study Instrument (ANOVA test)

Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	F crit
Rows	119.4441176	19	6.28653	9.71555	
Columns	40.58823529	16	2.53676	3.92045	
Error	196.7058824	304	0.64706		
Total	356.7382353	339			
Result			0.897072222		

3.5 Validity of the Study Instrument

The questionnaire items were reviewed by a panel of EFL instructors to ensure their validity. The researchers incorporated their feedback, making the necessary adjustments. As a result, the validity of the questionnaire was achieved.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Result of the First Section of the Questionnaire "EFL students' Perceptions of Using YouTube in Developing Speaking Skills"

Table 3. The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Ranks for the First Section the Questionnaire

Item	Mean	Std.D	Rank	Estimation: Positive/Negative
1 YouTube videos help me to enhance my speaking skills.	4.22	0.840068	2	Positive
2 YouTube videos help me to understand the content I listen to.	4.26	0.860608	1	Positive
3 YouTube videos help me to differentiate individual sounds.	3.84	0.911603	7	Positive
4 YouTube videos help me to understand the content in detail.	3.88	1.06215	6	Positive
5 YouTube videos help me to use stress and intonation cues.	3.76	1.001224	10	Positive
6 YouTube videos help me to follow the show I listen to.	4.06	0.912722	5	Positive
7 YouTube videos help me to listen to important words that carry meaning.	4.2	0.832993	3	Positive
8 YouTube videos help me to guess the meaning of words that I do not know.	4.16	0.791795	4	Positive
9 YouTube videos help me to infer what is not stated.	3.78	0.995705	9	Positive
10 YouTube videos help me to separate the continuous flow of speech into identifiable units.	3.88	0.939822	6	Positive
11 YouTube videos prevent me from being lost while speaking.	3.82	1.100835	8	Positive

As shown in Table 3, all the items were positively estimated. According to the questionnaire responses, YouTube videos were claimed to be beneficial for improving EFL students' speaking skills. This result confirmed the findings of Saed, Haider, Al-Salman, and Hussein (2021), who concluded that YouTube videos positively influence EFL students' speaking skills. Additionally, most students agreed that YouTube videos help them to understand the content they listen to. This conclusion is in line with what Syafiq, Rahmawati, Anwari, and Oktaviana (2021) indicate, in which watching YouTube videos contributes to improving EFL students' ability to distinguish different individual sounds.

Moreover, the participants viewed YouTube videos positively in terms of understanding the material in detail.

YouTube offers various explanations and perspectives on any topic, providing EFL students with comprehensive information. This result matches well with the conclusion of Tristian and Swondo (2020). They concluded in their study that the group taught by using YouTube videos was much better than the other group instructed by the traditional approach. The participants also agreed that YouTube videos helped them use stress and intonation cues and follow the direction of conversations they listened to. This finding is in line with Binmahboob's (2020) results. The participants also confirmed that YouTube videos improve their ability to identify important words that carry meanings. In other words, frequent exposure to YouTube videos enhances listening comprehension skills and develops recognizing key words. This is consistent with Binmahboob's (2020) results emphasizing that YouTube offers the opportunity to perceive content words. In addition, there was a good agreement on the help provided by YouTube videos regarding enabling EFL students to guess the meanings of words that they are not familiar with, confirming what Riswandis (2016) concluded emphasizing the vital role of increased exposure to a language through YouTube in raising students' awareness and improving vocabulary and content understanding.

Furthermore, YouTube videos were positively rated in terms of facilitating making inferences about what is not clearly stated. In other words, the more individuals engage with YouTube videos, the more they become knowledgeable about it, as Binmahboob (2020) suggested. Moreover, YouTube videos were positively estimated regarding helping EFL students divide the speech stream into recognizable units. This is in line with Binmahboob's (2020) results, in which exposure to YouTube videos boosts students' ability to segment speech into identifiable units. Lastly, the participants agreed that YouTube videos prevent them from getting lost while speaking. This finding aligns with the study conducted by Saed, Haider, Al-Salman, and Hussein (2021), who indicated that YouTube videos improve students' speaking skills, as well as the study by Riswandis (2016), which highlighted the improvement of students' fluency through YouTube videos.

4.2 The Result of the Second Section of the Questionnaire "EFL students' Attitudes Towards Using YouTube in Developing Speaking Skills"

Table 4. The Mean Scores, Standard Deviations, and Ranks for the Second Section of the Questionnaire

Item	Mean	Std.D	Rank	Estimation: Positive/Negative
1 Finding materials in English language learning on YouTube is easy.	4.36	0.89807	1	Positive
2 EFL student's attention is more attracted by YouTube videos.	4.2	0.92582	3	Positive
3 YouTube videos facilitate faster and more effective English language learning.	4.08	0.944155	4	Positive
4 Integrating YouTube videos in language learning reduces EFL student's anxiety in the classroom.	3.92	1.046666	5	Positive
5 YouTube is preferred by EFL students as it provides a comfortable and enjoyable experience.	4.08	1.103612	4	Positive
6 The ability to choose from a wide range of materials on YouTube enhances the language learning process.	4.3	0.839096	2	Positive

As shown in Table 4, all the items were positively estimated. According to the questionnaire responses, finding English content for learning purposes is effortless since YouTube has a vast range of English materials, allowing EFL students to find the content they seek easily. This result confirms what Binmahboob (2020) concluded, asserting that YouTube's English content is readily available. Moreover, YouTube videos were positively rated in terms of capturing and maintaining students' attention more effectively, as YouTube videos include different learning styles, which are visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Binmahboob (2020) reached a similar conclusion, highlighting the ability of YouTube videos to capture and keep students' attention better.

Furthermore, the participants expressed that learning English through YouTube videos enables faster and better language acquisition. This result is because YouTube offers a wide variety of content, allowing EFL students to choose materials that suit their preferences and learning styles. Anggraini (2021) found the same result, concluding that YouTube videos facilitate faster and better English language learning. Additionally, the participants agreed that using YouTube videos contributes to reducing EFL students' anxiety and, accordingly, to increasing their

self-confidence and encouraging them to participate in the classroom and agreed that they feel at ease when using YouTube to learn English as YouTube provides a relaxed learning environment where students can study without feeling pressured. This finding aligns with the results provided by Binmahboob (2020), who expressed that YouTube videos help alleviate students' anxiety, enhance their engagement in the learning process, and motivate them to learn, and indicated that students feel comfortable when they use YouTube for learning English. Lastly, the participants asserted that they enjoy selecting materials on YouTube for learning English. The availability of various types of videos on YouTube allows students to choose content that aligns with their personal preferences and learning styles. Binmahboob (2020) agreed with this viewpoint, emphasizing that students find joy choosing content on YouTube for English language learning.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, the participants' perceptions were positive towards the impact of YouTube videos on improving their speaking skills in English language learning. YouTube easily provides access to English language content, allowing EFL students to easily find the materials they seek. Moreover, YouTube encompasses many learning styles that effectively capture EFL students' attention. In addition, YouTube contributes to better and faster English language learning since it is easy for EFL students to find materials that suit their individual preferences and learning styles. Since YouTube provides a comfortable learning environment, it reduces EFL students' anxiety, increases their self-confidence, and motivates them to learn, making the learning process more enjoyable.

Based on these insights, it is recommended that YouTube videos can be integrated into language learning lessons to improve students' speaking abilities. More specifically, encouraging active participation through discussions and role-plays using YouTube videos can enhance speaking skills. EFL students' critical thinking can be motivated by being exposed to YouTube content. In addition, allowing students to choose videos that match their preferred learning styles boosts their motivation and autonomy. Also, sharing and discussing videos with classmates and encouraging collaborative learning can create a sense of community and facilitate language learning. Following these suggestions, YouTube videos can enhance speaking skills, promote active learning, and create an engaging language-learning environment.

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Acknowledgments

Not applicable.

Authors contributions

Not applicable.

Funding

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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