



## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING YOUTUBE AS A MEDIUM FOR TEACHING EFL IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

This study presents a systematic review of recent empirical research examining the role of YouTube as an instructional tool for enhancing English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' speaking abilities, with particular emphasis on vocabulary development, pronunciation improvement, and confidence building in digital learning contexts. Adhering to the PRISMA 2020 framework, the review analyzed fifteen empirical studies published between 2020 and 2023, sourced from databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and DOAJ. The findings indicate that YouTube supports speaking skill development by offering learners authentic, multimodal, and repeated exposure to spoken language. Results showed that learners experienced better vocabulary acquisition, more accurate pronunciation through mimicry, and increased speaking confidence due to the flexibility of self-paced learning. Conversely, unstructured or passive viewing was found to have minimal impact. The implications of this review are significant for EFL educators, curriculum developers, and educational institutions seeking to effectively incorporate YouTube into speaking instruction through interactive, reflective, and task-based approaches. This study offers a distinctive synthesis of recent global research and emphasizes pedagogical techniques that promote active engagement in speaking rather than passive content consumption.

*Keywords: Youtube, Efl Learners, Speaking Skill*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, online platforms have increasingly been recognized for their potential to provide flexible and engaging alternatives to conventional pedagogical approaches. These platforms extend language exposure beyond the confines of the classroom, enabling learners to access rich and varied input at their own pace (Su et al., 2021). Among them, YouTube has gained prominence as a powerful tool for incorporating authentic, multimodal content into English language instruction (Mosully, 2024).

Speaking remains one of the most complex and demanding skills for EFL

learners to master. Persistent issues such as inaccurate pronunciation, limited fluency, and low confidence often stem from constrained classroom time, minimal interaction with native speakers, and fear of making errors (Omar, 2023; Pratolo et al., 2019). These challenges are particularly evident in large-scale or teacher-centered learning environments, where opportunities for communicative practice are scarce. In response, an increasing number of studies have investigated how digital media—particularly YouTube—can be leveraged to support the development of speaking proficiency (Listiani et al., 2021; Nugroho & Atmojo, 2020; Alharbi et al., 2024).

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

YouTube offers learners an expansive repository of authentic English materials, including interviews, vlogs, discussions, and instructional videos delivered by native or fluent speakers. These resources provide valuable exposure to natural speech features such as pronunciation nuances, intonation, stress patterns, and colloquial expressions—elements that are often underrepresented in conventional textbooks (Meinawati et al., 2020; Saed et al., 2021; Grari, 2023). The platform also supports learner autonomy and reduces performance anxiety by allowing self-directed and repeated engagement with content (Wahyuni et al., 2021; Abbas & Qassim, 2020; Musdayanti et al., 2024). As Styati (2022) notes, YouTube has the potential to foster more active learner participation and bridge the divide between formal instruction and authentic language use.

Nonetheless, the pedagogical impact of YouTube in enhancing speaking skills is not without its challenges. Several researchers emphasize that passive content consumption yields limited progress unless accompanied by structured tasks and appropriate instructional scaffolding (Suloso & Sakina, 2023; Farikhah & Rizal, 2023). Additionally, factors such as digital literacy, content appropriateness, and technological accessibility may significantly influence the effectiveness of YouTube-based instruction (Cahyana, 2020; Ajiza & Puspitasari, 2023). Furthermore, while some studies report notable improvements in learners' pronunciation, others emphasize gains in vocabulary retention or speaking confidence, with few addressing all components comprehensively.

Against this backdrop, the present study aims to conduct a systematic review of empirical literature published between 2020 and 2023 that explores the use of YouTube as a pedagogical medium

to enhance EFL learners' speaking performance. Specifically, this review focuses on three key domains: vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, and the development of speaking confidence.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

YouTube has become a dominant digital platform within the sphere of language education, particularly for the enhancement of English speaking proficiency among EFL learners. Its user-friendly interface, dynamic interactivity, and extensive collection of authentic audiovisual materials render it highly effective for diverse learning contexts. As noted by Listiani et al. (2021), the platform supports varied learning preferences through multimodal content, while Van Truong and Le (2022) emphasize its capacity to embed linguistic elements such as vocabulary and grammar within meaningful, communicative settings.

A growing body of research has substantiated YouTube's pedagogical value in EFL speaking instruction. Studies by Meinawati et al. (2020) and Saed et al. (2021) indicate that consistent exposure to native speaker content via YouTube contributes to improvements in learners' pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Likewise, Wahyuni et al. (2021) report reduced speaking anxiety through asynchronous, self-regulated video tasks, and Abbas and Qassim (2020) highlight enhanced learner motivation fostered by the informal and immersive nature of YouTube-based learning.

Building on these insights, more recent empirical inquiries offer nuanced findings. Mosully (2024) identifies YouTube as a meaningful source of contextual vocabulary acquisition, particularly through conversational formats like interviews and vlogs. Al-Khasawneh (2021) demonstrates that regular engagement with YouTube significantly enhances fluency, lexical

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

range, and accuracy among Jordanian university students. Additionally, Anggraeni (2020) underscores the pedagogical impact of incorporating vlogging tasks into instruction, noting marked gains in learners' public speaking abilities and fluency as a result of iterative practice and feedback.

However, the efficacy of YouTube in fostering speaking competence is contingent upon thoughtful instructional design and active teacher facilitation. Hussin et al. (2020) argue that educator intervention is essential in steering learners toward linguistically rich content, thereby mitigating the risks of passive viewing. Similarly, Sakkir et al. (2020) advocate for integrating YouTube with structured speaking activities—such as role plays, oral summaries, and guided discussions—to maximize communicative engagement. Reinforcing this view, Farikhah and Rizal (2023) suggest that reflection-based tasks can amplify YouTube's pedagogical potential when embedded in a broader instructional framework.

Nonetheless, several research gaps persist. Much of the current scholarship disproportionately emphasizes either vocabulary enhancement or pronunciation outcomes, often overlooking a holistic understanding of speaking skill development. For instance, Musdayanti et al. (2024) primarily focus on learners' confidence-building through repetitive exposure, whereas González Cabañas and Núñez Mercado (2024) examine gains in fluency and accuracy through subtitled video engagement.

Moreover, there remains a limited synthesis of evidence-based practices regarding YouTube integration in classroom settings. While Alharbi et al. (2024) propose structured speaking assignments incorporating peer assessment and reflective elements, Ajiza and Puspitasari (2023) highlight the critical role of content relevance and

learner interest in maintaining engagement. Aburub and Singh (2024), in turn, identify significant differences in speaking improvement depending on whether videos are used passively as homework or actively in classroom interactions.

In response to these trends and unresolved issues, the present study seeks to systematically review empirical literature published between 2020 and 2023 that examines YouTube's pedagogical influence on EFL learners' speaking development. The review focuses on three interrelated dimensions: vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, and speaking confidence. Furthermore, it aims to distill effective instructional models and classroom practices that optimize the integration of YouTube into speaking-focused language instruction.

**METHODS**

This study employed a systematic review methodology to synthesize empirical findings on the effectiveness of YouTube as a medium for enhancing EFL students' speaking skills. The review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), which ensure transparency and reproducibility across four structured phases: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion.

***Data Sources and Search Strategy***

The data were collected from three widely used and peer-reviewed databases: Google Scholar, ERIC, and DOAJ. These were selected due to their accessibility and relevance to educational research. The search was conducted using targeted keywords such as “*YouTube for EFL speaking*,” “*digital tools for speaking improvement*,” and “*YouTube for speaking confidence*”, adapted to each database.

**Table 1. presents the combinations of keywords**

Database	Keyword Used
Google Scholar	“YouTube for EFL speaking,” “improving speaking skills with digital tools”
ERIC	“YouTube in language learning,” “digital platforms for speaking skills”
DOAJ	“Using YouTube to teach EFL speaking,” “YouTube for speaking confidence”

The search was limited to publications between 2020 and 2023, written in English, and focusing on empirical studies related to YouTube use in EFL speaking instruction.

### *Selection Process*

In the identification phase, 45 records were retrieved. After removing 7 duplicates, 38 unique studies remained for screening. During the screening phase, article titles and abstracts were evaluated based on

inclusion criteria: (1) use of YouTube as a primary instructional medium, (2) focus on EFL speaking skills, and (3) empirical data.

In the eligibility phase, 22 full-text articles were reviewed. Seven were excluded for reasons such as lack of empirical basis or misalignment with the research focus. Finally, 15 articles met all criteria and were included in the review.

**Table 2. Outlines the Inclusion and Exclusion**

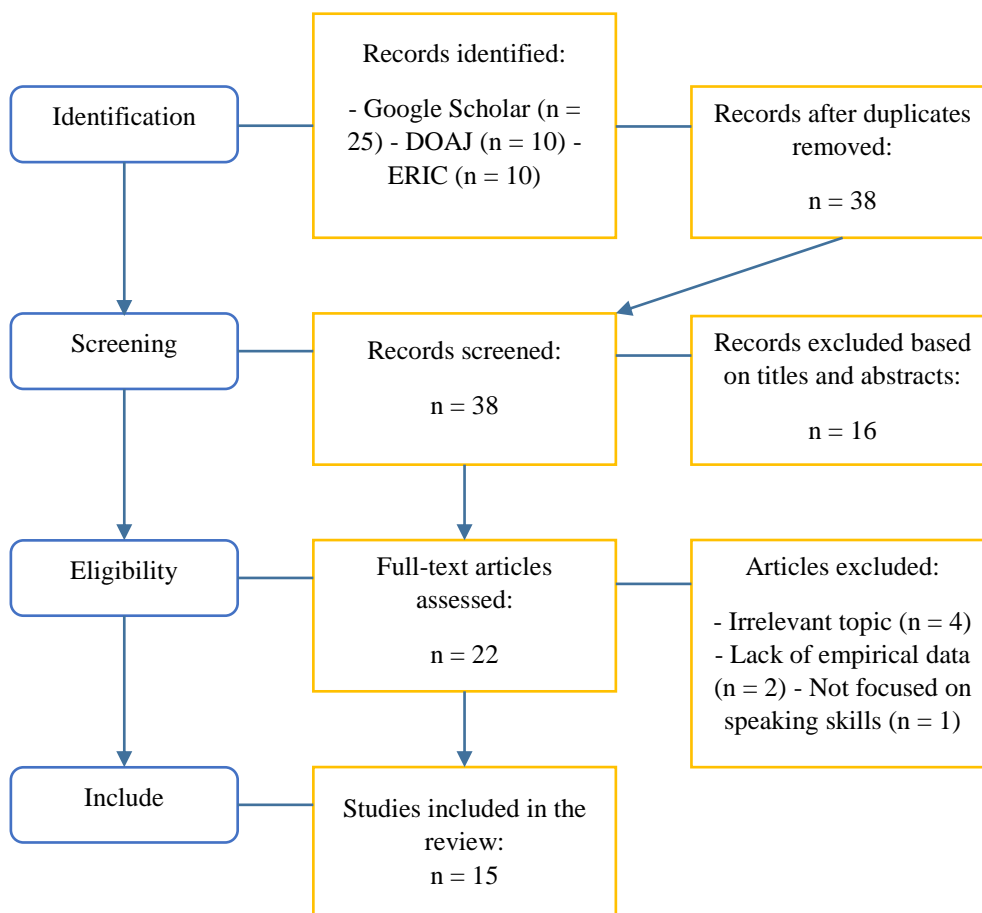
Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Date	Articles published between 2020 and 2023.	Articles published before 2020.
Language	Articles written in English.	Articles written in languages other than English.
Focus	Studies focusing on the use of YouTube for EFL speaking skills.	Studies unrelated to YouTube or focusing on other language skills (e.g., reading or listening).
Type of Study	Peer-reviewed journal articles with empirical evidence.	Theoretical or opinion-based articles without empirical data.
Context	Research conducted in EFL teaching contexts.	Research conducted outside EFL contexts or unrelated to teaching.

### *Analysis Procedure*

The final 15 articles were analyzed using thematic coding based on three dimensions identified in the literature: (1) vocabulary acquisition, (2) pronunciation accuracy, and (3) speaking confidence. Each study was categorized according to its research focus, findings, and instructional approach. This analytical framework enabled synthesis across contexts and highlighted

practical implications for EFL classrooms (Grari, 2023; González Cabañas & Núñez Mercado, 2024).

Furthermore, to ensure research transparency and repeatability, all steps; keyword selection, database tracking, and inclusion, rationale were documented systematically. The PRISMA flow diagram was used to visually represent the selection process.



### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This systematic review included 15 empirical studies published between 2020 and 2023 that examined the use of YouTube to enhance EFL learners’ speaking skills. Thematic analysis categorized the findings into three main areas: vocabulary acquisition,

pronunciation accuracy, and speaking confidence.

#### *Vocabulary Acquisition*

Table 3. presents the findings from seven studies that explored how YouTube contributed to vocabulary development among EFL learners.

**Table 3. Results of Reviewed Studies on Vocabulary Acquisition in Using YouTube**

Author(s)	Year	Focus Area	Key Findings
Solano et al.	2020	Vocabulary retention	Contextualized YouTube videos improved vocabulary retention via visual-audio cues.
Abidin & Ngadiman	2022	Informal vocabulary	Tailored YouTube content enhanced vocabulary, especially informal expressions.
Hussin et al.	2020	Teacher support	Teacher guidance ensured effective vocabulary learning from selected videos.
Ibhar	2022	Practical usage	Authentic content improved understanding of practical vocabulary.
Khairul & Putri	2021	Idiomatic expressions	Vlogs helped students acquire idiomatic phrases effectively.
Sakkir et al.	2020	Student interaction	Increased engagement led to peer-supported vocabulary development.
Suloso & Sakina	2023	Repetition	Repetitive exposure to themes reinforced vocabulary retention.

A review of the table reveals that three main patterns emerge across the studies. First, most researchers highlight the value of authentic and contextualized input in enhancing vocabulary retention. Solano et al. (2020) and Ibhara (2022) report that when learners are exposed to real-life communication through video, they tend to retain vocabulary more effectively than through textbook instruction. Similarly, Khairul & Putri (2021) note that students more easily remember idiomatic phrases encountered in casual vlog content than formal instructional material.

Second, thematic repetition appears to play a significant role in reinforcing vocabulary, as shown by Suloso & Sakina (2023). Their study emphasizes that frequent exposure to specific content topics; such as travel, daily routines, or hobbies, enables learners to internalize vocabulary clusters more efficiently. This is further supported by the findings of Musdayanti et al. (2024), who observed that repeated interaction with topic-focused videos helped students retain new expressions more naturally over time.

Third, several studies stress the importance of instructional design in making YouTube-based vocabulary learning effective. Hussin et al. (2020) found that students benefitted most when teachers guided the video selection process and

scaffolded the learning with follow-up tasks such as word-mapping or oral explanations. This aligns with Farikhah & Rizal (2023), who recommend using YouTube not as a stand-alone resource but as part of a structured speaking lesson where students engage with target vocabulary before and after viewing.

Notably, student engagement also emerged as a critical factor. According to Sakkir et al. (2020), students were more willing to experiment with new words when they watched videos in small groups and discussed them afterwards. This suggests that YouTube can function as a social vocabulary learning tool, especially when combined with interactive classroom practices.

In summary, the studies in Table 2.1 demonstrate that YouTube supports vocabulary acquisition most effectively when learners engage with authentic, repeated, and teacher-supported content. Rather than passively watching, learners benefit from active tasks and contextual applications that deepen word understanding and encourage oral use.

### Pronunciation Accuracy

Table 4. shows findings from seven studies that explored YouTube's role in improving pronunciation accuracy among EFL learners.

**Table 4. Results of Reviewed Studies on Pronunciation Accuracy in Using YouTube**

Author(s)	Year	Focus Area	Key Findings
Meinawati et al.	2020	Intonation & rhythm	Native speaker videos improved speech rhythm and intonation patterns.
Saed et al.	2021	Articulation clarity	Repetitive listening enhanced pronunciation and articulation.
Binmahboob	2020	Accent adaptability	Exposure to diverse accents improved pronunciation flexibility.
Wahyuni et al.	2021	Stress patterns	YouTube tutorials supported mastery of syllable stress and intonation.
Toleuzhan et al.	2023	Imitation	Mimicking vlog content sharpened pronunciation accuracy.
Al Jawad	2020	Pronunciation & vocab	Video use enhanced both pronunciation and vocabulary simultaneously.
Putrawansyah et al.	2020	Q&A method	Integrating video with Q&A drills improved fluency and clarity.

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

The data in Table 4. indicate that repetition, native speaker modeling, and active mimicry are the most frequently used strategies to develop pronunciation. Four studies; Meinawati et al. (2020), Saed et al. (2021), Wahyuni et al. (2021), and Toleuzhan et al. (2023) are specifically emphasize that learners' control over rhythm, stress, and articulation improved after repeatedly listening to and mimicking native or fluent speakers on YouTube.

One key pattern that emerges is the emphasis on imitative learning. Toleuzhan et al. (2023) and Al Jawad (2020) found that students who practiced by repeating or shadowing what they heard from vlogs and tutorials demonstrated measurable improvement in clarity and fluency. This supports findings from Styati (2022), who noted that intentional imitation tasks using YouTube improved both segmental and suprasegmental features of learners' speech.

Another important aspect highlighted in the table is accent exposure. Binmahboob (2020) reported that learners benefited from hearing a variety of English accents, which improved their adaptability and listening discrimination—skills essential for global communication. Similarly, Grari (2023) concluded that accent diversity on YouTube helps students become more aware of

pronunciation variation and reduces dependence on a single accent model.

The role of task integration also appears in the studies. Putrawansyah et al. (2020) effectively combined video viewing with Q&A activities, which not only reinforced listening but prompted spoken output, allowing learners to immediately apply pronunciation features they observed. This echoes the insight from Purnamasari (2018), who reported that YouTube in blended learning contexts supports pronunciation improvement through flexibility and multimodal input, particularly when learners receive structured guidance.

Overall, Table 4. shows that YouTube is most effective in pronunciation instruction when learners are encouraged to imitate, repeat, and actively use the language they observe. Passive viewing alone is insufficient. Instead, task-based learning, diverse input, and reflective practice are essential for achieving measurable pronunciation gains.

### *Speaking Confidence*

Speaking confidence is a critical affective component in language learning. Table 2.3 summarizes eight studies that examined how YouTube contributed to learners' speaking confidence.

**Table 5. Results of Reviewed Studies on Speaking Confidence in Using YouTube**

Author(s)	Year	Focus Area	Key Findings
Wahyuni et al.	2021	Speaking anxiety	Self-paced video tasks reduced student anxiety in speaking.
Toleuzhan et al.	2023	Active participation	Vlogs encouraged more speaking practice and engagement.
Suloso & Sakina	2023	Passive learning risk	Warned of limited progress from passive video watching.
Hussin et al.	2020	Authenticity & confidence	Native-speaker content built self-confidence through exposure.
Abidin & Ngadiman	2022	Conversation practice	Tailored videos helped simulate real-world conversations.
Putrawansyah et al.	2020	Q&A confidence	Students became more confident through structured questioning.
Khairul & Putri	2022	Habitual exposure	Frequent YouTube users exhibited better speaking confidence.
Al Jawad	2020	Media-assisted speaking	Practicing with video increased learner confidence in communication.

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

From the table, it is clear that YouTube helps learners develop speaking confidence by creating low-stress, familiar learning environments. Three studies; Wahyuni et al. (2021), Hussin et al. (2020), and Al Jawad (2020) are explicitly highlight that learners felt more comfortable speaking when practicing with video content because they could pause, rewind, and review at their own pace. This asynchronous learning reduces the fear of making mistakes in front of others.

Several studies also highlight the importance of learner autonomy and repetition in increasing confidence. For example, Khairul & Putri (2022) and Toleuzhan et al. (2023) found that students who habitually engaged with English-language YouTube content were more willing to participate in class and less hesitant when speaking spontaneously. Similarly, Abidin & Ngadiman (2022) observed that simulated conversational videos allowed learners to visualize themselves in real-life interactions, which promoted mental rehearsal and eased communication anxiety.

Importantly, two studies; Putrawansyah et al. (2020) and Suloso & Sakina (2023) show contrasting perspectives. The former found that active, structured speaking tasks following YouTube viewing (such as Q&A) significantly improved confidence. In contrast, the latter warned that passive video watching alone did not yield meaningful gains, emphasizing the need for guided use and interactive practice. This contrast supports the findings of Ajiza & Puspitasari (2023), who reported that confidence increased only when students were actively involved in speaking tasks based on video content.

Furthermore, Musdayanti et al. (2024) found that confidence improvements became visible after repeated, topic-specific video practice, indicating that building self-assurance is a gradual process. Similarly, Maulidah (2018) highlighted the effectiveness of vlog creation assignments, which required students to speak on camera regularly. This task fostered not only fluency, but also a sense of ownership and pride in their speaking ability.

Overall, the evidence in Table 2.3 suggests that YouTube contributes significantly to building EFL learners' speaking confidence, especially when paired

with interactive, reflective, and output-focused learning strategies. Teachers play a critical role in converting video input into productive, low-anxiety speaking experiences.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This systematic review of 15 empirical studies published between 2020 and 2023 demonstrates that YouTube is an effective instructional tool for enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills, particularly in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy, and speaking confidence. The findings reveal that vocabulary development improves through exposure to authentic, contextualized video content, especially when supported by teacher guidance, peer interaction, and repeated viewing. Pronunciation accuracy is most enhanced when learners actively engage in imitation and repetition of native speaker models, especially when combined with speaking tasks that reinforce fluency and rhythm. Speaking confidence also increases in low-anxiety, learner-centered settings, where self-paced practice and structured tasks like Q&A sessions or vlogging reduce fear and promote active participation. These findings suggest that YouTube can be more than a supplementary resource—it becomes a powerful pedagogical medium when embedded within a structured, interactive teaching framework. Practically, EFL teachers are encouraged to integrate YouTube with task-based speaking activities such as oral summaries, role-plays, or video presentations. Curriculum developers should also consider incorporating YouTube into speaking syllabi and provide training for educators to design engaging, reflective, and output-focused tasks. Future research should explore the long-term effects of YouTube integration, examine learners' experiences in producing their own video content, and compare passive viewing with active, output-based approaches to

**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

gain deeper insight into their respective impacts.

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**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

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**Vol 8, No 2 (2025): ESTEEM**

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