



EXPLORING THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES IN LEARNING ENGLISH FROM YOUTUBERS

Hendriwanto^{1)*}, Tifani Dita Desela²⁾, Ramnita Saini Sharda³⁾
Swadaya Gunung Jati University, Indonesia^{1), 2)}
Hans Raj Mahila Maha Vidyalaya, Jalandhar, Punjab, India³⁾
hendriwanto46@gmail.com*

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Abstract

The present study aims to explore the role of YouTubers in facilitating English learners to learn autonomously. This study employed a narrative case study that explored the students' experience and emotions. Data of the study were collected through interview and narrative story. Data was analyzed thematically based on the autonomous learning framework. The findings revealed that all participants experienced a wide range of independent dimension. This study implies that learning English by watching videos can help them improve their English skills, especially the listening and speaking skills. The present study contributes to the pedagogical learning of English with content, good pronunciation, unfamiliar word, familiar with accent, a lot of information and knowledge through the videos that they watch for learning.

Keywords: YouTube, autonomous learning, narrative case study

INTRODUCTION

The study of use of technology (e.g. YouTube) in English language teaching has been an issue of great interest in the recent years (Bakar & Sahidol, 2019; Benson, 2015; Miller, 2017; and Wang & Chen, 2019). The present study aims to explore the role of YouTubers in facilitating English students to learn autonomously. In English teaching, YouTube as technological tool, provides the environment of language teaching authentically and learning activities as well as builds communicative language teaching (Bastos & Ramos, 2009). Scholars argue that teaching that uses technology might help students to build their autonomy and problem solving better. Other scholars emphasize that technology needs to be incorporated with pedagogical issues (Alwehaibi, 2013; Al Jawad et al, 2021). Thereby, technology and pedagogy in language learning together have a beneficial input for students to build their language learning.

YouTube as platform for sharing and watching was used by teachers and teacher educators to teach their students. This platform has a wide range of potential items for language learning. It can also be accessed by peer learners of languages around the world and provide a wide range of authentic and instructional language learning materials. This

learning engagement re-constructs and enhances the students' learning experiences (Benson, 2015 and Miller, 2017). It is reported that awareness of the use of technology is very useful for language learning and students' knowledge of meta-cognitive related use of communication as well as beliefs about language learning both in general and more specific. It can be argued that technology exposes students to the new environments.

Technology use in the classroom is closely related to the students' engagement and motivation. It can be argued that in using technology for teaching enables English students to tell the narrative story to their colleagues and peers. It also can mediate students to improve language and build community of practice. It can be added that the authentic and social nature of the use of technology enables educators to fulfill the needs of English Learners, facilitates language development and provides opportunities for English Learners to explore linguistic and cultural diversity. Other scholars investigated how learning by using technology can strengthen teachers' pedagogical knowledge and confidence in their ability to teach their students.

In educational landscape, students need to build their capacity to learn independently by activating their role in learning. Independent learning enables students to have certain abilities such as the ability of students to complete learning tasks independently, solve problems independently, make knowledge and decisions, and evaluate results. Independent learning has similarities with "action learning", in that active participation and "learning by doing" are important ingredients. With independent learning students acquire knowledge by their own efforts and can develop their abilities, curiosity, critical evaluation and critical thinking.

Thomas, Jones, Ottway (2015) reported that students' can have a wide array of autonomous learning types such as highly structured, direct independent, and full autonomous. Technology, it turns out, can help independent learning because as we know YouTube as a platform that provides various sources so students can access English learning through videos that can be viewed anytime and anywhere. Along with sophisticated technology, videos through YouTube can help students learn not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

METHOD

In this research, the researchers used qualitative methods. According to Creswell (2014, p.32), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem. The research process involves several statements and procedures that appear, data is usually obtained from participants who are used as participants which are then collected for analysis, data is inductively made from specific to general matters, and the researcher makes interpretations according to his/her opinion of the meaning of the data. Another definition states that qualitative method is a study if it has some purposes such as the study described phenomenon, situation, event, or problem, the qualitative measurement scales (nominal or ordinal scale) are used as a measurement of the gathered information and the analysis of the data is solved without quantifying it.

The researchers used case study in this research design. Case study explored the participants' experiences and emotions in terms of questioning the critical evaluation of how and why participant act a series of critical incident in learning a language (Gustafsson, 2017 and Yin, 2009).

Participants

The participants of this study are English students of one Private University in Cirebon who had experience in using YouTube application for learning English language. Before conducting the interview, the researchers distributed questionnaires by using Google Form. The questionnaires asked for a participants' characteristics such as gender, age, mother tongue, origin, and job in the form of a demographic table. The purpose of this demographic table was to determine the criteria for participants. The researchers distributed questionnaires among 25 students but from the results of the Google Form was filled only by 19 students.

Table 1. Participant Demography

Item	Category
Age	18-21
Gender	13 female, 6 male
Language Proficiency	350-500

The researchers interviewed 4 participating students. These questions were related to the relevant topic. College students also understand the nuances of scholarship and they are the ones who see things based on an objective attitude, are systematic, and rational. This is why the researchers chose college students as the participants of this research.

Instrument and Technique of Data Collection Method

The data was collected by interview method from the participants of this research. Similar to Yin (2009), this case study also explores the related question such as why and how. Researcher used structured interview or an interview schedule in the form of written list of questions. Interview can also be used to be open or closed and prepared in face-to-face interaction (this may be face to face, by telephone, or whatsapp). At this step, the researchers interviewed four students as participants about their experience using YouTube for learning English and to find out what kind of challenges and opportunities English Education Department Students' encounter in using YouTube applications for learning English language. Because covid-19 pandemic situation was still continuing, these interviews were conducted via WhatsApp chat application and participants were asked to answer the questions via voice note (vn), as they are recommended by Cresswell: "Researchers record information from interviews by using note taking or audiotapes. Recording is intended so that all interviews can be returned and listened to so that none of the information from the interview is left behind. The results of the interview are then rewritten for use as a source of reference for the author in analyzing the problems appointed in this study. For the instrument of interview process, the researcher requested some questions as a guiding in this study which were illustratively as follows:

- 1) What YouTube channel do you usually watch for learning English ?
- 2) In your opinion, learning English independently through YouTube can improve your English skill ? Why ?
- 3) What skills do you get in learning English through YouTube ?
- 4) What challenges and opportunities did you encounter in learning English independently using YouTube ?
- 5) How did you overcome these challenges in learning English through YouTube?

Technique of Data Analysis

After gathering the data from the interview, the data were analyzed by using thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) categorized how to use thematic analysis in data analysis. It can be used to identify, analyze, and reported. Therefore, thematic analysis can be carried out in doing all kinds of things.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Students' emotions in Learning English from Youtubers

In this study, the researchers tried to find out the experiences of participants from four students majoring in English education at one private university in Cirebon on the use of YouTube in learning English independently. This study only focuses on students' experiences when they use the YouTube application to learn English independently. The findings show that the participants gave positive statements about learning English using YouTube. The participants expressed that learning English independently through YouTube enable them to improve their English skills such as pronunciation, vocabulary, accent, and content. Not only improve their English skills but increase their knowledge, they get a lot of information from the video content they see. In the findings, the researcher has stated the opinion of each participant.

“I often watch video from youtubers. They teach me how to learn English step by step. What I like is I can postpone and continue to watch whenever I want to watch. From this experience, I am satisfied watching English video from youtubers. They have a lot.”

(Participant 1, April 2021)

“Sometimes, I watch YouTube to know how to express certain communication in marketplace. I think this way is very easy to me to confirm how other people do this. I also want to know how other learners learn English from this video.

(Participant 2, April 2021)

Data showed that participant experienced a wide array of learning English through English Youtubers. They perceived that YouTube has a benefit of learning resources. This implied that learning English through YouTube give the opportunity how to learn English better. It can also be argued that English can be learnt through activities of English learning.

First, YouTube channels provides a wide range of topics in learning English. There are many YouTube channels for learning English, each participant has a choice of YouTube channels that they usually watch to learn. They choose several channels of content videos according to what they will learn.

“It depends on my interest. I can choose what teaching materials from Youtubers. For example, I can choose learning materials about how to pronounce word correctly and also I always watch the materials related to how to write better in academic English. YouTube provides me a wide range of teaching materials choice.”

(Participant 2, May 2021)

“The video I watch in YouTube teach me valuable materials. They scaffolded me how to write better in essay paragraph. For Example a channel in IELTS YouTube, there are more than a hundred video that I can watch and learn. I think it is very essential for me to learn this using YouTube.”

(Participant 3, April 2021)

The story above showed that students' skills can be evaluated when they learn English independently through YouTube. Four participants expressed the same opinion about the skills gained in using YouTube to learn English. Aida stated, learning English by watching videos through YouTube can improve her speaking skills because through videos she has seen she can find out how the person's expression and intonation when speaking English. For Nira (pseudonym), learning English by listening to songs and reading the lyrics of the songs can improve her listening and speaking skills. Besides that, her vocabulary also increases because when she finds unfamiliar words from the lyrics she looks meaning unfamiliar vocabulary.

"I think learning English from Youtubers is like I see a teacher. I can engage with them through their questions and activities. Although I cannot interact with them directly, I can see and understand what they teach us. For example, when they ask me to listen a popular song related to teaching materials, I can feel that listening an English song can improve my listening skill."

(Participant 3, August 2021)

"I found a lot of vocabularies that is very useful. I know that I need to use it in context and useful sentences. I want to memorize it how to do tips and tricks in learning English. I need to learn more about Youtubers want to teach us and I know I still need learn English YouTube. I want to memorize how to use English YouTube like English learning. I want to improve my English proficiency and I also want to have good English. I think I never try to learn in a specific learning materials like grammar and structure. So, I need to learn about how write and speak better with English youtubers in around the world."

(Participant 2, July 2021)

Participant 3 believed that English learning through YouTube give them the environment like seeing the teacher and students. He believed that YouTube can enrich his vocabularies as well as improve pronunciation. Participant also believed that English learning YouTube enable him to enhance the language skills like grammar and vocabularies.

For participant 2, by watching videos from the TED Talk channel that is used to learn English, it turns out that I get feedback and my speaking and listening skills have improved. Besides that she also feels more confident when speaking English. For participant 3, she can improve her speaking and listening skills when she watches English learning channel videos from YouTube. This concurs with the finding of a study conducted by Chhabra (2012) in learning English, "YouTube videos can be used to improve vocabulary, accents, pronunciations, listening, reading, writing, and speaking."

Students' challenge learning English from Youtubers

Third talked about challenges and opportunities encountered in learning English using YouTube. Each participant provides statements regarding the challenges and opportunities they get during learning English using YouTube. The challenge they get when learning independently through videos from YouTube is that they cannot interact directly and need to watch videos repeatedly. The opportunities they get in learning English independently through YouTube their English skills are further increased and YouTube helps their needs in learning independently.

"Although English lesson in YouTube is very easy to find, there are more challenge and difficulties such as meaning of certain vocabularies and meaning of the context. I am not sure whether this meaning is appropriate or not. I confirm it through dictionary and online sources."

(Participant 4, July 2021)

“I believe that YouTube can give me valuable materials that I need. I always download the video to re-watch if I have leisure time. I also want all youtubers updated their video so that I can learn from them with this channel. I am very happy.”

(Participant 4, August 2021)

Participant 4 believed that learning English from YouTube is very easy because YouTube give me a good choice how to learn a lot of learning topics. He also makes sure that English dictionary is very helpful and give them how to pronounce certain words. This implies that vocabularies need to be incorporated with the context of meaning and context of situation. This implies that data showed the importance of language acquisition particularly in acquiring vocabularies. The participant collects the vocabularies from English learning experience. It is widely accepted that language acquisition acquired from English YouTubers. However, it remains the evidence of language acquisition of how to learn significantly about vocabularies.

Fourth talked about how participants overcome these challenges. The way they overcome the challenges they get is to practice independently such as speaking English with friends, looking for meaning from unfamiliar words they find, and making their own study schedule.

“This platform gives me the opportunity to learn whatever I want to learn. Just navigate and search the topic such as listening, speaking, movie, and listening a music. YouTube is the way I can be an autonomous learner. YouTubers provide me a wide range of interesting topics. It is regularly updated in every minute.”

(Participant 3, April 2021)

“At the first time, I only search the video about learning a language. Fortunately, I found the interesting video. It is a good channel I ever watched. I often this channel regularly. I can learn a lot from this channel. I hope I can access always what I need in learning English. Other videos also provide me an interactive video in learning English. I am very happy to see and listen this video because I need to have Excellent English.”

(Participant 4, July 2021)

Participant 3 explored that navigating and searching is very important skill to get a sufficient learning materials. This implies that English YouTube is the best place for a beginner to learn a language. Participant felt that YouTube can give him a beneficial long learning goal such as vocabulary, speaking, and listening skill.

All participants have goals when using YouTube they watch videos to learn English independently, improve their English skills better, and increase the knowledge they get from tutors through videos they see on YouTube.

Independent learning makes them active and creative in finding learning resources, with YouTube which can be used as a learning medium participants can find what they need. In addition, independent learning is able to develop their abilities to critical thinking, self-motivation, and accountability (Panadero, 2017). This concurs with statement from Chen et al., (2005) Independent learning can encourage students to have certain abilities such as the ability of students to complete learning tasks independently, solve the problems independently, make knowledge and decision, and evaluate results (Fox, 2008 and Zheng, 2016).

Findings showed that participant engaged in a series of YouTube watching. It implies that participants watch YouTube as learning English resources culturally and socially. Participant see video from Youtubers with the content of culture and society. It means that

participants want to know in more details about the life culture of English speakers in other countries. It also can be said that participants as a major concern of cultural idea in language learning. However, as reported by Wang & Chen (2019), YouTube might help students to learn aspect of culture, life style, and social domain. It can be argued that learning English through YouTube facilitate the independent learning. It can be seen from students' activities while learning English and choose a wide range of topics in YouTube.

Findings showed that participants did a self-reflection when watching English YouTube. It means that participants have internal reflection so that participants enable to see what they need to take a note or record. It can be done from students' activities in doing so. Studies suggested participants in learning English from YouTubers might help them to learn independently because they are autonomously to select teaching materials.

The findings contributed to the study of literature in self-independent learning particularly in terms of students' engagement in learning a language in YouTube mediated learning. It is widely accepted that learning goal remain a major concern for teacher and educators how to teach students to accomplish their competences in language learning. The findings also contribute practicality for learner of English who want to learn independently through YouTube. This issue is great interest among scholars in terms of how they build their students to have independent learning.

This study only focused on students' experiences in a single case study where participant engaged in a series of YouTube channel in learning English. This study is also limited to the students' experiences in online YouTube. Therefore, the limitation of the study is on the single case study where participants of the study cannot be generalizing with another context. This study aims to explore students' engagement in learning English through YouTube channel. For this reason, the further study need to be investigated in terms of how students really learn and reflect their learning experiences.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result, the participants show positive responses about English learning independently through the YouTube application. The participants argue that learning English with YouTube helps them improve English skills, increasing pronunciation, unfamiliar words, and they can choose English learning content according to their needs, and getting a lot of knowledge. Besides that independent learning makes them active and creative in finding learning resources, develop their abilities to critical thinking, self-motivation, and accountability.

The participants also found several challenges that they encountered while doing English learning with YouTube such as they couldn't interact directly with the tutor in the video, needs to practice directly, the using of accent, self-motivation to learn, signal, bad connection, and budget for internet data also causing the challenges for participants in using YouTube. This becomes a challenge for them when doing independent learning through digital tools.

Learning from YouTubers has a pivotal role as learning media and learning platform for students. Students are able to learn how to use English with a wide array of language variations such as English from Singapore and India. It is widely perceived that English does not only belong to native speaker who authorizes the use of English in spoken and written communication. However, by using YouTube, students might learn a wide range of topics as well as learn autonomously. This provide the teachers and teacher educators to use YouTube as platform for learning English.

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