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**Enhancing English Language Proficiency (Language Skills) through YouTube: A Systematic Review**

<sup>1</sup>Tul Bahadur Shahi

<sup>1</sup>M Phil Scholar  
School of Education  
Kathmandu University  
**Email:** [tulbd@gmail.com](mailto:tulbd@gmail.com)

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**Abstract**

*The systematic review examines 20 international studies (2020-2025) on the YouTube's role in enhancing English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in EFL/ESL context across Indonesia, Vietnam, Peru, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. Most of the studies are in the context of Indonesia. This study follows the PRISMA 2020 guidelines and this review reveals that YouTube significantly enhances and improves listening, speaking, reading and writing skills with better progress in vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency and learner motivation. These 20 articles reveal that they are highly constructive and supportive, reporting significant benefits for reading and writing through multimedia-supported vocabulary development, retention, and writing creativity. The finding highlights that YouTube as an effective, flexible tool*

*that supports autonomous and interactive learning, emphasizing the needs for strategic integration and digital literacy to maximize its educational impact.*

**Keywords:** YouTube, digital tools, skills, instructional strategy

**Introduction**

In recent year, different social media like face book, TikTok, messenger, email etc. are using for teaching and learning activities. In the same way You Tube is also one of the most important social media that is commonly used by students and teachers for their learning. According to Pratama et al. (2020), YouTube is a video-sharing platform and a popular digital tool that allows users to upload, watch, and engage with videos. It is a powerful digital tool not only for education but also for entertainment. YouTube is a popular digital tool which is considered as web 2.0 where the viewers do not only upload videos; they can also provide feedback through asynchronous interaction to other video contents (Yaacob at al., 2024). It serves as a supportive resource for both entertainment and

educational content, providing opportunities for interactive learning and content creation. In Bangladesh, the L2 learners use YouTube and other new media tools for enhancing their language skills (Chatta, 2024). In the same way Wagner (2017) found that new technologies help language learning.

In this way YouTube has emerged as one of the most popular and accessible tools for English language learners worldwide. This platform allows the vast level of contents or instructional materials required for both students and learners as their necessity (Nuha & Saputri, 2021). Nowadays, You Tube has plays a crucial role to enhance educational proficiency for both teachers and students. YouTube is one of the most popular online video platforms. It enables the users to search several videos, comment on the videos, upload a video, and subscribe to the other users(Ratnaningsih & Gumiandari, 2022). Similarly, Muthoharoh at al., (2021) found that YouTube media could improve students' listening comprehension skill outcomes at Alikhlas High School, Bekasi city. Moreover, through a survey study, (Gutiérrez & Vladimir, 2024) found that using video in teaching listening could give a significant effect to make the students effortless to understand the content or the occasion about the material that students learn. Likewise, in recent years, there has been a huge attention in researching the use of YouTube in educational field, particularly in English language learning (Bakar et al., 2019; Miller, 2017; Wang & Chen, 2020). Teachers and educators used YouTube as a platform for sharing and watching to teach their students (Hussaeni et al., 2020; Yacoob & Saad, 2020). In this way You Tube is also playing significant role in education. It provides supportive role to enhance writing as well as other proficiency level of students.

Despite the growing popularity of You Tube as learning tool, there is lack in its comprehensive understanding regarding on its improvement in English language proficiency. Mainly, students are facing trouble in listening, speaking, reading and writing skills that need be enhanced with the help of You Tube. The existing research has focused primarily on listening and speaking skills of English language as EFL learners. Despite growing popularity among students and educators, You Tube remains under examined in systematic academic research.

At present, You Tube on the development of key language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing remains insufficiently researched. Even having vast level of educational contents available, there is a lack of clear evidence on how You Tube effectively enhances these skills in structured language learning environment, and leaving educators uncertain about how to best integrate this tool in their day to day practice. It focuses on how all four language skills are enhancing together with the help of You Tube as it is taken as an integrated teaching supportive materials.

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of education with You Tube as an important digital tool for teaching English language education. There are several existing researches that are based on isolated

language skill or vocabulary development proficiency not for holistic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. They are primarily focused on listening and speaking. But this study will focus on four language skills. It also will support the confusion that how YouTube is used as an integrated language teaching tool for EFL class.

The primary purpose of this study is to provide a consolidated overview of the evidence on YouTube's impact on English language skills, identify any gaps in current research and evaluate the platform's potential for both formal and informal learning settings. It also aims to guide educators in the effective integration of YouTube in curricula providing insights for learners based on strategies for maximizing the educational value of YouTube.

### **Method**

This study employed a systematic review methodology to investigate the role of YouTube in enhancing the four core English language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, among English language learners. The review adhered to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The PRISMA framework was selected for its emphasis on transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor, providing a structured approach suitable for synthesizing evidence from diverse empirical studies within the field of education (Munn et al., 2018). Its systematic process aligns well with the study's objective of evaluating YouTube's impact across multiple language skills based on recent research, facilitating the selection, categorization, and synthesis of findings from relevant studies.

A comprehensive literature search was conducted across three academic databases: Google Scholar, ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center), and Research Gate. The search aimed to identify relevant empirical studies published between January 1, 2020, and 31 December 2024, ensuring the inclusion of recent research. The following keywords and their combinations were utilized in the search strategy: "YouTube and English Language Learning", "YouTube and Language Skills", "YouTube and Reading Skill", and "Digital Media and English Language Skills".

This study process followed the four phases of the PRISMA 2020 guidelines: identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion (Page et al., 2012)

**Identification:** The initially I downloaded a total of 62 from three databases ERIC, Google Scholar and Research Gate, based on titles and abstract.

**Screening:** These 62 records were screened. Duplicates (n=10) were removed. Two articles (n=2) were excluded due to file corruption, leaving 50 articles are for further assessment. These 50 articles underwent title and abstract screening for initial relevance.

**Eligibility:** The full texts of the remaining 50 articles were retrieved and assessed for eligibility by applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, focusing on publication year, peer, review status relevance to YouTube –based English Learning and involvement of ESL/EFL learners.

**Inclusion:** Following the full text review, 30 articles were excluded. The primary reasons for exclusion were publication outside the specified date range (n=17) and a lack of direct relevance or focus on YouTube's role in enhancing the core language skill (n=13). This process resulted in final sample of 20 articles deemed eligible for inclusion in the systematic review. The following are the criteria to include the studies for final review. In this way, finally 20 articles were taken for thematic synthesis which was focused on YouTube' role or impact on enhancing key major language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

### **Findings and Discussion**

In this section, I respond to the two research questions posed in the introduction of this review. Each subheading below corresponds to one research questions and presents a thematic synthesis of the findings of 20 selected articles published between 2020 and 2025. The discussion integrates the learners' perceptions, observed language gain, teaching strategies supported by YouTube English language classroom. The first two subheadings focus on the impact of YouTube on listening and speaking skills and on reading and writing skills respectively. The third subheading addresses the general enhancement of English language proficiency across four language skills. Finally, the fourth subheading presents the learner-centered and instructional strategies adopted by educators to integrate YouTube effectively into language instruction.

#### ***Enhancing Listening Skill through YouTube***

Listening skill is one of the four skills of language skill. It is the beginning phase of language learning as same in the foreign language learning process too. It is given more priority in existing research studies. They highlight YouTube's strong potentiality to enhance learners' listening comprehension in English language education. In this study, among 20, nine articles were selected specially investigating how YouTube helps listening skill in EFL learning. These articles were across the contexts like Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia.

The study reports that the multimedia nature of YouTube extensively provides learners varieties of authentic and diverse auditory input, ranging from conversation, interview, speeches, and dialogue. Such materials are not available to traditional textbooks but they are primarily essential in today's textbooks. Many studies like: (Tran, 2022; Yaacob et al., 2021), focus that such exposure are highly referred to real-life accents, varied speech speed and context, they greatly affect in improving learners' ability to speak in natural setting.

Some researchers found that the features of YouTube like pause, rewind, and replay videos allow the learners for engaging in self-placed and repetitive listening. That feature helps learner to develop comprehension and retention. Researcher like Ratnaningsih and Gumiandari (2022) investigated those students who used YouTube in their learning found better word recognition and improved ability to infer meaning from

context. Moreover, some studies show learners' motivation and engagement frequently that YouTube's audio-visual contents attract and stimulate learners in enhancing English language. Such videos with English content help to reduce anxiety and encouraged more in students' practice (Chatta, 2024; Gutierrez & Vladimir, 2024).

Despite several benefits of YouTube, there are adequate suggestions that effective listening development is only possible if there is proper utilization of devices like mobile laptop and tap with internet access. In this way, teachers need to guide learners in selecting suitable videos which only enhance their proficiency level and learning objectives. The contents without teachers' support, the wide range of YouTube contents can overwhelm and create puzzles in their learning. As a surface, YouTube effectively supports learners' listening skills as they get variety of contents that makes them more engage-able.

### ***Enhancing Speaking Skill through YouTube***

The second phase of language learning process is speaking skills. It is also a prominent skill of the four skills of language. Most of the studies out of 20, 10 studies that focus on how YouTube plays a significant role to enhance speaking skill of learners in EFL classroom. In this way YouTube essentially provides a crucial platform and facilitate the learners in development of oral proficiency among English learners especially in diverse contexts like Indonesia, Vietnam, and Saudi Arabia.

These studies show that YouTube offers learners abundant opportunities to support them to become self-learners. Because YouTube provides authentic and important engageable contents of videos across several contexts. Those features of videos contain native speakers' dialogues, interviews and educational tutorials. These studies also state that YouTube videos enhance rich models of pronunciation, intonation, stress and natural way of speaking skills. Such features are absent in traditional textbooks and teaching environment. The scholar, Khanh and Le (2022), notice that tertiary level of learners in the context of Vietnam effectively improved their speaking confidentiality and fluency after regularly interacting with YouTube videos.

Similarly, many studies highlight that the role of YouTube as a modern educational system, YouTube is highly preferred as a teaching and learning supportive material. It develops autonomous and blended learning of speaking skills (Santiana and Marzuki, 2022; Cynantia et al., 2024). It also creates an opportunity that learners can imitate and practice speaking that they heard in videos. Such a way of repeated exposure and practice enables learners to internalize vocabulary, phrases, even sentence structure, that obviously enhances their spoken fluency.

Likewise, some studies state that the use of learner centered instructional strategies combined with YouTube is incredibly fruitful to enhance learners' speaking skills in EFL class setting. The teachers who artistically integrated YouTube in their teaching curriculum videos containing speaking tasks, role play, and presentation found that their learners become more motivated and engaged. The scholars, Ahmad Nur

Syafiq et al., (2021) observed that at period of COVID-19 pandemic situation, the EFL teachers contained YouTube videos as learning materials helped students overcome speaking anxiety. These contents also encouraged learners for active participation in online class. Despite its several positive strengths, researchers argue that speaking skill development via YouTube requires a careful guide and suggestions of teachers in selecting right and appropriate contents.

### ***Enhancing Reading through YouTube***

Speaking skill is the third phase of learning skill among the four. It is also a basic and fundamental skill of language learning process. In this study, compared to listening and speaking, fewer studies are under this skill. Existing studies show that YouTube plays noticeable role in enhancing the learners' reading skill. In this way the selected evidence suggest that it can play meaningful role also in reading skill when strategically YouTube integrated teaching and learning class executed in EFL setting.

Similarly, YouTube improves reading skills of learners primarily through multimodal context when it includes subtitles or closed captions. Such texts added when combined with spoken language and visuals that support the learners in decoding with unfamiliar words. These also support word recognition and content comprehension. The study by Kurniasari, Widodo, and Yappi (2022), state those elementary students in Indonesia showed reading comprehension increasingly when class integrated with YouTube and readable texts and contextual explanations. It was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic that concludes visual context helped learners infer meaning and retain vocabulary.

Additionally, some studies identify that educational YouTube channels specially designed for reading instruction are very supportive to develop reading skills of the EFL learners. Such channels feature narrated storybooks, phonics instructions, vocabulary development and reading aloud activities. This type of learning is primarily beneficial for young or beginner level learners. It helps learners to build decoding and pronunciation skills along with comprehension skills too. Although, having several benefits of YouTube, studies point out that reading development via YouTube is not given more focus. These available studies tend to treat reading as a secondary skill that they have studied reading skill with together other skills.

### ***Enhancing Writing Skill through YouTube***

Among four key language skills, writing is in the last phase. It is also known as productive language skills. In my study, among four core skills, this writing skill is least frequently addressed in the reviewed articles. Although it holds a very effective potential in language learning activities through use of YouTube in EFL context, there is less priority in existing studies. Out of 20 selected studies, a few studies are only directly associated and focused on writing skill. For instance, study by Muthoharoh et al., (2021), Lumban Raja and Napitupulu, and Fadilliah et al., (2023) focus on writing skill in direct way. These

article state that YouTube integrated language class is very informative and insightful that deal how YouTube when used appropriately, that significantly enhances learners' writing creativity, vocabulary use, and their organization.

After the use of YouTube key advantage is found in students' contextual comprehensive writing. Because the videos on a variety of real-life topics such as culture, travel, adventure, food, science and personal experiences that provide meaningful context and content both. It helps learners learn writing skills in a natural setting. For example, the study, Muthoharoh et al., (2021), points that the use of YouTube videos mainly supports the student's writing skill in junior secondary level during COVID-19.

Similarly, YouTube also supports multimodal composition as an emerging trend at the present. In such learning, students are highly engaged and encouraged to write not just essay or paragraphs, but also write script, for videos, commentaries, video summaries or reflection in a blog style when they watched such YouTube contents. For example, the study conducted by Napitupulu and Raja in Indonesian context found that students with YouTube class helped in narrative and descriptive writing by exposing them real world language input and diverse contexts.

### **Methodological Trends**

In this systematic review, studies from 2020 and 2025 were examined to explore the role of YouTube in enhancing language proficiency. These studies from diverse contexts adapted various methods as research methodology. Among them 6 studies employed mixed method design. The studies of Narwastu Ajeng Kurniasari et al. (2022), Ahmad Nur Syafiq et al., (2021), Aenun Muthoharoh et al., (2021), Aizan Yaacob et al., (2021), Shadam Hussaeni Handi Pratama et al., (2020), and Arfa S.N. Fadillah et al., (2023) are based on mixed method research design. Similarly, these studies also used pre-test, post-test, survey, interview, questionnaire and interview as data collections tools as a combinational way. Studies focus to how YouTube helps learners to enhance their language skills.

Some studies follow experimental and pre-experimental designs in quantitative research methods. Among 20 studies 6 have adopted this method. For example, Theodara Evita et al., (2020), Kothimah Mahmudah (2020), Balaswamy Chata (2024), and Arfa S.N. Fadillah et al. (2023) studies are mostly followed by this type of method. Data was collected through pre-and post-tests, surveys, and questionnaires to evaluate the improvements of learners' language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Similarly, a total of 6 studies employed descriptive qualitative methods with case study design. Mainly, scholars, Theodora Evita Bella Lumban Raga and Selviana Napitupulu (2020), Cynantia Rachnijati et al. (2024), Vladimir Roman gutierrez-Juancayo (2024), Aenun Muthoharoh et al. (2021) Lidia Ratnaningsih and Septi Gumiandari (2022), and Balaswamy chatta (2024) have adopted case study qualitative descriptive research

methods. And these used interview, document analysis and classroom observation as data collection tools to explore teachers' and students' perceptions or stories.

Some studies are based on systematic literature reviews too. Among 20, 3 studies followed this systematic review method like Muhammad Saddam Husein Aljavari et al. (2023), Mahammad Ulin Nuha and Tiyas Saputri (2021) have followed this method. These studies didn't use the firsthand data rather used previous existing documents mainly articles related to YouTube's role in enhancing language skills. Additionally, 2 articles are conducted using action research based on qualitative research methods. Studies like; Van Ngoc Khanh and Thao Quang Le (2022) and Edy Suseno and Ikip Widya Darma (2024) are based on action research. They observe the teacher's classroom activities and performance as YouTube integrated class as data collection tools.

### **Conclusion and Implication**

This systematic review of 20 research articles from 2020 to 2025 highlights the significant role of YouTube in enhancing English language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing across diverse educational contexts primarily in Indonesia, Vietnam, Peru, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia. Most studies (16 out of 20) focused on listening and speaking skills. YouTube has played vital role to improve learners' listening and speaking skills with comprehensive way. It shows that YouTube helps to enhance comprehension, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition, speaking fluency, confidence and motivation. The YouTube platform offers authentic audio-visual contents exposures to native accents and real-life language use which is particularly beneficial in EFL contexts.

This review found that most of the studies are based on listening and speaking skills of language in EFL classroom setting. 9 and 10 articles respectively addressed listening and speaking skills focus on how YouTube enhanced them after YouTube integrated class maintained in ELT context. They focus YouTube multimodal, authentic and interactive content essentially enhance comprehension, fluency, pronunciation, and motivation of learners.

A few articles (4 out of 20) are concentrated on reading and writing skills of language. This study reveals that YouTube can positively impact in learners' reading and writing ability through engaging multimedia contents that aids vocabulary retention, grammar understanding and writing creativity. The asynchronous nature of videos allows learners to review materials repeatedly, enhancing comprehension and learning autonomy. Learners generally perceive YouTube as an effective, motivating and flexible tool for language learning. It supports autonomous learning and offers opportunity for repeated practice which helps to have higher engagement and better language outcome.

Methodologically, diverse approaches are applied in this review from diverse context. In this way total of 6 articles applied mixed methods, experimental and pre-experimenta also followed 6, and 6 adapted the case study research methods. Moreover, three articles employed systematic literature review. Likewise, 2 studies followed the

action research following interview and observation as a data collection tools.

Integrate YouTube videos carefully into lesson plans to enhance learners' exposure for authentic English language use. Multimedia content also fosters learners' motivation, confidence and autonomy their study suggests to use YouTube in our ELT setting accordingly. Design tasks around YouTube content that target specific language skills, such as speaking fluency or listening comprehension that need to be applied as an artistic way as teaching material. Therefore, to address psychological barriers a teacher should select right and appropriate content by including supportive and low-anxiety learning materials and contents. Therefore, it is necessary to incorporate digital tools like YouTube in language curricula to reflect modern blended learning approach.

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