A *Systematic Review* of YouTube for English Language Teaching

Tinjauan Sistematis YouTube untuk Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris

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Abstract

YouTube telah muncul sebagai salah satu platform digital yang paling banyak digunakan dalam Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris (ELT), menawarkan berbagai manfaat untuk pemerolehan bahasa, keterlibatan, dan aksesibilitas konten. Tinjauan sistematis ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis literatur yang ada tentang peran YouTube dalam ELT, menyoroti efektivitas, tantangan, dan pedagoginya. Tinjauan ini mengikuti metodologi sistematis, memilih studi yang relevan dari basis data akademis yang bereputasi baik. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa YouTube meningkatkan paparan bahasa, mendukung pembelajaran multimoda, dan mendorong pembelajaran mandiri. Namun, keandalan konten, gangguan, dan literasi digital harus ditangani. Studi ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih baik tentang peran YouTube dalam ELT dan memberikan rekomendasi untuk integrasi yang efektif di kelas.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran Mandiri, Pembelajaran Digital, Pengajaran Bahasa Inggris

Abstract

YouTube has emerged as one of the most widely used digital platforms in English Language Teaching (ELT), offering a range of benefits for language acquisition, engagement, and content accessibility. This systematic review aims to analyze existing literature on the role of YouTube in ELT, highlighting its effectiveness, challenges, and pedagogy. The review follows a systematic methodology, selecting relevant studies from reputable academic databases. Findings indicate that YouTube enhances language exposure, supports multimodal learning, and fosters autonomous learning. However, content reliability, distraction, and digital literacy must be addressed. This study contributes to a better understanding of YouTube's role in ELT and provides recommendations for its effective integration in the classroom.

Keywords: Autonomous Learning, Digital Learning, English Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Technological innovations have changed the world of education, providing a variety of instruments to improve teaching and learning processes. Digital tools in language learning enable new levels of involvement, participation, and accessibility. The emergence of video-based learning is consistent with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2009), which emphasizes the benefits of combining verbal and visual information for knowledge acquisition. In the context of second language acquisition, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) emphasizes the importance of social contact in learning, which is assisted by online media. Furthermore, Warschauer and Healey (1998) emphasize the relevance of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), which allows for personalized and student-centered learning experiences. With the rapid growth of digital platforms, video-sharing websites such as YouTube have become increasingly popular in English

Language Teaching (ELT), providing authentic language input and possibilities for practice outside of the classroom.

In the modern era, YouTube is a valuable instrument in ELT for enhancing language skills such as listening, speaking, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition. The platform's extensive material varies from language classes, pronunciation aids, and grammar lectures to real-life conversations and interactive exercises. Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1982) states that language acquisition happens when learners are exposed to understandable input slightly beyond their current skill level, which YouTube effectively provides through multimedia material. Furthermore, Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) emphasizes the importance of observation and imitation in learning, making YouTube an excellent resource for language learners looking to follow native speakers. Previous research, such as Kelsen (2009) and Wang & Chen (2020), has investigated the usefulness of YouTube in language acquisition, demonstrating favorable effects on student involvement and motivation. While these studies give valuable insights, they frequently focus on specific aspects of YouTube usage rather than thoroughly examining its function in ELT.

Given the increased interest in YouTube as a pedagogical tool, this paper aims to give a systematic overview of its use in ELT. While previous studies have looked at student views, teaching tactics, and content effectiveness, a more comprehensive analysis is required to discover best practices, obstacles, and theoretical implications. According to Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1998), while multimedia content can help with learning, excessive or unstructured input can cause cognitive overload, lowering learning efficacy. This study aims to analyze how YouTube is used in ELT, its benefits, and its limitations in language teaching contexts by conducting an in-depth review of existing literature.

In contrast to previous studies, which have focused on individual case studies or student participation, this study examines YouTube's usefulness in various ELT contexts. According to Ellis's Interaction Hypothesis (1991), meaningful interaction is required for language acquisition, and this study investigates how YouTube supports these interactions. Mayer's Principles of Multimedia Learning (2009) gives a framework for investigating how video material influences cognitive processes in language learning. This systematic study examines empirical studies on YouTube's involvement in ELT, providing an extensive comprehension of its pedagogical impact. The research aims to address the following questions: How is YouTube utilized in ELT to enhance language learning? What are the benefits and challenges of using YouTube in ELT? What pedagogical approaches optimize YouTube's effectiveness in ELT? By answering these questions, this review contributes to ongoing discussions on digital learning tools in ELT, offering insights for educators and researchers on effectively integrating YouTube into language teaching. This review aims to contribute to the continuing discussion about digital learning tools in ELT by answering these questions. The findings will help educators and academics understand how YouTube can be effectively integrated into language learning and identify opportunities for future research in the field of English language teaching.

Literature Review

The role of technology in ELT has been widely discussed in recent years. According to Pollara (2021), digital tools provide an interactive and engaging learning experience that traditional teaching methods may lack. Various studies suggest integrating multimedia resources, including

YouTube, enhances motivation and improves learning outcomes (Tarihoran et al., 2022). Technology has significantly changed English Language Teaching (ELT) by offering creative approaches to teaching and language learning. Warschauer and Meskill (2000) claim that technology improves language acquisition by enabling connection, engagement, and access to tangible resources. Traditional educational practices in ELT have changed due to incorporating digital platforms like social media, websites, video sharing, and mobile applications. According to research, digital technologies provide individualized language practice, boost motivation, and support student-centered learning (Chapelle, 2009). Additionally, the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (Mayer, 2005) describes how multimodal content—such as text, graphics, and videos—helps pupils learn and remember knowledge more efficiently. This idea emphasizes how crucial it is to combine auditory and visual cues to maximize learning results. YouTube provides dynamic and captivating teaching resources, making it a useful multimodal tool that adheres to Mayer's ideas in ELT.

YouTube is a widely recognized platform for delivering instructional content in ELT. Studies indicate that YouTube videos provide exposure to authentic language use, improve listening skills, and offer visual support for language learners (Tarihoran et al., 2020). However, some researchers highlight challenges such as content credibility, overreliance on passive learning, and potential distractions (Rivera-Lozada et al., 2022). YouTube has emerged as a widely utilized platform in ELT due to its accessibility, diverse content, and ability to provide real-life language exposure. According to Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1985), learners acquire a second language more effectively when exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. YouTube videos, particularly those featuring authentic conversations, real-world scenarios, and subtitles, support this hypothesis by offering students meaningful and contextualized language input. Additionally, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) emphasizes the role of social interaction in language development. YouTube fosters a collaborative learning environment where students can engage in discussions, participate in online communities, and interact with language content beyond the classroom. Studies have shown that watching YouTube videos enhances listening comprehension, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition (Tarihoran et al., 2022). Moreover, Constructivist Learning Theory (Piaget, 1964) supports the idea that learners construct knowledge through active engagement. YouTube enables learners to take control of their learning process by selecting content that matches their interests and needs, thus fostering autonomous learning. Despite its numerous benefits, YouTube also presents challenges in ELT. The Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988) suggests that excessive or unstructured multimedia input can overwhelm learners, making it difficult for them to process information effectively. Teachers must carefully curate and scaffold YouTube materials to ensure students remain focused and do not experience cognitive overload. Furthermore, concerns about content credibility, distractions, and passive learning behaviors must be addressed to maximize the effectiveness of YouTube as a pedagogical tool (Rivera-Lozada et al., 2022).

METHODS

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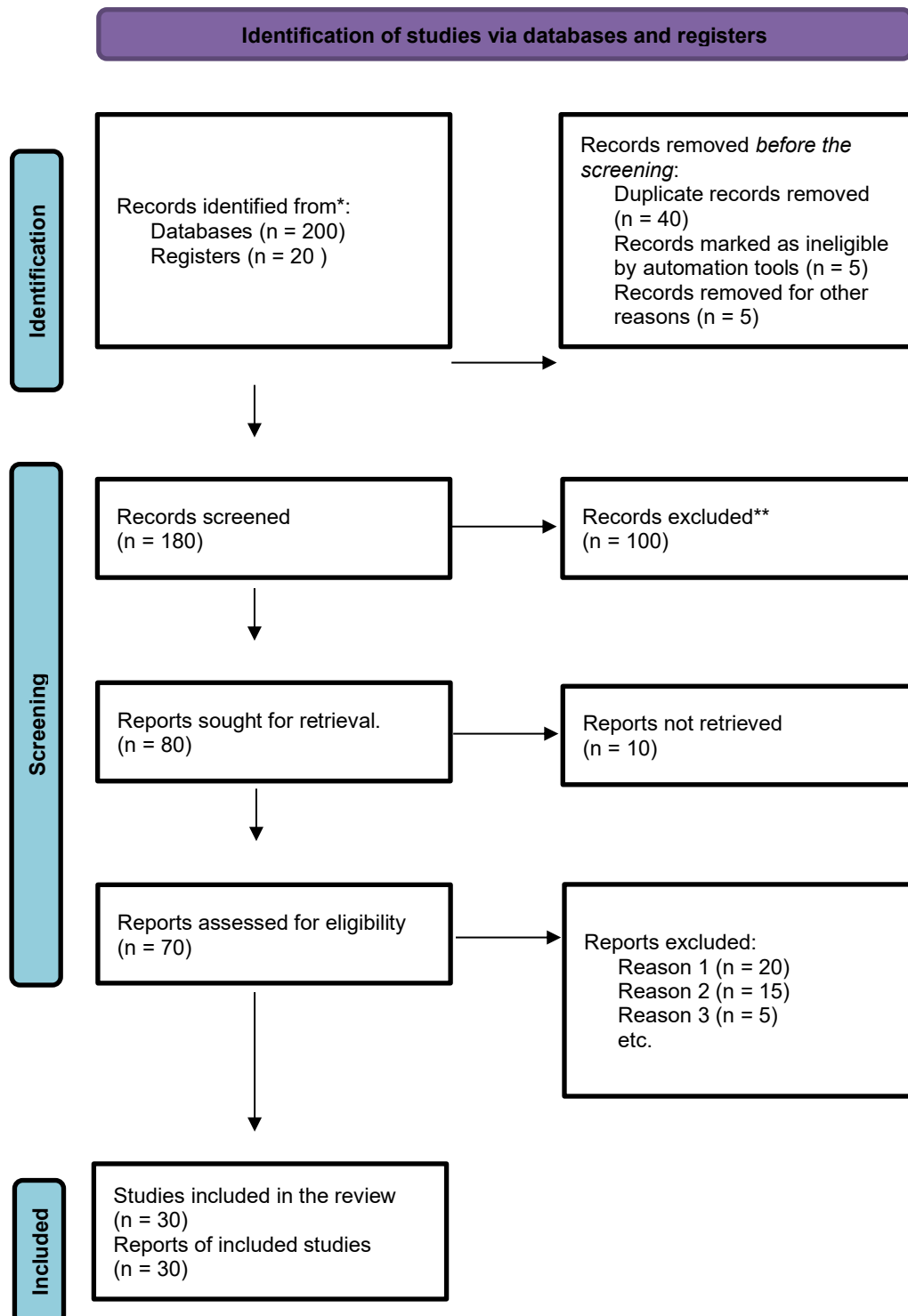
This systematic review examines empirical studies published between 2020 and 2024, focusing on the impact of YouTube on English Language Teaching (ELT). The selected studies meet specific inclusion criteria to ensure relevance and credibility. First, the articles must be indexed in reputable databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, EBSCOhost, and Taylor & Francis Online.

Second, the studies should specifically focus on undergraduate students in ELT settings. Additionally, only research published in English and available in full text is considered. Lastly, the review includes only empirical studies that analyze the effects of YouTube on ELT, ensuring a comprehensive examination of its role in language learning. The data collection process involved searching academic databases using keywords such as "YouTube for ELT," "digital learning in ELT," and "YouTube language learning." Selected studies were analyzed based on their methodologies, findings, and relevance to the research questions. The exclusion criteria for this systematic review ensure a focused analysis of YouTube's impact on English Language Teaching (ELT) among undergraduate students. Studies involving postgraduate students or working professionals are excluded to maintain consistency in the target population. Additionally, research that examines social media platforms other than YouTube is not considered, as the review specifically investigates YouTube's role in ELT. Lastly, meta-analyses or theoretical papers without empirical data are excluded to prioritize studies that provide direct, data-driven insights into the topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

According to the findings, YouTube significantly influences three key areas of ELT: vocabulary learning, listening comprehension, and student engagement. Nevertheless, several issues have also been noted, such as cognitive overload, distractions, and content dependability. These results are examined in light of prior research, theoretical viewpoints, and the current research gap. Eleven of the 220 studies were first found to satisfy the inclusion requirements and underwent a thorough analysis. These studies were chosen because, rather than concentrating on digital learning in general, they mainly analyze YouTube as a pedagogical tool in ELT.

Author	Title	Main Finding
(S. A. Faziah, S. A Fitriah, Z. K. Ramadhan, N. Tarihoran 2024)	Benefit Of Youtube Usage And Its Effectiveness In Teaching English: A Systematic Review	a. Youtube improves english language skills helps students s improve their speaking, listening, reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar. The majority of studies show that it improves speaking and listening skills. b. Engaging in YouTube videos increases students' interest and motivation to study English by providing authentic and adaptable learning resources. c. YouTube enables students to learn at their own pace, review materials as required, and participate in discussions through live chat features and comments. d. Not all YouTube content is high-quality, so students must filter relevant topics.
(Aprilian Ria Adisti 2022)	Investigating The Use Of YouTube as a Virtual Teaching Medium In ELT Among Nonenglish Students	a. This study investigates the usefulness of YouTube in English language teaching (ELt) for non-English-speaking students at b. YouTube improves pupils' comprehension of English concepts, particularly the degree of comparison and collocation.
(Rufino, Gilliane G. 2024)	Methods Used In YouTube for Teaching And Learning English Language: A	a. This study categorizes five techniques of using YouTube for English instruction: horizontal, intersecting, vertical, parallel, and spiral, each with its approach to student participation.

	Systematic Literature Review	
(A.A.C. Cahyana 2020)	The Use Of Youtube Video In Teaching English For Foreign Language At	a. This study highlights internet access as the most significant barrier to using YouTube videos for learning, despite the fact that students and teachers typically regard it as an excellent tool. b. This study finds that YouTube videos make learning more engaging and accessible by allowing students to replay content for improved comprehension and critical thinking skills.
(A. F. Aini, A. Navira, N. N. Rahayu, N. Tarihoran 2024)	The Use Of Videos And Its Effectiveness In Elt: A Systematic Review	a. Films in English language teaching (elt) improve students' listening, reading, writing, and speaking abilities while increasing motivation and self-confidence. b. Despite some challenges, films may be an engaging and successful tool in English language teaching, making learning more dynamic and fun for students.
(N. Tarihoran 2024)	The Widely Common Media To Teach English: Does YouTube Affect Students ' Speaking Skills? A Systematic Review	a. Incorporating YouTube into English language instruction dramatically enhances students' speaking abilities, including fluency, pronunciation, accuracy, and vocabulary. b. YouTube offers students an exciting and participatory learning experience by exposing them to actual language input, native speakers, and real-life communication scenarios.
(Van Ngoc Khanh Truong, Thao Quang Le 2022)	Utilizing YouTube to Enhance English Speaking Skill: EFL Tertiary Students' Practices And Perceptions	a. Using YouTube helps EFL tertiary students improve their English-speaking abilities by improving fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, and listening comprehension. b. Students see YouTube as a useful tool for practicing speaking, building confidence, and being exposed to English interactions.
(A. Yacoob, A. S. A. Amir, R. M. Asraf, M. F. M. Yaakob, F. M. Zain 2021)	Impact Of Youtube And Video Podcast On Listening to Comprehension Among Young Learners	a. The study discovered a statistically significant boost in students' listening comprehension scores after using YouTube and video podcasts. The post-test findings showed significant improvement over the pre-test, demonstrating that these digital tools significantly improved listening abilities. b. The availability of subtitles and visual components made it easier for students to understand the text, making learning more pleasurable. These findings demonstrate digital media's potential to improve listening comprehension in young ESL learners.
(Anrasiyana, Sulistyaningsih, A. Syakur 2022)	Creating Vlog As Media In English Language Teaching (ELT): Teaching Speaking	a. Using vlogging in English language teaching greatly increased students' speaking skills, including fluency, pronunciation, and confidence in using English. b. Creating vlogs boosted active engagement and enthusiasm among students, making English learning more interesting and engaging. Students showed enthusiasm as they prepared, recorded, and shared their vlogs. c. Students improved their speaking abilities, creativity, and technical capabilities, such as video editing and audience involvement, making learning more dynamic and relevant in the digital age.
(Anselmus Inharjanto And Ega Leovani 2022)	Could YouTube Benefit Secondary Education's Elt?	The study discovered that YouTube has a wealth of real-life, up-to-date English materials that assist students in enhancing their language skills by exposing them to authentic communication.

According to the results, there are three main advantages of utilizing YouTube for language learning:

1. YouTube Enhances Listening Comprehension

   YouTube's capacity to enhance listening comprehension is one of its main benefits for ELT. Through YouTube videos, learners are exposed to various accents, real-world communication situations, and actual English conversations. This exposure can help students improve their listening fluency and adjust to various speech rates and pronunciations. From a theoretical standpoint, learners effectively acquire language when they are exposed to understandable information that is just slightly beyond their present skill level, according to Krashen's information Hypothesis (1985). YouTube offers this input through annotated videos, subtitles, and real-world conversations, enabling students to deduce meanings from context. YouTube's effect on listening comprehension is consistent with Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (2005), which contends that integrating visual and aural data improves language understanding. Empirical data support these assertions. According to Tarihoran et al. (2022), students who regularly see instructional videos on YouTube demonstrate notable gains in their comprehension of spoken English, especially in identifying various accents and intonations. Furthermore, Mayer (2021) emphasizes that students who use YouTube with subtitles exhibit better comprehension levels than those who do not. Even with these advantages, there are still specific difficulties. It might be challenging for novices to follow fast-paced speech in many YouTube videos, as they are not adapted to the viewers' skill levels. Furthermore, not all videos have precise or timely subtitles, which might make comprehension more difficult rather than easier.

2. YouTube Facilitates Vocabulary Acquisition

   YouTube is essential for learning vocabulary and listening abilities. Instead of memorizing isolated vocabulary lists, contextual learning through movies helps students grasp new terms in meaningful contexts. Educational YouTube channels frequently use visual clues, subtitles, and real-world examples to strengthen language memory. This discovery is theoretically supported by Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1986), which contends that memory and recall are improved when text and audio are combined. Students' memory is strengthened when they view YouTube videos with subtitles because they process words visually and aurally. Similarly, regular exposure to relevant vocabulary in context promotes more organic learning, according to Krashen's (1985) theory of language input. These effects are supported by empirical research. According to Rivera-Lozada et al. (2022), students who watched YouTube videos with subtitles demonstrated a 30% increase in vocabulary retention compared to those who used conventional text-based resources. Furthermore, students who regularly watch educational videos and English vlogs expand their vocabulary since they encounter terms in a variety of real-life contexts, according to Tarihoran et al. (2022). However, YouTube videos' casual character might be a drawback since they can introduce slang, colloquialisms, and non-standard language that aren't necessarily suitable for official or academic settings. Furthermore, some students can struggle to grasp new vocabulary if there are insufficient contextual explanations in the video material.

3. YouTube Increases Student Engagement

    YouTube's capacity to raise student enthusiasm and engagement is another important benefit for ELT. In contrast to traditional teaching approaches, YouTube videos are frequently interactive, visually appealing, and available at any time. The ability to pause, fast-forward, and replay movies promotes independent learning by enabling students to interact with the material at their speed.

    YouTube's success in encouraging participation is consistent with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978), which highlights the importance of social interaction in the learning process. By allowing students to take part in online learning communities, comment on videos, and participate in conversations, YouTube promotes collaborative learning. Numerous research emphasizes these advantages. Pollara (2021) discovered that students are more interested and motivated when utilizing YouTube-based classes instead of conventional lecture-based methods. Similarly, Tarihoran et al. (2022) found that because of the platform's relevant and engaging material, students who used YouTube to learn languages expressed greater engagement and pleasure. Despite these benefits, distraction is a significant obstacle. Since YouTube's algorithm often recommends non-educational content, students may be lured to view entertainment videos rather than instructional ones. Ads and suggestions for irrelevant videos can also interfere with the learning process.

Discussion

The review's conclusions affirm that YouTube has great promise as an ELT teaching tool, but several issues need to be resolved to maximize its usefulness.

1. Content Quality and Reliability

    The dependability of the content is one of the main issues. YouTube videos are not necessarily subject to quality control or peer review, in contrast to conventional educational resources. Specific videos can include biased viewpoints, erroneous information, or grammatical mistakes. Teachers could direct students to credible YouTube channels that provide organized and scholarly information, such as BBC Learning English, TED-Ed, or CrashCourse, to solve this.

2. Passive learning and cognitive overload

    According to Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1988), cognitive overload is another difficulty. Excessive multimedia input can overwhelm students and impair understanding, particularly fast-paced movies with many visual and aural components. Teachers may counteract this by implementing guided viewing activities like comprehension tests, post-video reflections, and pre-watching talks. Additionally, if students only view videos on YouTube without actively interacting with the information, it may promote passive learning. Teachers could use YouTube to create interactive activities like group discussions, response videos, or vocabulary assignments, depending on the video content, to optimize learning results. According to this systematic research, YouTube is essential for improving vocabulary learning, listening comprehension, and student engagement in ELT. However, thoughtful material selection, well-planned pedagogical integration, and engaged student engagement are necessary for its efficacy. Although YouTube has drawbacks, including inconsistent material,

diversions, and cognitive overload, they may be overcome with interactive exercises, scaffolded learning techniques, and instructor supervision. Future studies must examine the long-term impacts of YouTube-based instruction and the best ways to maximize its use in ELT classes.

CONCLUSION

This systematic review has demonstrated that YouTube plays a significant role in English Language Teaching (ELT) by enhancing listening comprehension, facilitating vocabulary acquisition, and increasing student engagement. Through its rich and diverse content, YouTube provides learners with authentic language exposure, varied accents, and real-world communication contexts, contributing to developing their listening skills. Additionally, the platform aids vocabulary retention by presenting words in meaningful contexts with multimodal support, aligning with established cognitive and linguistic theories. Furthermore, YouTube fosters learner autonomy and motivation, making language learning more interactive and accessible. However, despite these advantages, several challenges must be addressed to optimize YouTube's pedagogical effectiveness. Content reliability, distractions, and cognitive overload pose potential obstacles to effective learning. Students may encounter inaccurate or inappropriate content without careful curation, leading to misconceptions or inefficient learning. Moreover, YouTube's algorithm-driven recommendations often divert learners' attention to non-educational content, reducing learning effectiveness. Educators should implement structured learning strategies to mitigate these challenges, such as guided viewing activities, comprehension tasks, and discussions that encourage active engagement with video materials.

This study contributes to the growing literature on digital learning tools by systematically analyzing empirical studies from 2020 to 2024. It highlights YouTube's potential as a valuable tool in ELT while emphasizing the need for pedagogically sound integration. Future research should explore the long-term impact of YouTube-based learning on language proficiency, investigate teacher perspectives on incorporating YouTube into curricula, and compare its effectiveness with other digital learning platforms. By addressing these areas, researchers and educators can further refine best practices for utilizing YouTube as an effective ELT tool. Ultimately, while YouTube presents unique opportunities for language learning, its effectiveness depends on thoughtful implementation, structured pedagogical integration, and active student participation. When used strategically, YouTube has the potential to transform ELT by making language learning more engaging, accessible, and effective for learners worldwide.

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