

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

THE USE OF ENGLISH YOUTUBE CHANNELS TO IMPROVE NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' LEARNING AT HANOI OPEN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to look into the use of English YouTube channels to improve learning for non-English major students at Hanoi Open University. Data was gathered and processed through learning diaries and questionnaires. The findings suggest that learning from YouTube can remarkably improve students' English skills. In addition, the study features the positive effects of YouTube on students' motivation, involvement, and complete learning experience. The implications of these findings for English language teaching and learning look promising, emphasizing the importance of using YouTube channels in the curriculum to promote effective language development and communication skills.

KEY WORDS: YouTube channels; diaries; questionnaire; motivation; language development.

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1. Introduction

These days, technology has developed and stepped into all aspects of life. YouTube, one of the most popular platforms, is seen as an abundant source of information. English users make use of YouTube to create their videos to serve their learning purposes, or they explore YouTube channels to discover new strategies to improve their English performance in effective ways. The fact shows that learners feel fascinated and excited when they learn from YouTube. This helps them enrich their social knowledge, as well.

On the basis of careful consideration of the reality of English language teaching and learning at Hanoi Open University, the study was done towards this orientation to state more clearly the use of YouTube channels by non-English major students at HOU in their language learning. Specifically, it attempted to (i) explore the effectiveness that YouTube channels brought to the students, and (ii) investigate the attitudes of students when the method of YouTube channels is applied in classes

To do the study, the researcher carried out studying and analyzing the references related to the study, researching students' diaries, designing questionnaires to conduct surveys of students' opinions about the use Youtube channels in their lessons, as well as to get an overview of how Youtube is used in language classes and to what extent it can help to improve students' learning progress.

2. Literature Review

2.1. *YouTube as a pedagogical tool for English learners*

The development of technology has created new opportunities for learners all over the world. The appearance of YouTube in 2005 has allowed people to share their self-made videos online. With this video sharing platform, the users, both native and non-native ones, have chances to access English learning content at ease. Videos online offer teachers and learners rich communication channels for acquiring new knowledge and exchanging ideas through producing and sharing media. Anil, B. (2016) affirmed that learning from YouTube enhances learners' English vocabulary at a high level. Hoem, J. (2004) looked at YouTube videos as a tool for collaborative projects because learners can work together to produce high-quality videos serving their learning goals. Their learning space can

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go beyond the borders of a classroom, which creates a common educational environment.

According to Baran, E. (2007), online video activities are useful for learners since nowadays they are put in a living atmosphere. This helps them become more active and flexible in making use of technology for their learning targets. What they learn from the books should be implemented outside the classroom, which can make their learning more practical and feasible. Balakrishnan, D.V., & Puteh, F. (2014) declared that videos bring learners a bunch of interest and enjoyment. The researches show a high percentage of students who feel engaged in and attentive when learning through media. Especially their speaking skills can be improved a lot after a certain period of time practising with online videos. Besides that, most students see this approach as a tool for their speaking error corrections; meanwhile, quite a lot of learners get the feeling of freedom at the same time. Anil, B. (2016) shared the same opinion when he said the videos on YouTube encourage learners' interest and enthusiasm. Students are eager to discover new but challenging methods of learning. They tend to be positive when they are provided enjoyable and relaxing learning atmosphere. They feel less stressed and express their ideas more openly. With the constant comments or feedback from teachers, they become more confident in their speaking skills.

All in all, YouTube videos are considered a beneficial tool for English teaching and learning. Learners also show their positive attitudes when accessing this new strategy.

2.2. Advantages of using YouTube videos in the English learning process

YouTube is a widely used website for uploading, viewing, and sharing various types of video content that are suitable for different ages and backgrounds. Every day, millions of video clips of different languages are uploaded. That is why it becomes an unlimited source for English learners who can exploit videos of any genre and any topic whenever they want and need.

YouTube videos provide learners with vocabulary and improve their pronunciation. The fact shows that generally, videos are made by people who often talk about their real experiences or practical tips for doing something; therefore, when watching these types of videos, the learners have more opportunities to approach authentic and informal English. This points out that learners can learn the language from real people who use it on a daily basis. Students can improve their vocabulary amount as well as know how to pronounce the words in a natural way because living languages appear constantly with new words and phrases becoming more popular every day.

What is more, when engaging in video learning, learners are exposed to chances to keep themselves interested. The contents in the videos tend to be vivid, interesting, and easy to follow. This keeps their brain stimulated continuously. They become attracted and feel motivated to learn from this learning tool. More importantly, videos on YouTube help learners find suitable materials that fit their needs. Millions of videos at different levels assist them in picking the best source for their learning speed and demands. They can do it in a second when plenty of content appears continuously on their computer screens. They can generalise the knowledge in order to meet their own requirements. Additionally, YouTube videos spring English language acquisition. When learners spend hours learning from YouTube, the vocabulary and knowledge can be repeated, creating memories in their minds. They can remember the knowledge longer and longer. This accelerates their learning process at a higher speed. Moreover, YouTube videos offer students opportunities to read, watch, and listen to the information in any form to acquire the knowledge; work with others to reinforce and deepen their knowledge; and use technology to organise and present knowledge. Last but not least, videos offer students visual representation, self-evaluation, a wider audience, peer learning, teamwork skills, and high learning motivation.

In conclusion, learning from videos on YouTube gives students a variety of advantages for improving language skills. By handling opportunities for practice, feedback, and collaborations, it can help learners to be more positive, fluent, and confident language learners.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

100 participants are the non-English major second-year students at Hanoi Open University who study the third level of English in their learning curriculum. Their main course book is New Headway 4th Edition - Intermediate level. Students have two mornings studying in the classroom. Then, the remaining time is used for self-study at home or in the library.

3.2. Data collection instruments

Data for the study were collected through the two main tools: students' diaries and questionnaires.

(i) Diaries:

Diaries are used to record some significant information during the process of learning. Students can take note on some of the following sections like the name of their favourite YouTube language channels; what skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing, grammar, use of English,...) they can learn from the channels; what difficulties they may face when watching these YouTube channels such as accent, speed, pronunciation, topic familiarities, and so on; what typical benefits they can have from watching the channels (enhance learning motivation, improve pronunciation, better language confidence, generalise real life conversations,...) and other comments or suggestions for using YouTube channels.

(ii) Questionnaires:

Questionnaires are regarded as a useful instrument for gathering data because of its deal of advantages. According to Wisker (2007), questionnaires are frequently used to collect information about attitudes, behaviours, activities, and responses to specific topics. This instrument is effective and time-saving when researchers want to collect a huge amount of data. Besides that, when questionnaires are applied, the results are analysed easily as compared to other forms of survey.

The questionnaire for students was carried out with 4 statements. Statement 1 explores students' general information, their interests, frequency of learning English. Statement 2 aims to find out the frequency students use YouTube channels for learning languages, the reasons, any difficulties they may have, and what strategies they use during YouTube learning. Statement 3 tries to discover students' attitudes toward using YouTube channels for their learning, as well as their recommendations for this study technique.

3.3. Procedures for data collection

The data was gathered for six weeks with the second-year non-English major students in the two classes in the Faculty of Information Technology at Hanoi Open University. Data collection was conducted as follows: 1/ Asking students to hand over their diaries after the course; 2/ Collecting data from the students' questionnaire in the sixth week.

3.4. Data analysis

The information collected was then analyzed to achieve the outcome of the study, and there were discussions about it afterwards. The data gathered from students' learning diaries and questionnaires were assessed independently and were used to fulfil the research objectives.

4. Results

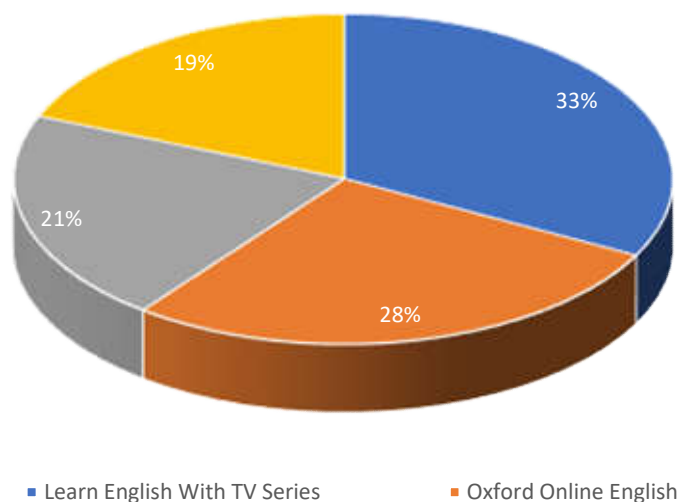
4.1. Results and analysis from students' learning diaries

In this method, students are required to write daily learning diaries. They focus on writing about the YouTube channels they have watched, what language skills they can learn from these channels, what benefits they can get, and what obstacles they may face when applying this learning strategy.

4.1.1. YouTube channels watched by the learners

Students watch 8 YouTube language learning channels, as recommended by the researcher, namely *EnglishClub*, *Learn English with English Class101*, *Learn English With TV Series*, *James ESL English Lessons*, *Easy English*, *Rachel's English*, *Oxford Online English*, *7ESL Learning English*. The content of these channels provides students with a variety of ways to learn English. Students can develop their skills while being entertained and accomplished at the same time as the channels use animations, native accents, and conversational English in real contexts. The topics mentioned in the channels fall into familiar ones like family, friends, school, jobs, shopping, free time, working in a team, personality, and so on. The most favourite channels chosen by the students are *Oxford Online English*, *7ESL Learning English*, *Learn English With TV Series*, and *English Club*.

Chart 1.1. YouTube channels watched by learners



From Chart 1, we can see that *Oxford Online English* and *Learn English With TV Series* are picked to be learners' most-watched channels. *Oxford Online English*, with the percentage of 32% covers a variety of language learning aspects, namely Level tests of 4 skills (Listening, Vocabulary, Reading, and Grammar tests), Free lessons improving learners in pronunciation, English writing, spoken English, business English, and so on. *Learn English With TV Series* ranks second when this channel attracts 28% viewers. When learning through this channel, learners can approach active and lively methods of learning. They can know how to use English in real contexts with high flexibility. One prominent feature of this channel is the different ways the content is presented. Learners can boost their English through videos created in the form of songs, dramas, funny stories, cartoons, sitcoms, etc. They can meet KOLs like famous singers, presenters, YouTubers, and TikTokers who share their own experiences in acquiring the English language. The number three ranking channel falls into *7ESL Learning English*, with 21%. This is the place where learners can gain access to thousands of lessons from AI English experts, tailored for test preparation, casual conversations, and more. Meanwhile, learners can have a wide choice of language games related to the topics that they are interested in. *English Club* ranks last with 19% watches. This channel demonstrates audio and video lessons to enhance English skills such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

(ii) *The skills that students can learn from the YouTube channels*

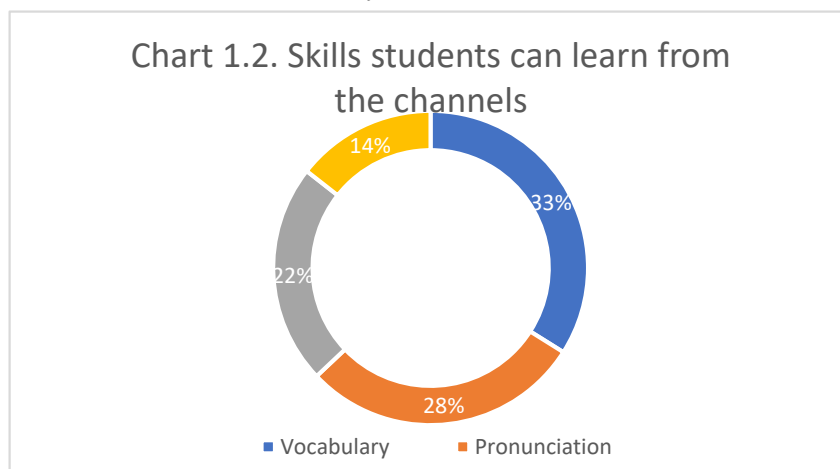


Chart 2 demonstrates the language skills students have improved after watching the YouTube channels. The diaries show that learners can gain improvement in the following fields: vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and grammar. We can easily see that the skill viewers benefit most is vocabulary, and this is recorded in 33% diaries. The other figures with pronunciation, listening, and grammar are 28%, 22% and 14% respectively.

(iii) *Benefits of watching YouTube channels*

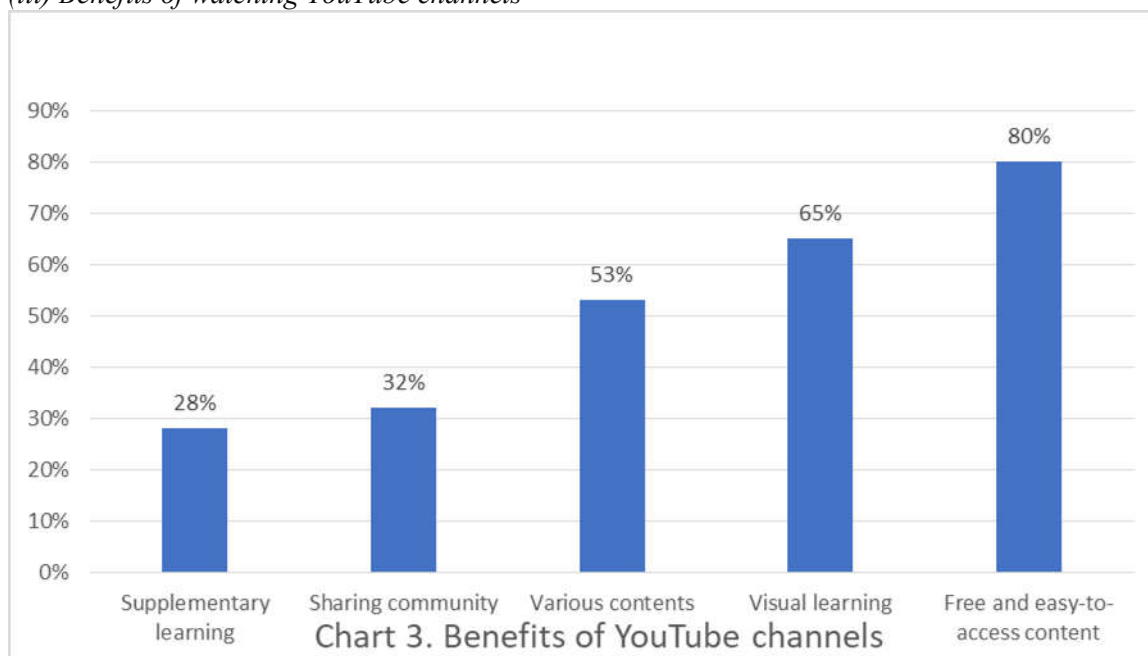
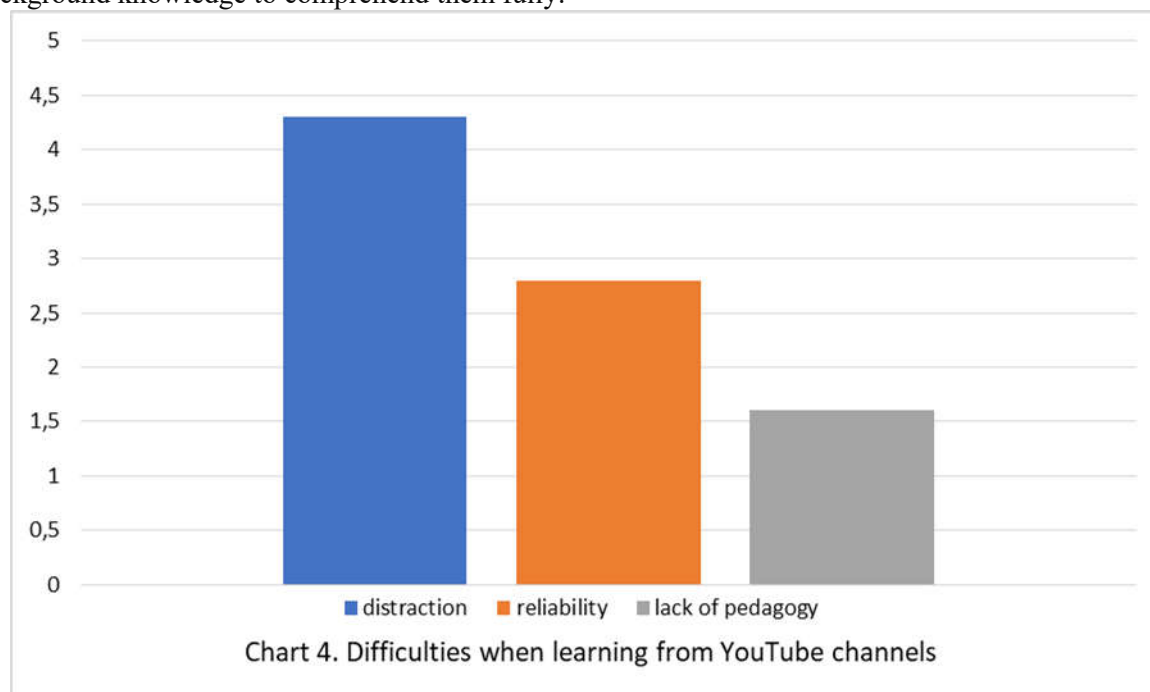


Chart 3 presents the benefits that learners can gain when they learn from YouTube channels. 80% of the students say they do not have to pay any money for the channels they are interested in, and the content they are looking for is easy to access. This is the biggest advantage that YouTube can give

the learners of learning language. 65% of the students say their learning process has become more interesting when they are exposed to the visuality and animation in the videos on YouTube. They do not feel tedious and stressed as compared to learning in traditional ways. Besides that, the contents come with various and familiar topics that also motivate them to engage in learning in a great deal. The topics are at the same time introduced by different creators who bring learners abundant perspectives as well as raise their cultural and social understanding. This benefit accounts for 53%. What is more, 32% of the students say that YouTube gives them a sharing environment. YouTube is considered a communal community where learners from all walks of life can share their learning experiences. They can comment, ask, share, and discuss common topics that they are keen on. This helps them broaden their knowledge and perception of the language world. Last but not least, YouTube channels can be used as a supplementary source. Learners can review the lessons, look for materials that support their learning after school. Most importantly, they can have clear-cut explanations for the subjects that they find difficult to understand. This benefit reports 28% on the chart.

(iv) Obstacles students face when learning from YouTube channels

Chart 4 illustrates the difficulties that learners may encounter when they use YouTube channels for their study purposes. It is easily noticed that the biggest obstacle is the distraction. This can be an unwanted advertisement coming across or unrelated content appearing. Students are easy to spend too much time watching non-stop Vlogs, gaming videos, and listening to music. This is not good for their time management and effectiveness. The reliability of the information online stands second. Students do not have experience or tactics to pick authentic sources when most videos can be uploaded by both experts and amateurs. Therefore, the accuracy raises a major question. The last hassle is the lack of pedagogy. Video content on YouTube is not organised on the progress track for learners. Sometimes, the content is too difficult and highly advanced because learners are not equipped background knowledge to comprehend them fully.



4.2. Results from questionnaires

(i) Students' interests in learning from YouTube channels

The chart below shows the percentage of interest that students have when participating in learning from YouTube channels. We can see that a majority of students tend to enjoy these activities. Most of them are highly interested in this learning strategy. This number accounts for 58%. Nearly one third (27% students) express their keen fascination in learning from YouTube, meanwhile 15% are interested in this kind of work. None of them had the choice of being completely uninterested. This clarifies the reality that students tend to take a big care in this technique when learning foreign languages.

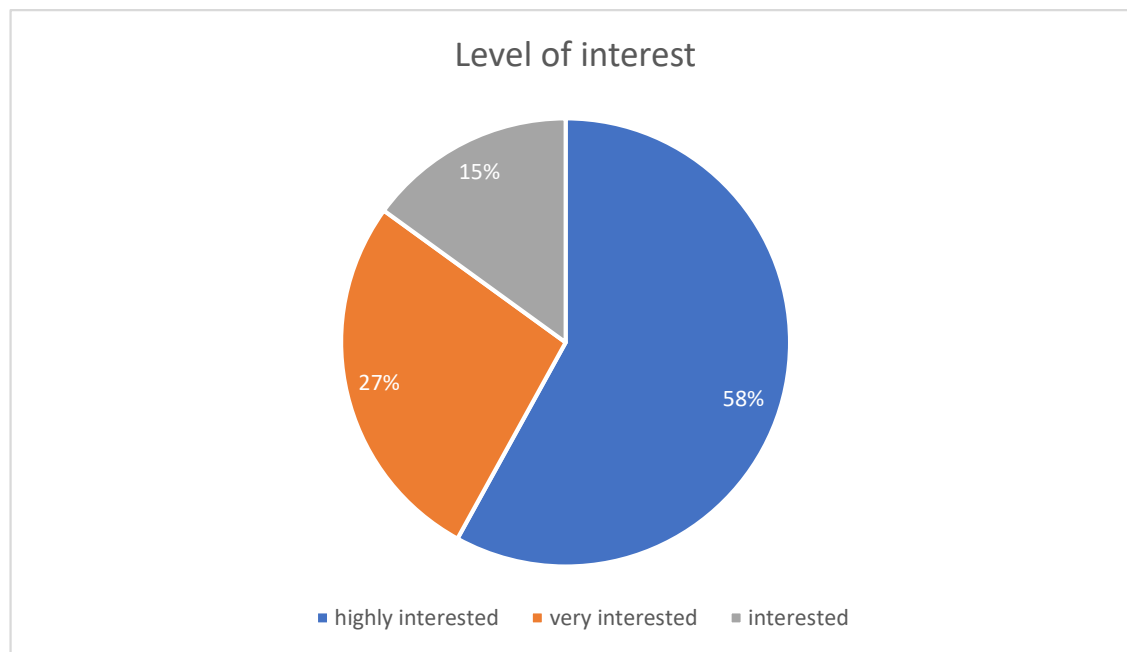


Chart 5. The level of interest in learning from YouTube channels

(ii) Frequency of watching YouTube channels

Table 1. Students' frequency of watching YouTube channels

	(0) Never	(1) Sometimes	(2) Often	(3) Always
YouTube channels	Frequency			
	(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)
EnglishClub	42%	16,5%	14,5%	0%
Easy English	65%	8,5%	6%	0%
Learn English with EnglishClass101	43,5%	16%	0,5%	0%
Learn English With TV Series	26,5%	23%	15%	20,5%
JamesESL English Lessons	46%	11,5%	21,5%	0%
Rachel's English	62,5%	13%	8,5%	0%
Oxford Online English	23,5%	17%	28%	12,5%
7ESL Learning English	30,5%	18%	16%	6,5%

From Table 1, we can figure out that the two channels that are most accessed by the learners are Oxford Online English and Learn English With TV Series, with the percentages of 95% and 85% respectively. 7ESL Learning English ranks third with 81% viewers. The less frequently watched channels are JamesESL English Lessons, which occupies 79% and EnglishClub with 73%. This result is the same as the data collected from students' diaries.

The reasons to explain why these channels are more commonly watched by students are as follows. First, students find it interesting and feel fascinated by the content and the topics covered in these channels. The second, the quality of videos is better with clear pronunciation, authentic accents, and moderate speed and intonation. These make learners not stressed and become more engaged in the learning activities.

During the time of using YouTube for study, learners have some significant difficulties, namely fast speed, alien topics, one-way communication, and unfamiliar vocabulary. Among these, unfamiliar words are the biggest challenge for students. Some of them are not aware of the meaning of the words, then they are easy to get distracted and unmotivated. Fast speaking speed is also considered an obstacle when learners cannot keep up with what the conversation or speech is about. In addition, viewers have to struggle with strange topics that they have never encountered before. This results in misinterpretation or inadequate comprehension. The last is one-way communication. Students do not have a real language environment or face-to-face conversations to practice. The only things they can do are just to listen or sometimes mimic what they have seen from the YouTube videos. This affects their creativity as well as practical experiences.

(iii) Strategies applied when learning from YouTube

When being asked about what strategies students use when learning from YouTube, there are lots of techniques mentioned. Noticeably, most students use subtitles to get a deeper understanding, especially when they are in the early stage of the learning process, and this is suitable for weaker learners. The next most used technique is choosing quality content. They tend to access to reputable sources with high credibility or recommendations. This helps them leave out unrelated content and find the most valuable videos. One more effective way is after watching videos, they jot down the key information or build a mind map for longer memorization. The last useful method is that students set aside a fixed amount of time every day for this practice. This helps them manage time better and avoid unwanted distractions.

(iv) Students' attitudes toward using YouTube channels to facilitate English learning

The starting opinion has the outcome of 5% of the students who hold the strong disagreement that learning from YouTube English channels improves their language learning. 45% of the students agree with this learning technique. A small number of students (15%) seem to be neutral on that scale. Nearly half students (48%) choose 'strongly agree' and 12% pick strongly agree.

Looking at the second viewpoint, more than a third of the students (33%) strongly believe that YouTube English channels provide them with a flexible learning environment; meanwhile 52% say 'agree' with this opinion. There exist only 13 students (13% equivalently) who hold a neutral position, and just two students out of 100 disagree.

According to the results of the third point of view, nearly half the students are convinced that learning from YouTube English channels is more effective than the traditional method. The number of students who agree ranked second with 32%. Only 4 students or 4% disagree, and 0% say strongly disagree.

Seeing the fourth statement, it is noticed that more than a third of students (35%) strongly agree with the confirmation that learning from YouTube English channels gives them self-paced learning. One fifth of the students (20%) show their approval with this viewpoint. Nearly half students stay neutral on this scale (45%) and only 10% disagree with this standpoint.

As seen from the chart, we can say that 58 students out of 100 (58%) show their strong approval that learning from YouTube English channels helps them stay focused on specific skills or concepts. Furthermore, 16% of the students agree with this standpoint, while just 18% are fair-minded with this learning activity.

Looking at the next view, more than half students strongly agree with the statement that learning from YouTube English channels offers them real-time and contextualised language. At the same time, 16% express their agreement. There is only a small number of students (10%) indicating their disagreement. 18% of the students have an objective observation on this issue.

This statistic is seen the same as in statement number 8, when 55% of the learners choose strongly agree and 14% say agree with the assertion that learning from YouTube English channels assists them to share a common community. Only 13% disagree, and nearly 20% stand in the middle of thought.

Having a look at the ninth viewpoint, approximately one third of students strongly agree and agree with the idea that learning from YouTube English channels equips them with both linguistic and cultural knowledge. These numbers are 30% and 31% respectively. 23% holding the neutral consideration, and only 6% disagree with this way of thinking

As stated in the last viewpoint, when being asked if learning from YouTube English channels develops the learners' creativity and imagination, 26 out of 100 students (26%) say that their creativity has been strongly improved. Surprisingly, 50% of the students confirm that English channels are indeed effective in upgrading their imagination. 20 students out of 100 (20%) trust that groupwork activities in speaking skills are very valuable, whereas 07 students (7%) think their speaking abilities are a little progressed.

5. Discussions

From the research results, it can be stated that using YouTube channels has a productive impact on learners' academic progress in terms of vocabulary expansion, pronunciation improvement, developing the 4 skills of language, and enriching cultural awareness.

As seen from students' diaries, more than 80% confirm that their vocabulary source has been widened dramatically by note-taking at least 10 new words after one session of learning. Knowing how to use new words in real context and practical situations helps them memorise the words in the long term. This also avoids them from learning vocabulary in a passive way, which is easy to fade away from their mind. Additionally, new concepts in videos are often visualised in the form of pictures or animation. This provides better help for learners to grasp their meaning and use them correctly.

As for pronunciation improvement, it is widely known that YouTube provides students with access to an unlimited number of native speakers from many parts of the world. They can know how a word is pronounced in different regions. This enables them to have a better mastery of various accents, intonation, and sounds. More importantly, the words are symbolised in characters or visual clues. Students are taught how to place their tongue when they want to pronounce a word accurately. They even listen and repeat the pronunciation over and over until they are fluent in and familiar with it. This skill is indeed effective and trouble-free.

Regarding 4 skills reinforcement, students' listening capacity has been upgraded significantly, and it is regarded as the greatest benefit when applying the technique of learning from YouTube channels. Students have opportunities to approach real-time conversations, speeches, and lessons, and at the same time, they are trained with abundant accents, speeds, and tones. Accordingly, learners' speaking competence has been enhanced as they can mimic models of speech or conversations intentionally. Their pronunciation, speed, and fluency have been boosted, as well. Apparently, most videos on YouTube have subtitles or captions, which lend students a hand in reading along. This is actually helpful for their comprehension and combining the written words with spoken language naturally and

productively. Moreover, after watching a video, students can upload and share their thoughts in the comment section. This is, in fact, beneficial for students' writing skills. They can respond to other people's comments or memorise what they have watched by using the target language.

Concerning cultural awareness enrichment, YouTube videos are viewed as big windows for watchers to open their horizons. Students are taken to different countries, and they can acquire abundant experiences in people's customs, traditions, cultures, and backgrounds. By watching authentic videos from native speakers, learners have a broader understanding of the context where the language is used, then they can know more about the cultural features that are not always presented in the textbooks. What is more, while watching videos, they can meet various people who come from many parts of the world. This provides them with chances for interaction and cultural diversity improvements.

6. Conclusion

With the application of YouTube videos in students' learning a foreign language, it exposes them to positive and notable results. As for non-English major learners who have a limited exposure to authentic English, the YouTube platform can offer them advantages in improving their language proficiency, help them form the habit of self-directed and independent learning. This strategy puts forward a brand-new approach that goes beyond the traditional methodology, which excites the learners and gives them a higher commitment to their learning path.

The research specifies that these YouTube channels have an effective impact on the progress of students in terms of speaking and listening skills. In addition, students have chances to boost their pronunciation, intonation, and fluency through the ways they mimic and shadow the video content. The visual and auditory effects also make their learning become more painless as they can understand grammar structures and vocabulary with ease. Moreover, this technique changes students' moods quite a lot. With vivid images and lively sound, the videos lessen the learners' pressure in learning, giving them the feeling of relaxation and encouragement. They tend to be interested in their study without hesitation or neglect. This is a significant sign.

However, there emerge some drawbacks, as a role of a teacher who turns to be a guide or instructor in this case should give students suggestions and recommendations. Teachers ought to advise students to choose the reliable video quality, have appropriate time management, and worthy distraction control in order to make the YouTube channels valuable supplementary learning sources. This ultimately makes students become professional and confident English users who are excellent in language skills.

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**Sử dụng kênh youtube tiếng Anh để nâng cao việc học tiếng Anh
cho sinh viên không chuyên ngữ tại Trường Đại học Mở Hà Nội**

Tóm tắt: Nghiên cứu này nhằm mục đích sử dụng các kênh YouTube tiếng Anh để cải thiện việc học tiếng Anh cho sinh viên không chuyên ngữ tại trường Đại Học Mở Hà Nội. Dữ liệu được thu thập và xử lý thông qua việc sử dụng nhật ký học tập và bảng hỏi sinh viên. Kết quả cho thấy việc học qua kênh YouTube có thể nâng cao kỹ năng tiếng Anh cho sinh viên một cách đáng kể. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu cho thấy ảnh hưởng tích cực của YouTube đối với động lực, tham gia và trải nghiệm học tập toàn diện cho sinh viên. Ứng dụng của kết quả nghiên cứu này đối với việc dạy và học tiếng Anh rất triển vọng, nhấn mạnh tầm quan trọng của việc sử dụng các kênh YouTube trong chương trình giảng dạy để thúc đẩy sự phát triển ngôn ngữ và kỹ năng giao tiếp hiệu quả.

Từ khóa: Kênh YouTube; nhật ký; bảng hỏi; động lực; phát triển ngôn ngữ.