# MOTIVATION, CONFIDENCE, AND ENGAGEMENT IN YOUTUBE-MEDIATED EFL SPEAKING: INSIGHTS FROM JORDANIAN LEARNERS

## Omar Abdel Rahman Sadeq Aburub[1]*, Manjet Kaur A/P Mehar Singh[2]

[1]School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang, Malaysia
[2]School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Penang, Malaysia

**Corresponding Author:** Omar Abdel Rahman Sadeq Aburub

omaraburub@student.usm.my[1]
manjeet@usm.my[2]

## Author Biographies

Omar Abdel Rahman Sadeq Aburub obtained his Master's degree in English Language and Literature in Jordan and is currently pursuing his PhD in Applied Linguistics at the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

Associate Professor Dr Manjet Kaur A/P Mehar Singh is a faculty member at the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). She obtained her PhD in 2013 from Universiti Sains Malaysia, specialising in academic literacies and international students. She is actively engaged in research and publication and serves on editorial boards of several national and international journals.

### Abstract

This qualitative study explores how Jordanian EFL undergraduates looking to improve their speaking abilities are motivated, confident, and engaged when using YouTube-mediated language learning strategies (LLS). A semi-structured protocol was used to interview twelve participants from a 16-week intervention, emphasising affective, behavioural, and cognitive experiences. The six-phase model proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to analyse the data thematically. Three main themes surfaced: (1) motivation through authentic multimedia input, (2) confidence building via observation and imitation, and (3) engagement through self-regulated practice. The results show that YouTube increases intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and enjoyment by acting as an affective catalyst as well as a language resource. In terms of pedagogy, the study emphasises how crucial it is to incorporate video-based strategy instruction in order to improve students' affective engagement and communicative competence.

**Keywords:** YouTube-mediated learning, motivation, confidence, engagement, language learning strategies, EFL speaking, Jordanian learners.

## 1. Introduction

Speaking is widely recognised as one of the most challenging skills to master for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners (Saed et al., 2021), particularly in contexts where exposure to authentic communication is limited. YouTube, as an interactive and multimedia-rich platform, provides opportunities for learners to observe, imitate, and engage with authentic English input in ways that are both flexible and motivating (Hamad et al., 2019; Saed et al., 2021). In Jordanian universities, however, many students still struggle with anxiety, limited vocabulary, and low self-confidence in oral

communication. YouTube-mediated Language Learning Strategies (LLS) can bridge this gap by providing real-world input and opportunities for strategic practice.

Despite extensive research on technology-assisted language learning, few studies have examined the affective impact of YouTube-mediated instruction on learners' motivation, confidence, and engagement, especially through qualitative inquiry. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how students perceive their learning experiences in a YouTube-integrated strategy training programme.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. RQ1. How do YouTube-mediated LLS influence Jordanian EFL learners' motivation to speak English?
2. RQ2. In what ways do these strategies enhance learners' speaking confidence?
3. RQ3. How does YouTube-mediated strategy instruction promote learner engagement in speaking activities?

## 2. Literature Review

A growing body of literature supports the use of online platforms such as YouTube in promoting EFL speaking skills (Al-Maani et al., 2024; Saed et al., 2021). Learners can imitate real-world examples of discourse structure, intonation, and pronunciation on YouTube. Studies by Wael et al., (2018), shows that YouTube increases students' exposure to natural English and boosts their desire to speak up.

Motivation is essential for language learning to be successful (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). It has an impact on students' perseverance, effort, and communication readiness. Because there are few opportunities for interaction, intrinsic motivation is frequently low in EFL contexts. Because YouTube is authentic and self-paced, it gives students control and autonomy, two things that are associated with increased motivational engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Confidence, also known as self-efficacy, is another affective factor that affects speaking performance according to Bandura & Walters, (1977). When students watch proficient models on YouTube, they get vicarious experiences that bolster their confidence in their fluency. This is consistent with Oxford's (1990) affective and social strategies, which include controlling emotions and interacting with people to improve language learning.

A growing body of research has explored the pedagogical potential of YouTube in developing EFL learners' motivation, confidence, and engagement during speaking activities. Albahlal (2019) investigated 40 Saudi teachers' perceptions of using YouTube to enhance speaking skills and reported that it helps reduce learner anxiety, build vocabulary, and sustain attention. Similarly, Alwehaibi (2015) found that Saudi university students who engaged in YouTube-based discussions exhibited higher enthusiasm, participation, and retention than those taught through conventional materials. In a related study, Kelsen (2009) noted that learners regarded YouTube as an enjoyable and motivating supplement for oral communication courses, while Alhamami et al., (2013) highlighted that YouTube-integrated pronunciation lessons effectively lowered anxiety and improved listening and speaking performance.

Further evidence supports the platform's motivational and affective benefits in diverse contexts. Rahayu & Putri (2018)examined learners' motivation for pronunciation learning through YouTube using self-report questionnaires with 10 participants. Their

findings revealed that YouTube videos motivated learners to enhance pronunciation accuracy and self-confidence. Likewise, Balbay & Kilis (2017) surveyed 70 Turkish undergraduates about their perceptions of YouTube for speaking practice and found that students believed the videos strengthened their presentation skills, vocabulary use, and overall speaking proficiency. In a broader educational perspective, Al Awabdeh et al., (2022) investigated 36 EFL teachers' perceptions of YouTube for improving speaking skills through a mixed-methods design. Results indicated highly positive attitudes, with teachers reporting noticeable gains in learners' motivation, attention, and classroom participation.

Research beyond the Arab world has also emphasised YouTube's capacity to foster self-regulation and sustained engagement. Watkins and Wilkins (2011) argued that YouTube offers authentic input and multimodal context that enhance learners' attention and communicative competence. Rahimi and Katal (2012) observed that digital video platforms encourage self-paced, repeated practice, which promotes learner autonomy and confidence in speaking. Similarly, Zhang (2020) demonstrated that YouTube-based speaking tasks significantly improved Chinese students' motivation, pronunciation accuracy, and attentional engagement. Consistent results were also reported by Sari (2017), who found that Indonesian students participating in YouTube-mediated activities displayed greater enjoyment and interaction than those in traditional lessons.

Within the Jordanian context, Saed et al., (2021) revealed that YouTube-assisted instruction significantly enhanced students' fluency and motivation to speak English. Likewise, Aburub & Singh (2023)found that Jordanian undergraduates who received YouTube-mediated strategy instruction reported notable gains in confidence, vocabulary, and communicative fluency compared with those in the control group. Collectively, these studies confirm that YouTube's authentic, visually rich, and interactive environment effectively lowers affective barriers, fosters motivation and confidence, and sustains engagement in EFL speaking contexts.

According to (John et al., (2021) student engagement refers to the level of interest, drive, or curiosity that students exhibit in their education. This indicates a change from traditional educator-focused models to contemporary, collaborative approaches that prioritise student participation and co-creation in the learning process. YouTube makes the learning process more dynamic by encouraging both cognitive and emotional engagement through multimodal input (videos, images, and comments). However, there is still a dearth of qualitative information regarding how students react emotionally and behaviourally to such learning environments, despite the fact that quantitative research has verified gains in performance. Thus, by examining students' perceptions of motivation, confidence, and engagement in a YouTube-mediated LLS context via a qualitative lens, this study expands on previous research.

## 3. Methodology

In order to document the subjective experiences of students taking part in a YouTube-mediated strategy training program, this study used a qualitative, interpretivist design. Purposively chosen for semi-structured interviews were twelve Jordanian undergraduates from the experimental group of a larger quasi-experimental study. Six open-ended questions about learners' motivation, confidence, and engagement when using YouTube for speaking practice made up the interview guide. Every interview,

which lasted 15- 25 minutes, was audio recorded, transcribed, and, if needed, translated from Arabic to English. The steps of Braun & Clarke (2006) thematic analysis, familiarisation, coding, theme generation, review, definition, and reporting were followed in the data analysis.

Trustworthiness was ensured through member checking, peer debriefing, and maintaining an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical considerations included voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality.

## 4. Findings

Three major themes emerged from the data: motivation through authentic input, confidence through observation, and engagement through self-regulated practice.

Theme 1: Motivation through Authentic and Relevant Input

YouTube was cited by participants as a source of real, entertaining, and pertinent content that rekindled their interest in speaking English. one participant said (S3). "I felt more excited to learn when I watched videos about everyday life, because it looked real and useful," The flexibility to select subjects that matched their interests was valued by students, which maintained their intrinsic motivation.

Theme 2: Confidence through Observation and Imitation

Students highlighted that watching and imitating native speakers helped them pronounce words more clearly and with less anxiety. For example, S7 clarified, "My fear vanished when I listened and practiced many times." In line with Bandura's (1977) theory of vicarious learning, students gained self-efficacy through repeated exposure and imitation.

Theme 3: Engagement through Interactive and Self-Paced Practice

Participants were able to practice speaking at their own pace and review content as needed thanks to YouTube's adaptable environment. S11 stated "I could pause and repeat videos until I understood everything." In order to promote social interaction and long-term engagement, learners also reported talking about the material with their peers.

the three themes collectively demonstrate the powerful influence of YouTube-mediated strategy instruction on learners' motivation, confidence, and engagement. Participants consistently described how the integration of YouTube videos encouraged them to practise speaking more frequently, reduced their fear of mistakes, and fostered enjoyment through authentic and visually rich content.

Overall, the present study provides robust evidence that YouTube-mediated language learning fosters both affective and behavioural engagement among EFL learners. The integration of YouTube videos enhanced learners' intrinsic motivation, reduced anxiety, and increased their confidence to speak English in front of others. These results not only confirm earlier evidence (e.g., Albahlal, 2019; Alwehaibi, 2015; *Saed et al.*, 2021) but also extend it by highlighting that systematic strategy-based YouTube instruction—when aligned with learners' autonomy and interaction—can yield measurable improvements in fluency, pronunciation, and overall communicative competence. Consequently, YouTube can be viewed as a sustainable pedagogical tool that bridges entertainment and education while cultivating motivation, confidence, and active engagement in EFL speaking classrooms.

## 5. Discussion

The results show that by creating a stimulating, anxiety-free environment, YouTube-mediated instruction increases students' affective engagement. According to

Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, exposure to real, contextually rich materials led to motivational gains. Bandura's (1977) theory that observational learning increases self-efficacy through vicarious experience is supported by an increase in confidence. YouTube offers an ideal platform for satisfying these needs: learners can control their pace, select videos that match their interests, and observe authentic models of English use in real contexts. Such learner-centered and visually rich experiences appear to increase intrinsic motivation and lower affective barriers in speaking

The increase in speaking confidence and motivation observed in this study aligns with Albahlal (2019), who found that YouTube reduces anxiety and sustains learners' attention, and with Alwehaibi (2015) and Kelsen (2009), who reported that learners found YouTube-based lessons more enjoyable and motivating than traditional methods. Similarly, Alhamami (2013) confirmed that YouTube-assisted pronunciation lessons reduced anxiety and improved learners' confidence, findings echoed by the current participants' perceptions of improved fluency and pronunciation.

Learners' engagement and self-efficacy in this study also correspond to Balbay and Kilis (2017), who found that Turkish students perceived YouTube as a valuable resource for enhancing presentation and speaking skills, and Rahayu and Putri (2018), who noted that YouTube videos motivated learners to improve pronunciation accuracy and self-confidence. On the teachers' side, Al-Awabdeh et al. (2022) found that instructors perceived YouTube as an effective tool to enhance students' motivation, attention, and classroom participation, results consistent with the present findings.

Comparable outcomes were also observed in other EFL contexts. Zhang (2020) showed that YouTube-based speaking tasks significantly enhanced Chinese learners' motivation and pronunciation accuracy, while Sari (2017) highlighted learners' greater enjoyment and attentional engagement through YouTube-integrated activities. Within Jordan, (Saed et al., 2021; Al-Maa ni et al., 2024) found that YouTube-assisted instruction improved speaking fluency and motivation, and Aburub and Singh (2023) similarly reported substantial gains in confidence, vocabulary, and communicative fluency. Collectively, these findings reinforce that YouTube's authentic, multimodal, and interactive nature creates an optimal learning environment that stimulates motivation, boosts confidence, and promotes sustained engagement in EFL speaking contexts.

## 6. Conclusion and Implications

According to the study's findings, EFL learners' motivation, self-assurance, and participation in speaking assignments are greatly increased by YouTube-mediated strategies. The results highlight the educational benefits of incorporating digital video resources into formal education to produce fun, independent, and stress-free learning opportunities. Teachers can encourage students' affective development in addition to their language proficiency by creating assignments that integrate strategy training with YouTube videos. Future studies should investigate long-term effects on fluency development and expand these findings to other language skills.

**References**

Aburub, O. A. R. S., & Singh, M. K. M. (2023). *LLS Language Learning Strategies Used by Jordanian Undergraduates to Improve Their EFL Speaking Skills*.

Al-Maani, A., AlAbabneh, B., Mashaqba, B., & Huneety, A. (2024). Investigating

Second Language Learning Strategies using Think Aloud Protocols: Evidence from Jordanian EFL Learners. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *10*(2), 12–22.

Al Awabdeh, A., Albashtawi, A. H., & Abdo, I. B. (2022). The Use of YouTube in Enhancing Speaking proficiency Among Jordanian EFL Students. *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*, *6*(1), 444–456.

Albahlal, F. S. (2019). The impact of YouTube on improving secondary school students' speaking skills: English language teachers' perspectives. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, *6*(2), 1–17.

Alhamami, M., & others. (2013). Observation of YouTube language learning videos. *Teaching English with Technology*, *13*(3), 3–17.

Alwehaibi, O. H. (2015). The Impact Of Using YouTube In EFL Classroom On Enhancing. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning*, *12*(2), 121–126. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1061416.pdf

Balbay, S., & Kilis, S. (2017). Students' Perceptions of the use of a YouTube channel specifically designed for an Academic Speaking Skills Course. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *3*(2), 235–251.

Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory vol. 1: Prenticehall Englewood Cliffs*. NJ.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101.

Cheng, H.-F., & Dörnyei, Z. (2007). The use of motivational strategies in language instruction: The case of EFL teaching in Taiwan. *International Journal of Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching*, *1*(1), 153–174.

Hamad, M. M., Metwally, A. A., & Alfaruque, S. Y. (2019). The Impact of Using YouTubes and Audio Tracks Imitation YATI on Improving Speaking Skills of EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(6), 191–198.

John, E., Rangasamy, D., Indiran, D., Rita, E., Adickalam, S. K., & Hashim, H. (2021). *Language Learning Strategies Used by Form 4 Esl Learners to Develop Speaking Skills*.

Kelsen, B. (2009). Teaching EFL through YouTube: Authentic video motivation. *English Language Teaching, 2*(3), 49–56.*

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry. Newberry Park*.

Rahayu, S. P., & Putri, W. S. (2018). Uploading speaking assignment to YouTube channel as an effort in increasing student's pronunciation skill. *EnJourMe (English Journal of Merdeka): Culture, Language, and Teaching of English*, *3*(2), 35–45.

Rahimi, M., & Katal, M. (2012). The role of metacognitive listening strategies awareness and podcast-use readiness in using podcast-mediated language learning programs. *Educational Technology & Society, 15*(3), 96–109.*

Saed, H. A., Haider, A. S., Al-Salman, S., & Hussein, R. F. (2021). The use of YouTube in developing the speaking skills of Jordanian EFL university students. *Heliyon*, *7*(7), e07543. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07543

Sari, F. M. (2017). Exploring YouTube video in teaching listening. *Indonesian EFL Journal, 3*(2), 165–175.*

Siemens, G. (2005). Connectivism: A learning theory for the digital age. International Journal of Instructional Technology and Distance Learning. *Online] Retrieved from:*

*Http://Www. Idtl. Org/Journal/Jam \_05/Article01. Html.*

Wael, A., Asnur, M. N. A., & Ibrahim, I. (2018). Exploring Students' Learning Strategies in Speaking Performance. *International Journal of Language Education*, *2*(1), 65–71.

Watkins, J., & Wilkins, M. (2011). Using YouTube in the EFL classroom. *Language Education in Asia, 2*(1), 113–119.*

Zhang, X. (2020). The effect of YouTube-based speaking tasks on Chinese EFL learners' motivation and pronunciation accuracy. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning, 15*(7), 200–210.