

LEARNERS' ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING ENGLISH VIA YOUTUBE

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Received : August 7, 2025

Accepted : December 25, 2025

Revised : December 22, 2025

Published : December 31, 2025

How to Cite (in APA Style) :

Setiawati, Babaroza, M., Anggraini, Y., & Sari, I. P. (2025). Learners' engagement in learning English via Youtube. *Pioneer: Journal of Language and Literature*, 17(2), 238-252. <https://doi.org/10.36841/pioneer.v17i2.7023>

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Abstract: The learners of MA Hubbulwathan Duri were diligently clicking and commenting on videos, yet they often failed to take notes or practice the material being taught. Learners were entertained (due to engaging audiovisuals), but this enjoyment does not always translate into a deep understanding of English concepts. Some learners struggled to filter out linguistically accurate content among the abundance of available videos. This research aimed to find out learners' engagement in English learning via YouTube. This research used a survey research design. The data analysis technique used was descriptive. The population of this research was the tenth grade of MA Hubbulwathan Duri. A census study was used as the sampling technique in this research. The sample consisted of 29 respondents, and the research instrument was questionnaires. The findings revealed that learners' engagement in learning English via YouTube at MA Hubbulwathan Duri was categorized as High across all measured dimensions. YouTube can capture learners' focus and mental attention. YouTube successfully encouraged learners to move beyond the stage of simply 'hearing' (input) to the stage of 'trying to produce' (output). The learners were working hard to connect what they already know with new information from YouTube. YouTube serves as a powerful media for English language learning.

Keywords: learners' engagement, learning English, YouTube

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has fundamentally changed the way we learn and teach. This change is marked by the increasingly deep integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into the educational process. In English language learning, ICT, including platforms like YouTube, radio, television, and other mobile learning platforms, has proven to be preferred by the majority of students, especially when learning English (Dewi, 2017). In the past, the main learning resources were limited to textbooks and lectures given by teachers; now, many digital devices and platforms have opened up many learning opportunities that were previously unthinkable. This change is not just about using new devices; it also refers to fundamental changes in the roles of teachers, learners, and the accessibility of information and knowledge.

Practically, the teacher can access the new device by connecting to the internet. Advanced technology in school enhances learning through digital media and internet use (Sari, 2020). It refers to various hardware and software devices integrated into the teaching and learning process. Tablets, laptops, wireless projectors, or even smartphones are usually used for educational purposes. Without the internet, many devices only function as limited offline tools. With the internet, teachers can access online resources (such as journals, articles, and learning videos). Internet access allows teachers to utilize the full potential of available technology. Internet access is a practical prerequisite that enables teachers to use the latest technology, which in turn improves the quality of learning through the use of interactive digital content.

Interactive digital content stimulates students' curiosity and their desire to explore further. Interactive learning involves students actively participating, rather than simply listening. They feel more engaged in the material. High engagement is a key prerequisite for motivating students to learn. The material is delivered with audiovisuals (high quality), and the class makes it easier for students to understand. They feel competent and able to complete the task, which is a strong motivator based on the Self-Determination Theory (Bouffard, 2017).

Furthermore, the ability for learners to use English-related apps on their phones is an additional advantage (Van et al., 2021). Apps enable students to learn outside of formal classroom hours, transforming free time into learning opportunities. Additional

benefits of mobile apps include creating a sustainable and personalized learning ecosystem outside of the classroom, maximizing practice time, and providing a fun and adaptive environment, all of which accelerate English language acquisition.

Among the various digital platforms and applications that already exist, one of them is YouTube. YouTube is one application that can be used in the learning process. Initially designed as a video-sharing site for entertainment, from music videos to comedy and lifestyle content, YouTube quickly evolved into a source of countless information. Now, the platform has touched the education sector by providing a variety of instructional and educational content that can be accessed by anyone, anytime, and anywhere. The presence of YouTube has enriched the learning approach, presenting dynamic visual and audio elements that are difficult to achieve in a traditional classroom context. The educational videos were uploaded on YouTube as assignment material or instructional materials. The teacher produced and disseminated the original video, which was made with the learning purpose of the specific subjects in mind, to clarify pertinent content for each class (Ahmad et al., 2022).

YouTube is used in the English learning process as a media. English learning is often considered difficult by many learners, especially in terms of motivation and opportunities for real-world practice outside the classroom environment. Conventional teaching methods are sometimes ineffective in arousing learners' interest or providing experiences that are relevant to everyday life situations. In this case, YouTube emerges as an interesting option, providing an immersive and interactive learning experience that can connect elements of classroom learning with everyday language applications. The use of YouTube can support learners' engagement (Roodt & Peier, 2013). YouTube and other Web 2.0 technologies in the classroom are innovative and fresh methods of teaching (Roodt & Villiers, 2011), and these tools can enrich course content and improve student engagement (Harris, 2011).

By presenting dynamic visual and audio elements from YouTube, it will give new enthusiasm and energy in the learning process. It is the foundation on which meaningful learning can be built, as actively engaged learners tend to demonstrate higher motivation and a willingness to put in extra effort in their studies. Learner engagement refers to their active participation in various school activities, both curricular and non-curricular. It also encompasses their dedication and commitment to

achieving learning goals. According to Fredricks and McColskey (2012), Engagement consists of three theoretically distinct but closely interrelated dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioral Engagement refers to learners' participation in various learning activities. The examples of this behavior include attendance, active participation, adherence to rules, and completion of assignments. Emotional Engagement relates to learners' sense of belonging and their perception of fairness toward others in the school environment. Cognitive Engagement is defined as students' level of interest and intentionality in the learning process. This article involves a lot of cognitive involvement, from mastering the subject to active questions to abstract concepts. It is believed by Fredricks and McColskey (2012), EFL learners' engagement represented behaviour, emotion, involvement, and cognitive engagement. Learners' engagement is a crucial factor in successful learning (Suharti et al., 2021).

YouTube is no longer just an entertainment platform; it has become one of the most popular learning resources among learners. YouTube has transformed from a mere entertainment platform into a highly popular learning resource among learners. Access to English-language content on YouTube is easy and diverse (from grammar tutorials to native speaker vlogs), allowing for more personalized and enjoyable learning. Several phenomena emerged at MA Hubbulwathan Duri when the learners were in learning process. Learners were diligently clicking and commenting on videos and commenting, yet they often failed to take notes or practice the material being taught. Learners were entertained (due to engaging audiovisuals), but this enjoyment did not always translate into a deep understanding of English concepts. Some learners struggled to filter out linguistically accurate content among the abundance of videos available.

On the other hand, access to English-language content on YouTube is easy. Learners can choose from a wide variety of content based on their interests, from grammar tutorial videos and native speakers' vlogs to movie reviews and inspirational talk shows. This diversity allows learners to learn English in a more personalized and enjoyable way. These phenomena are the background to the importance of this research, to understand more deeply how learners are involved in the process of learning English through YouTube. Therefore, this research takes a position to describe learners' engagement in learning English through the YouTube platform. This research aims to find out learners' engagement in English learning via YouTube.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Learners' Engagement

Learners' engagement refers to a multi-layered concept that goes beyond just physical presence in the classroom. It is a complex aspect that reflects how actively learners are engaged in their learning. To truly understand learners' engagement, it is important to explore three key interrelated dimensions: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Bundick, 2014). These three dimensions provide a holistic picture of the extent to which a learner is engaged in their education.

The behavioral dimension of learners' engagement includes actions and participation that can be seen. This includes aspects such as school attendance, involvement in class discussions, completion of assignments and homework, and showing initiative in the learning process. When learners are behaviorally engaged, they are physically present and actively participating in activities designed to support learning. It also includes the following rules: displaying positive behavior toward others and overall showing dedication to the learning environment.

The emotional aspect of learners' engagement focuses on learners' affective reactions to school, teachers, peers, and the learning process itself. Emotional engagement can be characterized by positive feelings such as interest, enthusiasm, curiosity, and ownership. Conversely, a lack of emotional engagement can be seen as boredom, anxiety, frustration, or even indifference. Learners who feel emotionally engaged feel connected to the learning environment, feel rewarded, and are motivated to learn from within themselves.

Finally, the cognitive dimension of student engagement relates to how much learners mentally invest themselves in understanding and mastering the material. It includes the application of deeper learning strategies, such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information, as well as the ability to solve problems and think critically. Cognitively engaged learners not only memorize facts but also strive to understand concepts, make connections, and apply knowledge in diverse contexts. Cognitive engagement also reflects learners' willingness to take on intellectual challenges and persistence in completing difficult tasks.

These three dimensions can be described; the dimension of behavioral involvement can be interpreted as the level of student compliance with school

regulations, in addition to their participation in learning activities in class and activities outside of class. Engagement refers to a learner's experience, feelings, attitudes, and views of education, particularly his or her sense of belonging, interest, eagerness to study, and overall liking of school. Cognitive engagement is the cognitive function engaged in a learner's learning process (Kusumayanthi & Rusmiyati, 2021). These three types of engagement are interrelated and form a holistic description of how deeply and effectively learners participate in learning.

Thus, these dimensions provide a comprehensive analysis for research to determine the extent of student engagement in learning English via YouTube. YouTube not only makes students happier (emotional), but also more active in tasks (behavioral), and more in-depth in their thinking (cognitive) when learning English.

YouTube

Technology is now widely used for learning English because it has proven effective and allows easier access to knowledge. Due to its practicality (usability), students routinely use various devices such as learning apps, smartphones, and tablets (Van et al., 2021). One of the technologies that can be used in learning English is YouTube. YouTube can serve as an effective and useful tool for improving various aspects of foreign language proficiency. YouTube can improve pronunciation, listening, and conversational abilities both inside and outside of the classroom. YouTube videos can also be used as realia to encourage the formation of authentic vocabulary, improve exposure to World English, and stimulate cultural learning. YouTube videos can even serve as the basis for writing and reading exercises. Lessons and activities that take place in class will be covered in depth, as will assignments and projects that call for the usage of streaming videos (Watkins & Wilkins, 2011). YouTube has evolved from just an entertainment platform, it is a tremendous educational resource for teaching and learning foreign languages. With millions of videos available, YouTube offers a multidimensional approach that can complement traditional teaching methods.

Videos have been presented on YouTube, and these videos have been uploaded by native speakers to serve as models for accurate pronunciation. Learners can listen to the correct intonation, rhythm, and stress and then imitate them. Many educational channels specifically focus on pronouncing specific sounds or distinguishing between similar sounds, which is very helpful in improving pronunciation clarity. When

multimodal elements such as lyrics and rhythm are presented, they actively engage the learner's cognition. These elements serve as mnemonic devices that are very helpful in improving vocabulary recall and pronunciation (Feng & Guo, 2025). Then, exposure to different accents and speaking styles through YouTube videos is crucial. Learners can listen to everyday conversations, news stories, interviews, or even speeches. This trains their ears to understand spoken language at varying speeds and contexts, significantly strengthening their listening skills. Although YouTube is a one-way medium, videos can be a catalyst for conversation. This creates an opportunity for learners to practice their speaking skills interactively.

METHOD

The research approach was a quantitative approach. The design was used in this research by using a survey research design. To obtain a quantitative picture of the views, attitudes, or trends of a population, a survey design is carried out by collecting and analyzing numerical data from a representation (sample) of that population (Creswell, 2009). The population of this research was the tenth grade of MA Hubbulwathan Duri. Sampling technique was used in this research by using a census study. In survey research, it is possible to study everyone in the population because the group is small and easy to find. This kind of survey is sometimes called a census study, and it allows researchers to make conclusions about the whole population (Cresswell, 2012). Thus, the member of the tenth grade of MA Hubbulwathan Duri was to be a sample in this research. The sample consisted of 29 respondents. The data collection technique used in this research was a non-test, which was implemented through the use of a questionnaire as a research instrument. Questionnaires were made based on the indicators: behavior, emotional/affective, and cognitive (Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Bundick, 2014). The researcher shared the questionnaires by using Google Forms to collect the data. The questionnaires were shared with 29 respondents. The data was taken on December 5th, 2024. The respondents filled in the questionnaires. All of the respondents answered the questionnaires by using Google Forms on their smartphones. The data analysis technique used was descriptive.

To ensure the validity of the data, the author first conducted a pilot test of the questionnaire by distributing it to learners in one class via Google Forms. This aimed to

determine the reliability and validity of the research instrument. The research was conducted to assess the validity and reliability based on the questionnaires shared with the respondents. The total number of respondents to examine the validity and reliability tests was 22.

Table 1. Validity Test

| Items | Q1 (Behavior) | Q2 (Emotional) | Q3 (Cognitive) | Total |
|-------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------|
| | 4 | 4 | 5 | 13 |
| | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| | 4 | 3 | 5 | 12 |
| | 5 | 3 | 5 | 13 |
| | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| | 3 | 3 | 5 | 11 |
| | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| | 3 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| | 4 | 3 | 4 | 11 |
| | 4 | 5 | 4 | 13 |
| | 4 | 4 | 4 | 12 |
| | 4 | 3 | 5 | 12 |
| | 1 | 3 | 5 | 9 |
| | 3 | 4 | 4 | 11 |
| | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 |
| | 3 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| | 3 | 3 | 3 | 9 |
| | 3 | 5 | 4 | 12 |
| | 4 | 5 | 5 | 14 |
| | 4 | 5 | 5 | 14 |
| R- account | 0,631 | 0,767 | 0,747 | |
| R- table | 0.4227 | 0.4227 | 0.4227 | |
| Information | Valid | Valid | Valid | |

Based on the data in Table 1, R-account > R-table showed that the data were valid. All of the questionnaires could be shared with all respondents.

Table 2. Reliability Test

| | Q1 (Behavior) | Q2 (Emotional) | Q3 (Cognitive) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Variants | 0,611 | 0,886 | 0,663 |
| Number of variants | 2,954 | | |
| Variants Total | 3,330 | | |
| Cronbach Alpha | 0,760 | | |
| Information | Reliability | | |

Table 2 shows Cronbach's alpha value $0.760 > 0.70$. It showed the test was reliable. Cronbach's alpha values range from 0 to 1. The closer it was to 1, the higher reliability. The data had been valid and reliable. The researcher could share the questionnaires to the respondents.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The objective of this research was to find out learners' engagement in learning English via YouTube. Engagement has three indicators, namely: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive. The questionnaires were shared and consist of: I often take notes or try to repeat information that I learn from YouTube videos to deepen my understanding. (Q1); I feel very involved when watching an English video on YouTube. (Q2); When watching an English Video on YouTube, I focus completely on the material being taught. (Q3)

Table 3. Percentage of Respondents' Response

| | Q1 (Behavior) | Q2 (Emotional) | Q3 (Cognitive) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Percentages | 70% | 72% | 82% |
| Mean | 3,5 | 3,6 | 4,1 |
| Standard Deviation | 0,89 | 0,89 | 0,80 |
| Respondents = 29 | | | |

Based on Table 3, learners' engagement in the learning English via YouTube at MA Hubbulwathan Duri involved behavior and emotion in the learning process. Behavior had 70% in the high category, a mean of 3.5, and a standard deviation of 0.89. This indicates that the majority of learners at MA Hubbulwathan Duri did not just passively watch videos, but took real physical actions (observable actions) to support their learning process. Learners recorded information from YouTube into written form.

It showed an intention to retain information permanently. Learners also did independent repetition. In the English context, it was very crucial for practicing pronunciation and intonation. The act of ‘noting’ and ‘repeating information’ were early form of language production (output). By attempting to repeat information, learners became aware of the gap between what they heard on YouTube and what they could actually say. The 70% figure indicates that YouTube successfully encouraged learners to move beyond the stage of simply ‘hearing’ (input) to the stage of ‘trying to produce’ (output).

Table 4. Percentage Categories

| Percentage Interval Scale | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Minimal percentage 20% | |
| Maximal percentage 100% | |
| Percentage Range | Scales |
| 0 – 20% | Very low |
| 21% - 40% | Low |
| 41% - 60% | Moderate |
| 61% - 80% | High |
| 81% - 100% | Very High |

Most learners (72%), with a mean of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.89, showed experienced positive emotional engagement. It means that the average learner of MA Hubbulwathan Duri had a positive perception and felt a strong emotional attachment when learning through YouTube. The majority of learners felt emotionally engaged. They did not just watch, but felt ‘entered’ into the content. Most learners had relatively similar feelings of engagement. This finding indicated that the majority of learners at MA Hubbulwathan Duri experience positive feelings and interest when learning English via YouTube. Emotional engagement (3.6) emerged as the most dominant type of engagement in this research.

Cognitive 82%, a mean of 4.1, and a standard deviation of 0.8, which showed that learners of MA Hubbulwathan Duri had a strong level of concentration and mentality when learning through YouTube. They gave full focus to the material. Almost all learners agreed that they were completely focused while watching. Learning process occurred when learners actively processed information from YouTube. High levels of focus indicated that learners were working hard to connect what they already know with new information from YouTube. This high level of concentration allowed learners to perform the necessary mental processing before producing output (such as taking notes or speaking).

Discussion

The result showed that all three dimensions of engagement at MA Hubbulwathan Duri were in the “High” category. However, a critical synthesis of the data reveals that Cognitive Engagement is the most dominant factor (82%, a mean of 4.1). This indicates a strong mental investment and focus, which aligns with Vygotsky (1978). Social Constructivism, where learners actively mediate their thoughts to internalize new information. In contrast, Behavioral Engagement is identified as the weakest dimension (70%, a mean of 3.5). While still categorized as high, the lower percentage compared to cognitive engagement suggests that learners’ intense mental focus does not always translate into physical actions or language production, such as taking notes or repeating information. Then, actively interacting in the comments section demonstrates the use of the platform as a social space for practice and discussion, not just as a one-way source of information. Applying what was learned, internalizing the knowledge, and using it in real life is the strongest evidence of mastery of the material. While learners’ behavioral engagement in YouTube learning is quite high, there is a need to encourage more learners to become active and proactive learners. This finding highlights a minor gap in the Output Hypothesis (Swain, 1985), suggesting that while the ‘noticing’ (cognitive) phase is very strong, the ‘production’ (behavioral) phase is slightly less frequent among the learners.

The disparity between cognitive (82%) and behavioral engagement (70%) indicates that while YouTube effectively facilitates the internalization process, it does not automatically guarantee a high level of language output. The data suggest that learners at MA Hubbulwathan Duri are at the ‘noticing’ stage, where their mental focus is sharp, but more pedagogical intervention is needed to convert this mental energy into productive behavioral actions.

Most learners (72%), with a mean of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.89, showed experienced positive emotional engagement. Positive emotional engagement showed a positive emotional response when learning English via YouTube. This emotional engagement includes interest and enthusiasm, positive feelings, not feeling bored, and feeling connected. Learning English via YouTube can evoke positive feelings in learners, which makes them motivated and enjoy the learning process. YouTube is not only a tool for conveying information, but also an effective means of

building learners' intrinsic motivation. When learners enjoy the learning process and feel emotionally connected, they tend to be more engaged, persistent, and have better learning outcomes. The data found highlights the importance of emotional and attitudinal factors in the language learning process, while also demonstrating YouTube's potential as a digital tool capable of helping learners achieve their learning goals.

This engagement does not just mean they are watching or listening, they are also engaging in higher-order thinking processes. First, understanding and processing information well. Learners do not just passively receive information, they also process it. This indicates that the material in the video is presented in an effective and digestible manner. Second, critical thinking. Learners can analyze information, not just receive it. This is a higher-order thinking skill that is crucial in learning. Connecting new material with existing knowledge, learners do not view new material as isolated information. They can integrate it with what they already know, which is a sign of effective and deep learning. Third, active action. Actions such as taking notes, summarizing, or attempting exercises are clear evidence of metacognition. Learners are aware of their learning process and take steps to strengthen their understanding. YouTube can create conditions where learners are not only physically engaged, but also mentally and cognitively engaged.

In previous research, first, there are similarities between the findings of this study and those of Pratiwi & Priyana (2022). Both showed that English language learners exerted high levels of effort to stay engaged (remain engaged) in digital learning environments. However, this study found a more specific level of cognitive engagement (82%) through YouTube. Second, the high level of cognitive engagement in this study (mean of 4.1) provides empirical support for Yilmaz et al. (2022). Yilmaz emphasized the importance of metacognitive feedback in enhancing engagement. In the context of YouTube, features such as duration control, re-watching, and recommendations for similar content appear to function as 'self-feedback' that triggers deeper cognitive engagement among learners than mere behavioral interactions.

Third, there is a stark contrast between the findings of this study and the concerns raised by Archambault et al. (2009). While Archambault found a decline in motivation and behavior (behavioral decline) in one-third of high school adolescents,

the data in this study actually show the opposite: 70% of learners showed high behavioral engagement when learning via YouTube. This indicates that the contextual and engaging nature of YouTube may be a solution to mitigate the loss of enthusiasm identified in Archambault's study.

Previous studies focused on strategies and factors influencing engagement in general, both in interactive and conventional learning contexts. They identified positive feedback and intrinsic motivation. Meanwhile, this research was more specific, analyzing one learning medium, YouTube. This study not only measured engagement levels but also divided them into three dimensions (emotional, behavioral, and cognitive) to identify YouTube's strengths and weaknesses as an educational tool. The study concluded that YouTube successfully stimulated cognitive aspects, but still has great potential to explore emotional and behavioral aspects.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The research concluded that learners' engagement in learning English via YouTube at MA Hubbulwathan Duri is categorized as High across all measured dimensions. The research explicitly indicated that Cognitive Engagement is the most dominant type of engagement. This proved that YouTube can capture learners' focus and mental. Following this is Emotional Engagement, indicating a strong connection and interest in the video content. Finally, Behavioral Engagement is identified as the weakest dimension. While still high, it suggests that learners are slightly less likely to perform physical learning actions such as taking notes or repeating information compared to their level of mental focus.

In summary, YouTube serves as a powerful media for English language learning at MA Hubbulwathan Duri, primarily by securing learners' attention and emotional interest. Future pedagogical strategies should focus on bridging the gap between high cognitive focus and active behavioral output to ensure a more balanced and productive learning experience.

Suggestions

YouTube could stimulate the cognitive aspects of learners, but there is still room to increase emotional and behavioral engagement. Based on the findings, it is suggested

that English teachers at MA Hubbulwathan Duri should introduce more ‘Output-oriented’ tasks to balance the high cognitive focus with behavioral actions. Learners need more opportunities to produce language after watching videos. Furthermore, for future researchers, it is recommended to investigate the underlying factors that cause the slight disparity between mental focus and physical learning behaviors in digital environments.

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