



Moroccan EFL Students' Use of YouTube and the Development of Speaking Skills

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Abstract

The study delineated in this article analyzed the impact of YouTube on the development of students' speaking skills in the department of English at Moroccan universities. This qualitative correlational research investigated the role of students' use of YouTube in the progress of their speaking capacities. The data was collected online using a questionnaire on Google forms since this study coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic lock-down. The results revealed a determining role that YouTube plays, as the most effective and reliable platform for self-instruction, in developing the English speaking skills of Moroccan EFL students. It also demonstrated the type of use that students prefer to access YouTube for, the big influence of using YouTube on the development of the speaking capacity, and an agreed upon assumption that it is a platform, which has more positive features than negative ones. The findings of this study came up with implications for different actors in the domain of language education in Morocco and the world.

Keywords: Speaking capacity, speaking skills, social media, YouTube

1. Introduction

Speaking is the most focal language skill in life. It is the automatic production of one's ideas and thoughts. For a language acquirer, speaking is all what an individual acquires from his immediate environment. However, for a language learner, speaking is the output of the individual's intake resulting from what he or she learns in informal settings. Nowadays, mobile technology has intersected language learning and acquisition through platforms rich in language content.

For the time being, mobile technology is in progress causing the whole universe to mutate. It has been playing a significant role and can be employed for different objectives in daily life, especially in the two last decades. In language education, language learners use their smartphones and computers to look for different information on the World Wide Web (www), which is recognized as the internet ("World Wide Web", 2019, para. 1). Students can make use of different learning platforms for learning English like YouTube, which is one of the most influencing mobile technology platforms. It is effectively contributing to the development of students' English speaking skills (Balbay and Kilis, 2017, p. 236). Also, it is one of the most prevalent sharing platforms and the second metasearch engine after Google search. YouTube is a video participating platform that makes users keep an eye on the videos posted by other users and upload videos of their own (Routley, 2020, para 1). Besides, YouTube videos are published by people all over the world and from all types of backgrounds. This guarantees a wider variety of input that any user can freely access, watch, and download ("Why people turn to YouTube?", 2017, para. 2).

As a way of constructing a theoretical framework for this study, this piece of research considered Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory to language development (cited in Mcleod, 2018, para. 1). His theory states that the environment of the learner is the only determiner in the development of his/her language skills, including speaking. However, today's environment is poorly investigated vis-à-vis the impact it may have on language learning. In this context, today's environment is almost technological and it is, in a way or another, affecting the language skills of learners.

This study investigated the impact of YouTube, as a rich environmental factor, on the speaking skills of students of S2 and S4 in the English department at Sidi Mohamed Ibn Abdellah University of Fez, Ibn Tofail University of Kenitra, and Moulay Ismail University of Meknes. It aimed at shedding light on the different roles that YouTube plays in developing the speaking abilities of the English department students.

Today, it is needless to say that social media in general and YouTube in particular have become key determiners of education including languages. It goes without saying that students are surrounded by a rich environment that can provide them with all sorts of language input. If a simple comparison between the past and present is applied, the student in the past will stand in total contrast to the student of today in terms of availability of information and degree of accessibility to knowledge.

At present, students have an unlimited number of sources of information only by a simple click on their computers or a slight touch on their smartphones. Before, lots of studies and observations tackled how external factors from within the environment of the learner affect the development of language skills, most notably Vygotsky who believed that the environment of the learner is the key element in developing his linguistic skills (cited in Shi, 2019, p. 1059).

With a similar assumption, this study aims to investigate the impact of YouTube, as a rich environmental factor, on the speaking skills of students of S2 and S4 in the departments of English at Sidi Mohamed Ibn Abdellah University of Fez, Ibn Tofail University of Kenitra, and Moulay Ismail University of Meknes. It aims at shedding light on the different roles that

YouTube can play in developing the speaking abilities of the English department students. The study assumes that accessing YouTube can help Moroccan English department students develop their speaking skills.

In this regard, the study aims to answer the following questions:

- To what extent do students use YouTube to develop their speaking skills?
- Why do students resort to YouTube?
- Does YouTube help learners develop their speaking capacity?
- Do students use YouTube for educational or non-educational purposes?
- Is YouTube a helping tool or a coin with a concealed negative facet?

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Definition of Speaking

Speaking was defined by Chaney as *"the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts"* (cited in Nuraini, 2016, p. 13). It is one of the four language skills besides listening, reading and writing and is considered to be the mother of the language skills. According to Nunan (1997) *"being able to claim knowledge of a second language means being able to speak and write that language"*. In this realm, Nunan sees speaking as the capability to transmit knowledge in a second language through oral expression.

2.1.1. Speaking as a Capability

Speaking is the natural capability that makes humans superior and different from other creatures. It is a linguistic and a cognitive skill that is naturally acquired through interaction with people within the same environment ("All about Speaking as a Communicative Skill", n.d., para. 2). The skill of speaking, however, does not have the same degree of complexity or does not always require abundant efforts. In other words, everyone can speak his mother tongue without the minimum of exertion, whereas speaking in a foreign language needs a lot of efforts and a whole process of learning phases ("All about Speaking as a Communicative Skill", n.d., para. 2).

According to Brown and Burns & Joyce, speaking is a process of interaction and construction of meanings that integrates production, reception and information processing (cited in Ann & Florez, 1999, para. 3). It is a verbal skill, which does not incorporate only words and sounds but connotation, denotation, and grammar as part of meaning. It includes relationships, formality and slang. Moreover, it involves other cultural issues and specificities like class, ethnicity, religion, gender, and dialects. Furthermore, speaking is all about performance, articulation, projection and pronunciation ("All about Speaking as a Communicative Skill", n.d., para. 2). In the same vain, Ann and Flozer (1999) stressed that speaking is not only a matter of producing words, but a good speaker needs to develop two types of complementary competencies: the linguistic competence, which includes grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation; and a sociolinguistic competence that integrates knowledge of what, when, and why to produce language (para. 1).

2.1.2. Speaking Skills

Speaking is a language production skill, which involves other subskills without which the act of speaking cannot occur or occurs inappropriately. Speaking includes four skills. First, fluency, which is about how comfortable and confident a person is while speaking a non-native language. It is also the ability to speak for extended periods by making the right connections between the points that the speaker is trying to make. It integrates cohesion and coherence of your speech so that the listener can follow up what you are saying without getting lost. Second, vocabulary, which is the ability to find the words needed to say what you want to say. Third, grammar, which concerns the ability to make the best use of different parts of speech even if a good speaker does not always have to make a perfect use of the rules of grammar (BINUS University [BU], 2020, para. 1).

The previous definition of speaking skills demonstrated that it is a process that involves a whole set of mechanisms. It is a human production, which goes through a complicated and fast process. According to Bygate, the oral production of a language incorporates four main steps, which he listed as conceptualization, formulation, articulation, and self-monitoring (cited in "Essays", 2018, para. 4). Despite the difference of labels, Bygate meant the same concepts that were previously defined.

In the same direction, Hughes provided a summary of characteristics of speaking that, in a way or another, entail the skills that should be developed by the language speaker. He contrasted speaking and writing skills as aspects of production in the following table:

Speaking	Writing
dynamic	Static
oral/aural	visual/motoric
transient	non- transient
unplanned	Planned
context	
dependent	decontextualized

Table 1. *Linguistic Aspects in the Comparison of Speaking and Writing (Cited in "The speaking skill", 2019, para. 7)*

In the table above, the difference between speaking and writing entails that despite all the similarities between the two skills, each one of them requires a specific set of skills. From the comparison of the two skills, it is easy to locate the subskills of speaking. First, speaking is dynamic, which entails that a speaker has to have a good knowledge of grammar. Second, it is oral, which means that speakers should have acceptable pronunciation skills. Third, it is unplanned, which entails that a speaker should always be equipped with a good vocabulary load that makes him/her able to deal with unplanned situations. Fourth, speaking is transient, which means that the speaker should be fluent to convey the message in the shortest period of time. Hughes also added social aspects to his comparison of productive skills

Speaking	Writing
primary	Secondary
rhetorical	Logical
stigmatized	Prestigious
informal	Formal
inter-personal	Contractual
locus of change	Conservative

Table 2. *Social Aspects in the Comparison of Speaking and Writing (Cited in "The speaking skill", 2019, para. 8)*

Based on the two tables by Hughes, it is obvious that speaking skills do not only include linguistic capabilities but also communicative and social skills without which the act of speaking cannot occur. These skills have become driven by external influencing factors like social media.

2.2. Relationship between social media and speaking skills

A lot of round tables, research groups, debates, and conferences have been discussing the issue of the role that social media has been playing in the mutation of all aspects of life including education. In language education, many studies published findings that demonstrated the relationship between social media and language achievement and development.

Kemp and Conway (2002) stated that *"the information age has seen a recent explosion of technology, which allows millions of people to communicate without ever meeting" (p.1)*. This spread of technology and social media extended to become a pandemic among adolescents whose face-to-face communication has kept declining (cited in Kemp-Conway, 2002, p.6). Such exemplified this by saying that *"we have people finding romance on the internet, but people on trains and buses who do not feel comfortable talking to each other" (cited in Kemp and Conway, 2002, p.6)*. These statements and the like demonstrate how social media redefined ways of communicating and encouraged people to spend a significant part of their time on social media.

In the two last quotations, it was obvious that social media occupy the vast majority of every body's life. This would certainly have effects on the development of language skills among which is speaking. Social media is presented in different formats that provide different language skills. Social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many others were first based on communication and sharing. However, the present updates have made them capable of hosting all forms of display like text, audio, and video, which certainly influence speaking.

Historically speaking, video-format-displays were proven to promote learning. According to Halpern, learning through visual displays helps develop metacognition and improves thinking and learning processes (1998, p.449). At the same time, Namaziandost and Nasri (2019) proclaimed that one of the main problems that all the teachers face is how to develop the speaking skills of their students and make them able to use the language in real contexts and in language classes (p .200). In his study, using social media was proven to remedy issues

regarding speaking since the language they use in class was not helping learners to enhance their speaking performance. Namaziandost and Nasri (2013) confirmed that the twenty-first-century students could not learn how to speak fluently if they simply rely on drills or words learned by heart. However, they stated that *"the overwhelming spread of social media among learners and even teachers proved itself as a successful tool to education"* (p.200). On the other hand, without free speaking contexts that could be provided by social media, learners face four main problem factors. First, Inhibition, which is when students get inhibited while trying to say things in the classroom. Second, the lack of topical knowledge, which means that students do not find what to say about some topics. Third, how or uneven participation, which is the tendency of some learners to dominate others. Fourth, the mother tongue use, which is a frequent issue in the language class (Namaziandost and Nasri, 2019, p.203).

Almoussa added that with social media people, including students, canceled distances, shortened time, and made the world a small screen (cited in Namaziandost and Nasri, 2019, p.203). Social media is viewed as a remedy source for language education. It is flexible, interactive, and entertaining. It also constitutes a vivid environment where learners could express themselves in a confident way (cited in Namaziandost and Nasri, 2019, p.205). Gibbins and Greenhow; Hashemifardnia, Namaziandost, and Sepehri agreed that since social media is part and partial of students' lives and interests, it has become a key factor in developing their communicative speaking skills (cited in Namaziandost and Nasri, 2019, p.205).

The results of a study conducted by Namaziandost and Nasri investigated the relationship between social media and speaking skills and revealed the following results:

Do you use social media ?		
The use	Absolute Frequency	Percentage
Always	82	82 %
Sometimes	16	16 %
Rarely	2	2 %
Never	0	0 %
Question 2. Have you ever used Social mediating for educational purposes? If yes, How?		
The influence	Absolute Frequency	Percentage
A lot	71	71 %
A little	27	21 %
Not at all	0	0 %
I don't know	2	2 %
Question 3. Among the different existing Social media there are, those which can be used in oral communication such as Skype, WhatsApp or Telegram, do you use any of them? If yes which one is your favorite?		
The Social Media	Number	Percentage
Skype	1	1 %
WhatsApp	69	69 %
Telegram	29	29 %
None	1	1 %
Question 4. Which language do you use when doing so?		
The Language Used	Absolute Frequency	Percentage

Mother Tongue	21	21 %
English	78	78 %
Other languages	1	1 %
Question 5. Have you ever used Social media to talk with native speakers of English around the world?		
The use	Number	Percentage
Yes	77	77 %
No	33	33 %
Question 6. To what extent do you think these types of Social media can help to improve students' speaking skills?		
The Influence	Absolute Frequency	Percentage
High	82	82 %
Medium	18	18 %
Low	0	0 %

Table 3. *Students' Answers to the Questionnaire about the Impact of Social Media on Speaking Skills (Namaziandost and Nasri, 2019, p.209)*

According to the table, students' use of different social media platforms was huge. In addition, about 71% use them for educational purposes and most of them use social media for oral communication. The study also confirmed that social media contributed a lot towards the improvement of students' speaking performance.

Based on the literature reviewed, it was plain that a very positive relationship exists between speaking skills and social media, which has become the most appropriate environment for those seeking to develop their ability to speak the target language fluently.

2.3. Students Use of YouTube and Speaking Skills

YouTube is the most accessed audiovisual social media platform over the globe. As reported by surveys and statistical results, this social platform is huge and increasingly attracting users. Furthermore, those users are, in most of the times, YouTubers who contribute to the making of other contents on this platform.

Statistically speaking, YouTube occupies a leading ranking in the world's most accessed websites. The following figure displays the results according to Routley's statistical results:

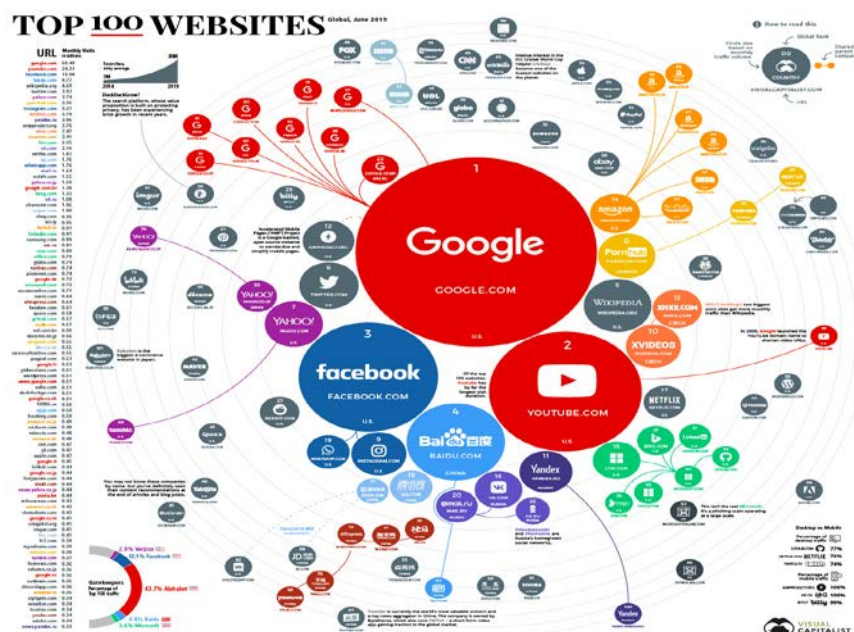


Figure 1. Ranking the top 100 websites in the world (2020, para. 1)

The results, which relied on the official findings of SimilarWeb, demonstrated that the biggest proportion of the population in the world spends its time online. However, the information that attracts the attention is the ranking of YouTube as the second mostly accessed website in the world after Google. This would certainly bring about a possible influence of this platform on the language skill under study.

Along the same line, Balbay and Kilis said, “*online sharing platforms are becoming more pervasive every day, especially in language education*” (2017, p. 236). This plain observation raised many questions regarding the skills of speaking that are influenced by the access to YouTube. According to Styati (2016), in a study comparing the impact of using YouTube videos and pictures on both speaking and writing, students who were taught using YouTube videos did not do well in writing but they were outstanding in speaking (p. 307-317). The reason could be that YouTube is able to accommodate different learning strategies and styles (Balbay & Kilis, 2017, p. 239). Duffy confirmed that YouTube develops speaking skills by giving students the chance to work individually with their own pace and within their social space. He also added that with this platform, students could also enhance other skills like note taking and listening (cited in Balbay & Kilis, 2017, p. 239). Similar results were revealed by Hwang who said that YouTube paves the way for students to develop their listening skills by using different facilities to replay and pause if they need to listen for details or to make sure about the pronunciation of new words (cited in Balbay & Kilis, 2017, p. 239).

All the previous studies, which investigated the relationship between YouTube and speaking skills, were important. However, a game changing comparative study by Kelsen affirmed that using YouTube materials to develop speaking skills of the English department students was beneficial when students were free to work individually at their own pace, choice, and style, but the same students rated YouTube less motivating when content was imposed on them (cited in Balbay & Kilis, 2017, p. 239).

In addition to enhancing listening skills and pronunciation, YouTube was found to be an effective tool to enhance self-confidence, make better use of expressions, intonation, gestures,

use the right vocabulary items, and develop a native-like pronunciation (Meinawati, Rahmah, Harmoko, & Dewi, 2020, p.8). Brown in a study about the impact of using YouTube on speaking skills, announced that in the pre-test and post-test procedures adopted, very positive results on students' fluency, pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary were found after using YouTube in teaching speaking skills (cited in Meinawati, Rahmah, Harmoko, & Dewi, 2020, p.8).

From the literature regarding the relationship between speaking skills and YouTube, it was obvious that this platform plays a fundamental role in enhancing the speaking skills of students. This confirms the assumption that there exist many factors, which direct students towards using YouTube in learning speaking.

2.4. Factors Behind Using YouTube in Learning Speaking

There are many factors behind using YouTube in leaning speaking, which are either for educative reasons or for non-educative reasons. McLuhan listed the factors that direct students towards using internet in general and YouTube specifically in learning speaking. First, accessibility because internet offers tremendous opportunities to experience and use the language without moving from ones desk. Second, flexibility of space and time as students could always choose when and where to learn the language. Third, instant response since students do not have to wait long to get feedback about their queries. Fourth, repeatability because students never get lost or miss information if they can replay or repeat what they are accessing online. Fifth, durability since YouTube and internet in general is always there: 24 hours a day and 7 day a week. Sixth, modality because it is a platform that can offer a variety of opportunities for learning. Last, specificity since it allows students to choose precisely what and how to learn (cited in Lekawael, 2017, p. 257).

The factors that make students use YouTube could be divided into two main types. They do not always use it for educational purposes and they do not even always use it for non-educational purposes. However, both ways direct them to enhance their speaking skills.

2.4.1. Educational factors.

Students use YouTube when they have queries and school tasks. They resort to tutorials and other video types. A new study conducted by the German Council for Cultural Education found that within 800 students 50% of them use YouTube for educational purposes (cited in Schließ , 2019, para. 3). They stated that YouTube *"has become the youth's leading medium and digital cultural hub"* (cited in Schließ , 2019, para. 3). According to the same study:

Students use YouTube to review material they did not properly understand at school. They also find informative videos to help them prepare their homework and exams. YouTube videos giving music, art and drama lessons are also a source of inspiration. (cied in Schließ , 2019, para. 4)

The previous quotation demonstrated how students have become able to direct themselves to using YouTube for educational purposes. The study concluded with implications that encouraged teachers not only to have a better understanding of social media but also urged them to foster self-learning even within their classrooms (cied in Schließ , 2019, para. 4).

According to Reddy, the factors that encourage students to use audiovisual platforms in general are the environment, which students can create for themselves, the freedom of usage, the control over their learning experience, motivation, and the fact of taking into account differences in school levels and in the paces of learning (cited in Kurniawan, 2016, p. 184).

2.4.2. Non-educational factors.

Similarly, to the rest of internet users, students use YouTube for non-educational purposes. In other words, other factors always encourage students to access this platform. However, in the case of language learning and acquisition, using YouTube for non-educational purposes could also enhance speaking skills. According to a survey, which included 1,006 users between the ages of 18-45, the graph that follows shows a detailed description of the factors that lead users to use YouTube:

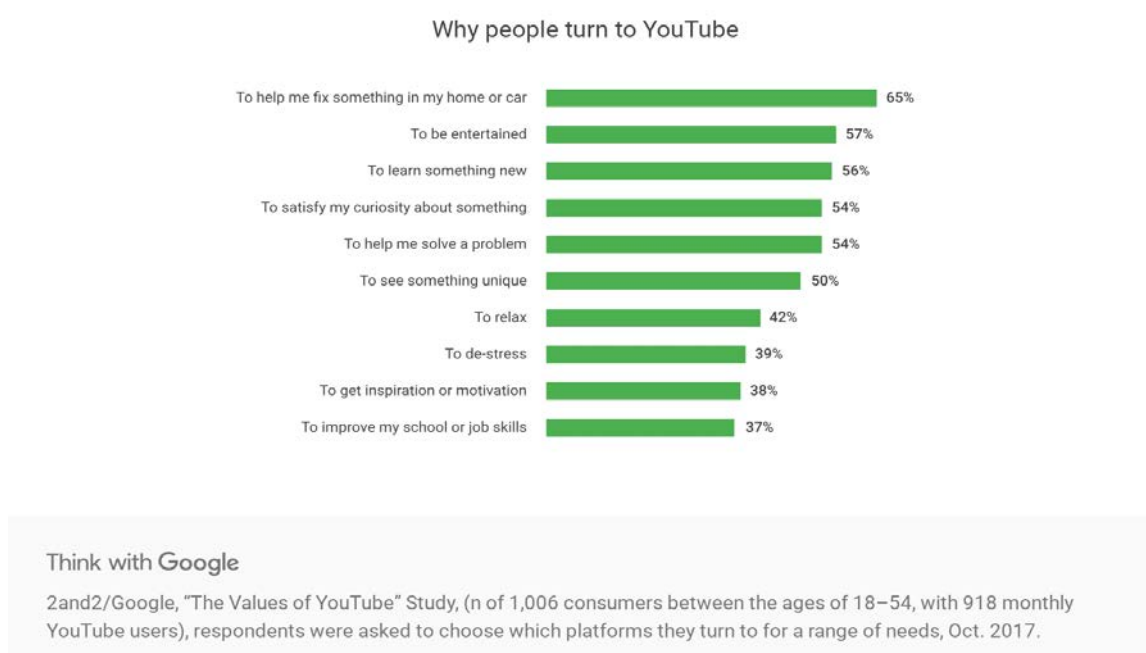


Figure 2. Why people turn to YouTube? ("Why people turn to YouTube?", 2017, para. 1)

The results displayed in the previous figure showed that a significant number of YouTube users, including students, use this platform to get entertained, relax, learn something new, get help from tutorials to fix home or car objects, satisfy curiosity about things, or to de-stress. In this respect, what was proven by previous studies is the impact of using YouTube for non-educational purposes on the enhancement of linguistic skills. Nunan said that listening to the target language is crucial for speaking and that students who are more exposed to the target language input develop their speaking skills better than the ones who are not exposed to the target language (2002, p. 239).

In the same direction, in a study addressing the impact of accessing YouTube on speaking skills, Blogger affirmed that this platform gives learners of English a good opportunity to experience the way native speakers speak through authenticity of the language and the environment (2017, papa. 2).

Overall, the factors behind using YouTube to develop speaking are varied and influencing, and their impact is even more impactful.

2.5. The Impact of Using YouTube on Learning Speaking

A big number of the studies, which investigated the relationship between exposure to language input through YouTube and the development of speaking skills, revealed a relation of causality between the two. However, this relationship does not seem to be always positive. Some studies represented YouTube a distracting platform for learners.

2.5.1. Positive impacts.

Nobody can deny the role that YouTube plays in fostering language education in general and speaking in particular. It has proven to be the locomotive that defines ways of learning and improves learning outcomes. Pichette argued that students who use YouTube either for educational or non-educational purposes outweigh those who do not, especially if they use the target language (2009, p. 77).

Along the same line, Warschauer proclaimed that using audiovisual platforms like YouTube satisfy mostly all the principles of the communicative method to learning a second language (cited in Lekawael, 2017, p. 255). This study revealed that YouTube could be an effective way to overcome problems that teachers encounter while teaching speaking communicatively, especially because many studies affirmed that educators worldwide sometimes fail to teach speaking in a communicative manner. In the same direction, Belghiti in a study assessing teachers' practices and issues in teaching speaking stated that teaching speaking in a communicative language teaching approach is still a challenge for university teachers (2011, p.1-88). The results of these studies showed that accessing YouTube has a very positive impact on the enhancement of speaking as it goes hand in hand with all the basic principles of a successful approach of the learning or the acquisition of the target language.

Korgaonkar and Wolin stated that using YouTube helps students develop other skills that are important in speaking like interaction skills and relationship enhancement (cited in Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017, para. 13). In the same vein, Blumer & Katz said that YouTube is a platform that satisfies all the needs of learners and addresses mostly all their weaknesses (cited in Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017, para. 14).

The role of YouTube and other audiovisual materials were already questioned by Bahrani and Tam who said that accessing videos like documentaries, songs, cartoons, and movies turned out to be crucial for the development of language skills including speaking (2013, p. 58). In a previous study, the same scholars experimented a sample of 60 low level students who were divided into three groups. All the groups were exposed to different video contents ranging from relevant to irrelevant in terms of students preferences, but after the treatment, the three groups were tested and the good results were in favor of the students who were exposed to videos that accord with what they prefer (Bahrani & Tam, 2013, p. 58).

Mostly all the studies demonstrated that YouTube, as an audiovisual platform, has so many positive impacts on speaking. However, some still believe that it constitutes a distracting factor and impacts speaking negatively.

2.5.2. Negative impacts

In the review of mostly all the research regarding the influence of YouTube on speaking skills, there was an agreed upon conclusion that this platform has become part and partial of students' learning tools. Furthermore, it has contributed to the enhancement of learners' speaking skills. However, there is still a camp of researchers who are trying to highlight its negative side. Kay (2012) criticized all the studies that focused on the positive aspects and asked for further research and investigation to confirm the advantages of YouTube (cited in Olasina, 2017, 237). In the same regard, Tess expressed his worries about the negative impact of YouTube and other social media on students' learning. He used a structural equation modelling to give evidence of some negative consequences of YouTube and other social media on speaking skills (cited in Olasina, 2017, 237).

The shortcuts of YouTube seem to be very limited since even the studies that highlighted their worries did not list the specific drawbacks of this platform. According to Kelly, one of the pitfalls of relying on YouTube to enhance speaking skills is the unaccompanied work in classrooms. His study affirmed that YouTube might develop listening and speaking skills of its users. However, a very limited number of teachers practice speaking communicatively in classrooms (2020, para. 9). Kelly added that when learners are unable to practice what they learn from YouTube, they resort to avoidance and become afraid of expressing themselves in language classes (2020, para. 13).

Mostly all the studies, which tackled the relationship between YouTube and the progress of speaking skills, agreed that advantages outweigh drawbacks since distraction could not have been listed as a negative aspect. In other words, getting distracted could also be an advantage when it offers an environment in which students can acquire the target language unconsciously.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Approach

This study opted for the quantitative research through which it elucidated students' attitudes, opinions and personal choices about using YouTube to develop their speaking skills. With this approach, it was possible to elicit the data about the frequency of using YouTube by students and the way (s) they are using it.

This method also helped to quantify the amount of time that students spend on YouTube and the number of students who either use YouTube for educational or for non-educational purposes.

3.2. Sample Population and Sampling Technique

The population targeted is semester 2 and semester 4 students from three departments of English including the School of Arts and Humanities, Dhar El Mahraz, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University in Fes, the School of Arts and Humanities, Moulay Ismail University in Meknes, and the School of Arts and Humanities, Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra.

Because the population size is too large, this study opted for stratified sampling method by selecting a small representative group from the whole population. Because the stratified random sampling aims to select the population randomly following a set of procedures, this

study decided to divide the entire population into strata. Each English department constituted a stratum, and the three strata served to make the study sample strata, which was based on gender, city, and university level.

In respect to the proportional random selection procedures, this study relied on the number of students who were able to participate in the online survey. In other words, instead of doing the selection based on the total number of students in S2 and S4 in the three departments, the random selection opted for the selection of students who were able to participate in the online questionnaire.

This study considered the selection method valid and reliable since it coincided with the lockdown period due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this way, the sample population included a total number of 64 students: 40 students were from semester 2, and 24 students were from semester 4. 21 of the students were from the department of English in Kenitra; 18 of the students were from the department of English in Meknes, and 25 of the students were from the department of English in Fez as the Figure illustrates:

Question 2: Define your university:
64 réponses

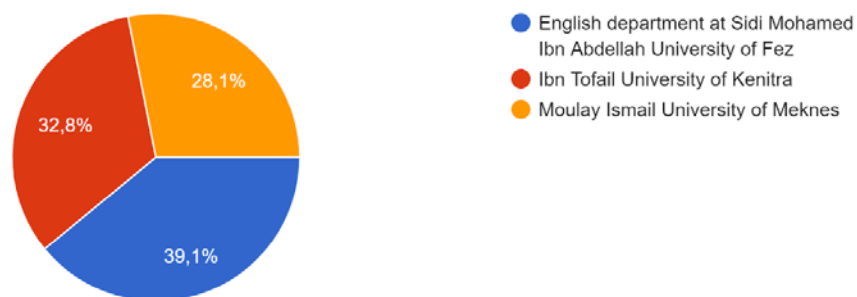


Figure 3. The universities that the respondents belong to

The figure detailed the percentages of the educational background of the sample under study. All respondents answered the question without any missing values. The percentages displayed were part of stratified random sampling adopted in the study.

As for the level the students belong to, the respondents were chosen from S2 and S4 as illustrated in Figure 4:

Question 3: University Degree:
64 réponses

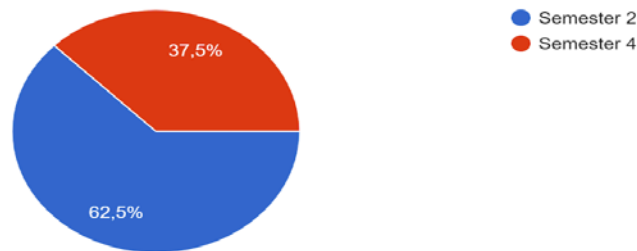


Figure 4. Students' university level

The results showed that 62.5% of the population were semester 2 students and 37.5% were semester 4 students. Once again, the results validated the methodology of sampling and accorded with the whole population since semester 2 students are normally more than semester 4. It is worth mentioning that the whole sample population included 32 males and 32 females.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

It was planned to use a questionnaire and an interview for the sake of achieving methodological triangulation and maximizing the validity and reliability of the findings. However, due to the lockdown circumstances, this study opted for the questionnaires only.

The questionnaire included varied questions, which were intended to demystify all the research objectives. The questionnaire mainly incorporated close-ended questions to ensure the specificity and accuracy of the responses and to facilitate the analysis. It included 11 questions covering Yes/No, dichotomous, and multiple-choice questions. These question types targeted analyzing the nominal variables in the study.

In this study, the questionnaire that was used in order to collect data was administered online via Google Forms to respondents from three different English departments in three universities.

All the statistical operations were done by means of the automated statistical features of Google. This gave more validity and reliability to the results obtained since no possible modifications of the results obtained were made possible.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Frequency of Using YouTube by the Students

Before revealing the results about the extent to which students use YouTube, students were first asked whether YouTube is platform that they use. The results demonstrated that 100% of the students do use YouTube as demonstrated in Figure 5:

Question 4: Are you a YouTube user?

64 réponses

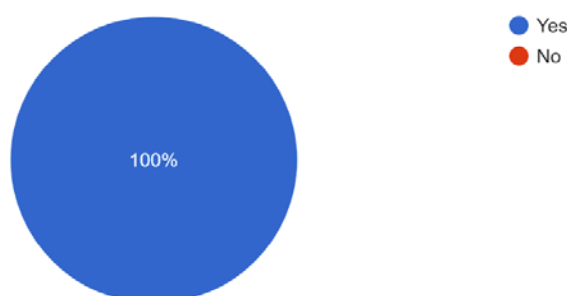


Figure5. The students' use of YouTube

The results were not surprising and showed that all students use YouTube regardless of the amount of time they spend on this platform. These results accorded with the literature reviewed. In this respect, Routley's statistical findings for 2020 confirmed that YouTube remains the most accessed audiovisual platform in the world (2020, para. 1).

Following the same direction, Balbay and Kilis affirmed that online sharing platforms have gained a devastating power in attracting users and influencing language learners (2017, p. 236). Moreover, Namaziandost and Nasri certified that the spreading nature of YouTube made it the most accessed and the most influencing social media platform ever (2013, p. 200).

As for the frequency of using YouTube by the students and the amount of time they spend on it, the study revealed that 79.7% of the respondents always use YouTube as the Figure shows:

Question 5: If yes, how often do you use this platform?

64 réponses

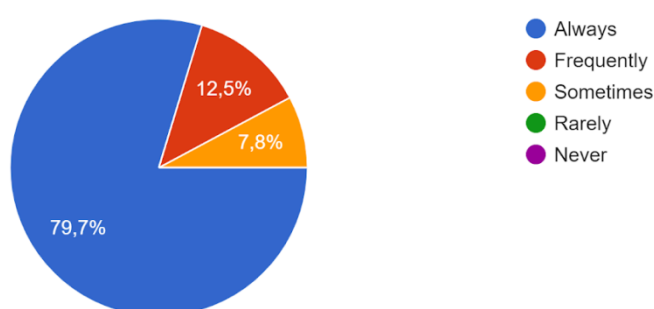


Figure 6. Frequency of using YouTube

The results revealed that the majority of students spend a big amount of their time on YouTube. They also showed that the lowest frequencies, which are "never" and "rarely",

were not even within the choices of students. In other words, YouTube is a platform that all technology users access frequently or all the time, and this is the reason that makes it one of the most influencing internet platforms in the world. The literature reviewed granted that the results are reliable. In this regard, in a study conducted by Namaziandost and Nasri, the results revealed that 82% of students always use social media, 16% of them sometimes use it, 2% rarely use it, and nobody never uses it (2019, p. 209). The comparison of the results of this study and the literature dismissed the uncertainty about the frequency of using YouTube and confirmed the inclination of students towards this platform.

4.2. The Purpose Behind Using YouTube by the Students

Students were asked if they prefer to use YouTube for educational purposes or for non-educational purposes and their choices revealed that, they mostly use it for purposes other than educational as the Figure below shows.

Question 6: What is the type of YouTube usage that you find yourself spending more time on?
(check only one circle
64 réponses

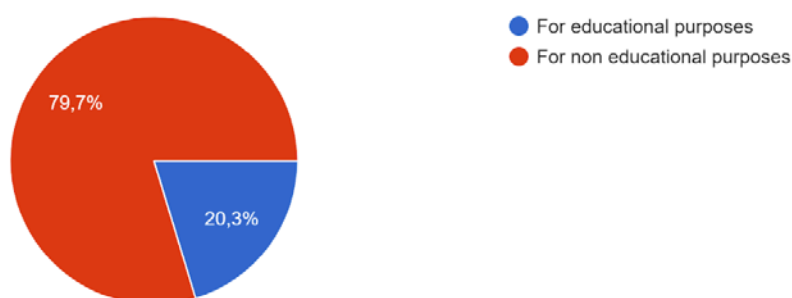


Figure 7. The purposes behind using YouTube by the students

The results indicated that 79.7% of the population use YouTube for non-educational purposes and only 20.3% of them use it for educational ones. These results evoked the students' tendency to use this platform for checking various contents for other aims not linked to education. However, in the case of language learning / acquisition, speaking skills are always expected to be influenced if the user makes use of the target language. More importantly, both purposes lead students to practice the target language and enrich their language mastery.

The results matched up with the literature reviewed. In this respect, previous surveys published statistical results, which displayed that most of YouTube users access this platform for non-educational purposes like getting entertained, learning new things, watching tutorials, relaxing...etc ("Why people turn to YouTube?", 2017, para. 1). In this realm, Blogger said that using YouTube for other purposes gives students the chance to experience and use the target language in the most authentic way, which helps them develop their speaking skills (2017, para. 2).

In this way, the findings confirmed that Moroccan students use YouTube for non-educational purposes more often. However, this never means that this type of use does not lead to their speaking skills development.

When the students were asked if they rely on YouTube for doing their university tasks, they reported that they do not, which provides additional evidence supporting the students' tendency to use YouTube for non-educational purposes. The Figure below demonstrates the findings:

Question 7: Do you rely on YouTube in doing your university tasks?
64 réponses

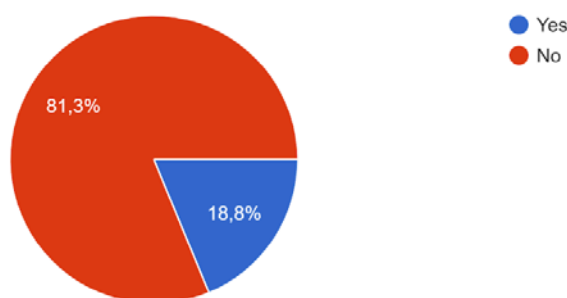


Figure 8. Students' use of YouTube for doing university tasks

The results demonstrated that only 18.8% rely on YouTube in doing university related tasks whereas 81.3% do not. This could be explained by the informal nature of YouTube, which allows students to make use of the target language but not necessarily to do university tasks.

The obtained results authenticated the previous findings and affirmed that students do not tend to use YouTube to do their university tasks. However, they use it for other reasons, which can help them enhance their speaking skills.

4.3. YouTube and the Development of Speaking Skills

As for the role of YouTube in the development of speaking skills, the study revealed that although students do not use YouTube for educational purposes, YouTube does actually help them with their speaking skills as illustrated in the figure below:

Question 8: YouTube helps me develop my speaking skills by emulating pronunciation and accent, vocabulary acquisition, and language structures.

64 réponses

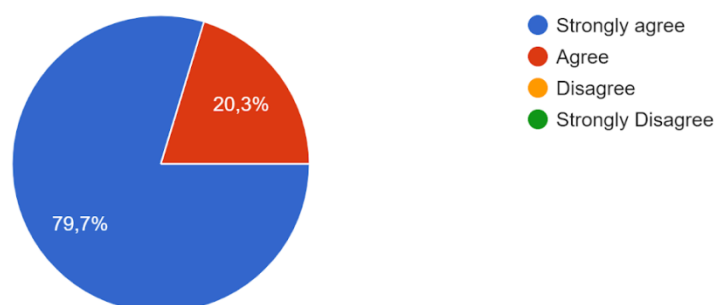


Figure 9. YouTube and the development of speaking skills

According to the above pie chart, 79.7% strongly agree that YouTube plays a fundamental role in developing speaking skills, and 20.3% of them agree. It was noticed that no body checked other values, which shows an agreed upon assumption that YouTube is crucial in the development of speaking.

The results obtained accorded with the literature reviewed. Pichette found out that students who use YouTube are better than those who do not especially if they use the target language (2009, p. 77). Moreover, Warschauer confirmed that YouTube represents a good example of an environment that promotes speaking skills communicatively (cited in Lekawael, 2017, p. 255). Korgaonkar and Wolin also said that YouTube contributes to the development of other skills that are crucial for speaking like interaction and relationship enhancement (cited in Balakrishnan & Griffiths, 2017, para. 13). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Namaziandost and Nasri, the results evoked that 82% of the students believe that their speaking skills were fostered by using different social media platforms including YouTube (, 2019, p.209).

From the results obtained and the literature reviewed, YouTube constitutes a backup and an environmental tool throughout which students can foster their speaking skills.

The quantitative data provided additional evidence supporting the role of YouTube in developing the students speaking skills. For instance, when the students were asked about their opinion on the role of YouTube in fostering their speaking competence, the majority of them confirmed that YouTube helps them with their speaking skill as shown in the figure below:

Question 11: Do you think that YouTube helps you in a way or another to foster your speaking capacity?

64 réponses

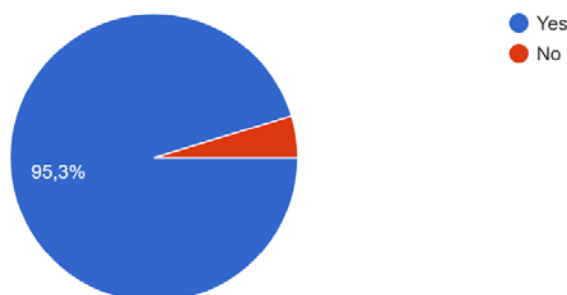


Figure 10. The role of YouTube in fostering the speaking capacity

According to the figure, mostly all students (95.3%) reported that YouTube helps in a way or another in fostering their speaking capacity. The results confirmed the previous assumptions and validated the previous results. In other words, students were asked almost the same question and the results were always the same.

The results of this study could not have been valid and reliable if, in a way or another, the language that they use on YouTube was not English. In this respect, the results revealed that the language that is mostly used by the students on YouTube is English as illustrated in the figure below.

Question 10: What language do you mostly use on YouTube?

64 réponses

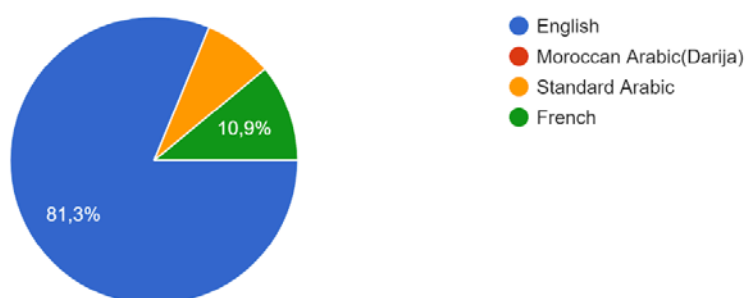


Figure 11. Languages mostly used on YouTube

According to the results displayed, 81.3% of students use English, 10.9% use French and a few use Standard Arabic. These percentages validated the whole research objective since students cannot develop and improve their speaking unless they use the target language frequently.

The results were in total congruence with the literature reviewed. According to Namaziandost and Nasri, students learning a second or a foreign language usually use the target language when accessing social media and 77% of them utilize it to communicate with native speakers (2019, p.209). Another study conducted by the German Council for Cultural Education evoked that language students frequently access YouTube to review and check things, which they did not understand properly, and they also watch tutorials or informative videos to help themselves with their homework and exam preparation (as cited in Schließ , 2019, para. 4). All this suggests using the target language more than any other languages.

The results convey that Moroccan students from the English department use the target language, which is English, more than any other language in YouTube. This finding validated all the previously obtained results.

4.4. YouTube as a Negative Distraction

When students were asked if they agree that YouTube is a distraction that does not contribute to the development of speaking skills, they reported that it is not as shown in the figure below.

Question 9: YouTube keeps me distracted all the time accessing content that cannot lead to my speaking skills enhancement.
64 réponses

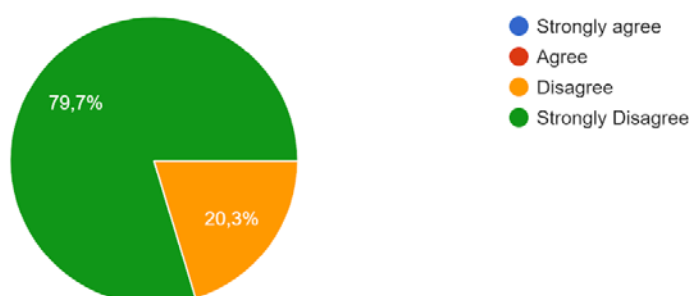


Figure 12. YouTube as a negative distraction for the development of speaking.

Based on the pie chart, it was obvious that mostly all students either strongly disagree (79.7%) or disagree (20.3%) with the fact that YouTube does not contribute to the development of speaking skills. This could be explained by a profound belief and a reality experience that accessing YouTube could only help but not the opposite. Students do not really see the negative sides of the internet in general and YouTube in particular simply because the majority of them are digital natives who cannot imagine themselves living without social media. This explains an agreed upon assumption that YouTube is a platform that provides entertainment, joy, and answers for all users' queries.

In this regard, there are a few studies that highlighted the negative sides of YouTube. Moreover, those who found some pitfalls focused only on the problem of discrepancy between what students learn from YouTube and what they learn in formal classrooms. Kelly said that YouTube enhances the speaking and listening skills of its students, but very few

teachers could match the two learning experiences by teaching students authentically and communicatively (2020, para. 9).

In this way, it could be deduced from the results that YouTube is not a distracting platform for Moroccan EFL students who are seeking to enhance their speaking.

5. Conclusions

Throughout this study, it was obvious that all students use YouTube and believe that it backs them up in developing their speaking capability. Moreover, the study showed that students use this platform for non-educational purposes yet believe that it is a determining factor in the mastery of their speaking skills. The findings accorded with the theoretical framework of this study, which was based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory to language development. In this way, the research hypothesis was maintained and it was made clear that YouTube, as a part of the learner's immediate environment, plays a focal role in the development of the speaking skills of the Moroccan English department students. All the findings suggested implications for different actors in the field of language education.

Implications for all Actors in the Field of Language Education

For instance, when teaching speaking, teachers should bridge the gap between what students learn inside classrooms and what they learn on YouTube. Teachers should go beyond integrating digital devices in teaching speaking in classrooms by simply displaying the language contents on data shows. Instead, they have to think about a pedagogical integration of social platforms in the teaching experience. Here are some suggestions for teachers:

- Teachers should encourage students to be more active participants on YouTube. They should not only consume videos, but also record their own as part of school tasks.
- Teachers should believe in the skills that students gain individually from YouTube because that will help teachers to get students self-motivated.
- Teachers should update the way they teach speaking by setting students' choices of topics free. They should move from controlled speaking activities to free ones since the overall objectives are the same.
- Teachers should target the unconsciousness of students speaking skills by organizing round tables, which debate topics appealing to their students' interests.
- Since students are now used to instantaneous feedback on YouTube, teachers should avoid delaying their feedback because that would devalue them.
- Teachers should work on the authenticity of the contents presented in the classroom to help develop useful speaking skills of their students.
- Teachers should analyze students' needs and use YouTube to satisfy them.
- Some teachers should encourage intensive speaking activities to address all the students' different paces of learning.
- Teachers should tolerate using YouTube in classrooms to help students develop the feeling of belonging, which could address their worries when speaking in public.
- Teachers should make the best use of students' skills in using platforms like YouTube and redirect them to enhance their formal achievement in speaking.

Universities should also be equipped with all the facilities that help both teachers and students make use of YouTube and other platforms to teach speaking. Similarly, to teachers, these are some recommendations for universities:

- Universities should work on integrating and maintaining massive online open sources as an integral part of their pedagogical package.
- Universities should not only think about making their own YouTube accounts. Instead, they should think about having collaborations with platforms like YouTube.
- Since students are used to learn on internet, Moroccan universities should work more on developing their websites to accord with students' expectations.
- They should encourage distance education, as it is high time to officialize it.
- Universities should think about financing students' ownership of digital devices and internet connection to address the problem of the digital divide and guarantee equality between all students.

The curricular should not only target how to teach speaking but also how to use internet platforms like YouTube to teach it. All speaking activities, in a curriculum, should be digitalized to foster the integration of learning platforms in teaching speaking. The language curriculum should integrate study skills that students need to make the best use of audiovisual interfaces like YouTube. It should also go beyond geographical limits to address skills that students need in language speaking countries.

Special attention should be given to integrating the socio-cultural skills in the curricula in order to help students succeed in communicating overseas. The language syllabus should include what teachers need in order to address their professional training weaknesses. In this way, they can teach using platforms like YouTube. The syllabus should also accord with what and how students learn informally online.

As for decision makers, they should have the courage to make a decision that would integrate informal practices and formal education. They should not resist the internet and neglect the contents it offers because that would put students and educational policies at two opposite extremes. They should consider the research gathered about the role of the internet in language education in the making of new educational policies. They should also involve all the actors in language education, including students, in the making of new policies of education.

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