

# The Correlation Between Students' Self-Reported Engagement in Self-Directed Learning on YouTube and English Speaking Achievement

Rumiyah<sup>1</sup>, Jaya Nur Iman<sup>2</sup>, Dio Resta Permana<sup>3</sup>

*Corresponding email: rumiyaplg343@gmail.com*

Universitas Indo Global Mandiri

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## Abstract

Speaking proficiency is a crucial component of communicative competence; however, many English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners continue to face difficulties in developing effective speaking skills due to limited opportunities for authentic practice and exposure. Drawing on the theory of self-directed learning (SDL), digital platforms such as YouTube have been recognized as valuable resources that may support autonomous language learning beyond the classroom. Nevertheless, empirical evidence regarding the relationship between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and English speaking achievement remains limited, particularly in Indonesian vocational school contexts. This study investigated the correlation between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and their English speaking achievement at SMKN 4 Palembang. Employing a quantitative correlational design, the study involved 33 tenth-grade students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire measuring students' engagement in self-directed learning activities on YouTube and a speaking test assessing fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension based on Brown's (2004) speaking assessment framework. Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis revealed a positive but very weak correlation between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and speaking achievement ( $r = 0.116$ ). The relationship was not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ), indicating that students who reported higher engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube did not necessarily achieve better speaking performance. These findings suggest that engagement in YouTube-based self-directed learning alone may be insufficient to improve speaking achievement without structured instructional support, learning strategies, and reflective learning practices. This study contributes empirical evidence from an Indonesian vocational school context and provides a more precise interpretation of self-reported engagement in YouTube-based self-directed learning as it relates to English speaking achievement.

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## INTRODUCTION

English has become one of the most important languages in the contemporary world and plays a significant role in international communication, education, business, technology, science, and cultural exchange. As an international language, English is used by people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to communicate across national boundaries. Kirkpatrick, A., & Wang, L. (2020) stated that English functions as a lingua franca that facilitates communication among speakers who do not share the same first language. Consequently, English proficiency has become increasingly important in the era of globalization, where individuals are expected to participate in international academic, professional, and social interactions. This global phenomenon has encouraged many countries, including Indonesia, to strengthen English language education in order to prepare students for future challenges and opportunities.

Despite the growing importance of English, achieving satisfactory levels of English proficiency remains a challenge for many learners in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts. Among the four language skills, speaking is often considered the most demanding because it requires learners to produce language spontaneously while simultaneously managing vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Speaking is not merely the ability to produce words orally but also the ability to communicate ideas effectively in real-life situations. Therefore, speaking competence is frequently regarded as one of the most visible indicators of language proficiency and communicative competence.

In Indonesia, efforts to improve English language learning continue through various educational reforms, including the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Under this curriculum, English is positioned as an intracurricular subject introduced at the junior secondary level with an allocation of approximately 108 lesson hours per year or three instructional hours per week (MoECRT, 2022). The curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, communicative competence, differentiated instruction, and project-based learning. In addition, the English for Nusantara curriculum incorporates speaking activities in every learning unit to encourage students to develop oral communication skills. However, despite these curriculum objectives, the implementation of speaking-oriented instruction remains challenging in many educational settings.

Several studies have reported that classroom practices frequently emphasize grammar instruction and text comprehension rather than oral communication. Utami (2019) found that English teaching in many Indonesian classrooms remains teacher-centered, limiting opportunities for students to engage in meaningful communication. Furthermore, Rulyansah et al. (2025) reported that limited digital resources, inadequate infrastructure, and insufficient teacher training hinder the effective implementation of curriculum innovations. These challenges are particularly evident in schools with limited access to educational technology and professional development opportunities. As a result, students often receive limited exposure to authentic communicative activities and have fewer opportunities to practice speaking meaningfully in classroom settings.

These challenges are reflected in national and international indicators of English proficiency. According to Education First (2024), Indonesia ranked 80th out of 116 countries and was categorized as having low English proficiency. This ranking indicates that many Indonesian learners continue to face difficulties in developing communicative competence despite years of formal English instruction. One possible explanation for this condition is the continued reliance on conventional instructional practices that provide limited opportunities for meaningful language use. In this regard, Ningsih et al. (2024) argued that the persistence of

conventional teaching methods and limited interactive learning opportunities contributes to the slow development of students' speaking abilities.

Apart from instructional issues, learners also encounter psychological barriers that negatively influence speaking performance. Nety, Wahyuni, and Nurhaeni (2020) emphasized that fear of making mistakes and speaking anxiety often discourage students from actively participating in oral communication activities. Students who are afraid of being judged by their peers or teachers tend to remain silent even when they possess sufficient knowledge to express their ideas. Such anxiety reduces learners' willingness to communicate and limits opportunities for language practice, which are essential for speaking development.

In addition to psychological factors, linguistic limitations also contribute to students' speaking difficulties. Goh and Burns (2012) explained that limited vocabulary knowledge may hinder learners from expressing ideas effectively because they struggle to access appropriate lexical resources during communication. Furthermore, Harmer (2001) argued that pronunciation difficulties often affect learners' confidence and intelligibility in oral communication. These linguistic barriers frequently result in hesitation, reduced fluency, and communication breakdowns, which ultimately influence learners' speaking performance.

The situation becomes more complex in rural and remote educational contexts. Rosyida, Natalya, and Avivah (2024) reported that many teachers in these areas lack sufficient qualifications in communication-based English instruction and oral proficiency. Consequently, teachers may experience difficulties implementing communicative teaching approaches that support speaking development. Fadilah et al. (2023) further noted that infrastructure limitations, insufficient learning resources, low learner motivation, and inadequate environmental support collectively contribute to the slow progress of students' productive language skills, particularly speaking. These interconnected challenges suggest that relying solely on classroom instruction may not be sufficient to support students' speaking development.

Given these circumstances, alternative learning approaches that encourage students to learn independently beyond classroom boundaries have gained increasing attention. One approach that has been widely discussed in educational research is Self-Directed Learning (SDL). Knowles (1975) defined SDL as a process in which learners take the initiative in identifying their learning needs, setting learning goals, selecting learning resources, implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes independently. Unlike traditional teacher-centered instruction, SDL emphasizes learner autonomy and responsibility throughout the learning process.

The theoretical foundation of SDL was further developed by Garrison (1997), who proposed that SDL consists of three interconnected dimensions: self-management, self-monitoring, and motivation. Self-management refers to learners' ability to organize and control learning activities, self-monitoring involves evaluating learning progress and performance, and motivation represents the internal drive that sustains learning efforts. These dimensions enable learners to regulate their learning effectively and adapt to various learning environments. In language learning contexts, SDL is particularly relevant because successful language acquisition often requires continuous practice and exposure beyond formal classroom instruction.

The increasing availability of digital technologies has expanded opportunities for SDL implementation. Students now have access to various online resources that allow them to learn independently according to their needs, interests, and learning goals. Through digital platforms, learners can engage in language practice outside classroom hours, revisit learning materials repeatedly, and select resources that match their proficiency levels. Therefore, SDL has become increasingly important in supporting lifelong learning and learner autonomy in the digital era.

Additional evidence supporting SDL was provided by Azizah and Susanti (2021), who identified a strong positive correlation between students' use of SDL strategies and speaking performance in a virtual English learning community. Furthermore, Supriyanto, Fiqri, and Hijrah (2024) found that self-directed dialogue activities improved learners' fluency and vocabulary development. Complementing these findings, Butarbutar (2023) demonstrated that web-based SDL promotes cognitive development, speaking accuracy, learner autonomy, and learning motivation. Collectively, these studies indicate that SDL has considerable potential to support speaking development in EFL contexts.

The growth of digital technology has also transformed the ways students engage in SDL. Among the many digital platforms available today, YouTube has emerged as one of the most widely used learning resources. YouTube provides access to millions of videos covering diverse educational topics, including English language learning. Through audiovisual content, learners can access authentic language input, observe pronunciation patterns, learn vocabulary in context, and gain exposure to natural communication. Such features make YouTube a potentially valuable tool for supporting independent language learning.

Recent studies have highlighted the important role of YouTube in supporting self-directed and self-regulated language learning. Haryadi and Krisna (2024) found that YouTube facilitates autonomous speaking development by helping learners improve pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency through authentic language exposure. Similarly, Wahdani and Syahputra (2024) reported that YouTube-based self-regulated learning positively contributes to students' speaking performance. Ate and Anuno (2025) revealed that learners independently use YouTube to enhance their pronunciation, fluency, confidence, and vocabulary acquisition. Consistent with these findings, Nur and Butarbutar (2022) found that YouTube encourages learner responsibility, speaking fluency, and engagement, while Putri (2020) reported increased learner autonomy and motivation among students who used YouTube for self-regulated learning. Wang and Chen (2020) further argued that YouTube facilitates self-regulated language learning through access to authentic English input, and Saed et al. (2021) found that YouTube positively contributes to speaking development and language learning motivation. Collectively, these findings indicate that YouTube has considerable potential as a learning resource for English speaking development. However, its effectiveness may vary depending on learners' ability to manage and direct their own learning processes.

The flexibility of YouTube also aligns closely with the principles of SDL. Learners can select content according to their interests, determine their own learning pace, revisit videos whenever necessary, and independently monitor their learning progress. Such flexibility allows students to personalize their learning experiences and assume greater responsibility for their language development. Consequently, YouTube has become an increasingly popular platform for self-directed language learning among EFL learners.

Although previous studies generally support the effectiveness of SDL and YouTube in language learning, several limitations remain. Most existing studies have focused on classroom interventions, experimental research designs, or higher education settings. As a result, limited attention has been given to investigating students' naturally occurring self-directed learning behavior through YouTube in secondary school contexts. Furthermore, few studies have specifically examined the relationship between self-directed learning through YouTube and English speaking achievement among vocational high school students in Indonesia. Moreover, many studies have examined speaking achievement, SDL, and YouTube separately rather than exploring the direct relationship among these variables. This situation indicates the need for further empirical investigation in vocational secondary school settings.

This limitation highlights an important research gap. While previous studies suggest that SDL contributes positively to language learning and that YouTube provides valuable learning opportunities, empirical evidence regarding whether students who report higher levels of engagement in self-directed learning through YouTube demonstrate better English speaking achievement remains limited. This issue is particularly relevant in vocational secondary schools, where students are expected to develop practical communication skills that support future academic and professional needs.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate the correlation between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and English speaking achievement among tenth-grade students at SMKN 4 Palembang. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following research question: Is there a significant relationship between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and English speaking achievement? By addressing this question, the study attempts to provide empirical evidence regarding the role of YouTube-based self-directed learning in supporting speaking development within the Indonesian EFL context.

This study is grounded in Self-Directed Learning Theory proposed by Knowles (1975) and further developed by Garrison (1997). Within this framework, students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube is conceptualized as learners' reported efforts to independently access, select, manage, and utilize YouTube resources for English learning purposes. The indicators of self-directed learning include learner initiative, resource management, learning responsibility, self-monitoring, and motivation. These indicators reflect the extent to which learners actively regulate their learning processes while utilizing digital learning resources.

Speaking achievement, meanwhile, is conceptualized based on Brown's (2004) speaking assessment framework, which evaluates learners' performance in terms of fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and comprehension. These components represent important dimensions of communicative competence and provide a comprehensive measure of speaking performance. Accordingly, students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube serves as the independent variable, whereas English speaking achievement functions as the dependent variable in this study.

The theoretical assumption underlying this research is that students who report higher levels of engagement in self-directed learning through YouTube are more likely to engage in meaningful language exposure, repeated practice, and autonomous learning activities that contribute positively to speaking achievement. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on vocational high school students and its investigation of students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube rather than teacher-directed instructional interventions. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge regarding digital learning, self-directed learning, and English speaking achievement while providing insights for teachers, learners, and educational institutions seeking to maximize the potential of YouTube as a language learning resource.

## METHOD

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and their English speaking achievement. A correlational design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to investigate the degree and direction of the relationship between two naturally occurring variables without manipulating them. According to quantitative research principles,

correlational studies are suitable for identifying statistical associations among variables and determining whether changes in one variable are related to changes in another. In this study, students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube served as the independent variable, while English speaking achievement functioned as the dependent variable. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between the two variables.

The population of the study consisted of 643 tenth-grade students enrolled at SMKN 4 Palembang during the 2024/2025 academic year. A purposive sampling technique was employed because the study required participants who possessed characteristics relevant to the research objectives. The final sample consisted of 33 students from class X TKJ.1 (Computer and Network Engineering). This class was selected based on the recommendation of the English teacher, who indicated that the students frequently used YouTube as a learning resource and regularly engaged with digital learning activities related to English learning. The sample was considered appropriate because the participants had comparable English learning experiences and sufficient exposure to YouTube-based learning practices, which were essential for examining the relationship between the variables under investigation. Although the sample represented only a small proportion of the total population, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select participants who met the specific criteria required for the study.

Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and a speaking test. The questionnaire consisted of 33 closed-ended items organized into three sections. The first section collected demographic information and students' YouTube usage habits, including frequency of use, duration of access, and types of content viewed. The second section assessed the extent of students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning activities on YouTube, including learning initiative, goal setting, resource selection, learning strategies, self-monitoring and self-evaluation. The third section explored students' perceptions of improvement in English language skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and fluency. All questionnaire items employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated higher levels of engagement in self-directed learning activities on YouTube.

Students' English speaking achievement was assessed through an individual speaking test. Participants were asked to deliver a short oral performance based on topics related to their experiences in learning English through YouTube. Their performances were evaluated using an analytic speaking rubric adapted from O'Malley and Pierce (1996), Brown (2004), and Hughes (2003). The rubric assessed five aspects of speaking performance: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and content. Each aspect was scored using predetermined performance descriptors, and the scores from all components were combined to obtain an overall speaking achievement score. To improve scoring objectivity and reduce potential rater bias, two English teachers independently evaluated all speaking performances. The final speaking score for each participant was calculated by averaging the scores assigned by both raters.

Prior to the main data collection, the questionnaire and speaking assessment rubric underwent validity and reliability testing. Questionnaire validity was examined using Pearson Product-Moment Correlation to determine the relationship between each item score and the total questionnaire score. The analysis indicated that all questionnaire items met the required validity criteria and were therefore retained for the final administration. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which produced a value of 0.981, indicating excellent internal consistency. The speaking assessment rubric was evaluated through expert judgment to establish content validity. The content validation process involved qualified experts in English

language teaching and assessment who reviewed the relevance, clarity, and representativeness of the rubric criteria. The results demonstrated excellent content validity, with an Item-Level Content Validity Index (I-CVI) of 1.00 and a Scale-Level Content Validity Index/Average (S-CVI/Ave) of 1.00. Inter-rater reliability was subsequently calculated using Pearson correlation analysis, yielding a strong level of agreement between the two raters ( $r = .851, p < .001$ ).

The data collection procedure began with obtaining permission from the school administration and coordinating with the English teacher. Before participating in the study, students were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Students were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous and would be used solely for academic research purposes. The questionnaire was administered first during regular classroom hours. After completing the questionnaire, students participated in the speaking test according to a predetermined schedule. All collected data were securely stored and used exclusively for research analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS version 26.0. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics, YouTube usage habits, and levels of self-directed learning engagement. Prior to testing the research hypothesis, a Shapiro–Wilk normality test was performed to examine whether the data met the assumptions required for parametric statistical analysis. Since both variables were normally distributed, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was employed to determine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and English speaking achievement. Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigated whether there was a significant correlation between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and their English speaking achievement among Grade X students at SMKN 4 Palembang.

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	20	60.6
	Male	13	39.4
Age	15 years	14	42.4
	16 years	18	54.5
	17 years	1	3.0
Time Spent Learning Through YouTube	Less than 5 hours	11	33.3
	5–<10 hours	12	36.4
	10–<15 hours	2	6.1
	15 hours or more	7	21.2
	None	1	3.0

(Source: Research Data, 2025)

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The participants consisted of 33 vocational high school students, of whom 20 (60.6%) were female and 13 (39.4%) were male. Most respondents were 16 years old (54.5%), followed by

15 years old (42.4%) and 17 years old (3.0%). Regarding YouTube learning habits, most students spent between 5 and less than 10 hours per week learning through YouTube (36.4%), followed by less than 5 hours (33.3%), 15 hours or more (21.2%), and 10 to less than 15 hours (6.1%). One respondent (3.0%) reported not using YouTube for learning purposes.

**Table 2.** Types of YouTube Content Used for Learning

Type of Video	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Educational	12	36.4
Music	9	27.3
Gaming	5	15.2
Film and Animation	4	12.1
People and Vlog	1	3.0
Pets and Animals	1	3.0
Science and Technology	1	3.0
Total	33	100

(Source: Research Data, 2025)

Table 2 shows the types of YouTube content accessed by students. Educational videos were the most frequently viewed category (36.4%), followed by music videos (27.3%), gaming videos (15.2%), and film and animation content (12.1%). Other categories, including people and vlog, pets and animals, and science and technology, each accounted for 3.0%. These findings indicate that students used YouTube for both educational and entertainment purposes, resulting in varying forms of English language exposure and practice opportunities.

**Table 3.** Normality Test Results (Shapiro-Wilk)

Variable	Statistic	df	Sig.
Speaking Test	0.968	33	0.419
Questionnaire	0.959	33	0.223

(Source: Research Data, 2025)

Before conducting the correlation analysis, a Shapiro–Wilk normality test was performed. As shown in Table 3, the significance value for the speaking test was 0.419 and the significance value for the questionnaire variable was 0.223. Since both values exceeded 0.05, the data were normally distributed and met the assumptions for Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis.

**Table 4.** Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Self-directed Learning through YouTube and Speaking Achievement	0.116	0.520	33

(Source: Research Data, 2025)

The Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis is presented in Table 4. The analysis produced a correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.116$  with a significance value of  $p = 0.520$ . These results indicate a positive but very weak relationship between students' self-reported

engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and their English speaking achievement.

The primary objective of this study was to determine whether students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube was significantly associated with their English speaking achievement. The findings revealed a very weak positive correlation ( $r = 0.116$ ) and a non-significant probability value ( $p = 0.520$ ). These results indicate that although students who reported higher levels of self-directed learning tended to achieve slightly higher speaking scores, the relationship was too weak to be considered statistically meaningful.

The findings provide important insight into the role of YouTube in language learning. While YouTube offers abundant authentic English input and flexible access to learning materials, merely using the platform does not automatically result in improved speaking performance. The findings suggest that the effectiveness of YouTube depends not only on access to content but also on how students engage with that content and transform input into active speaking practice. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis that students with higher self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube would achieve better speaking performance was not supported.

From a theoretical perspective, students' engagement in self-directed learning reflects the extent to which learners actively participate in planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning activities. According to Knowles (1975), successful self-directed learners demonstrate initiative, responsibility, and reflective learning behaviors. Therefore, students who report higher engagement are expected to be more actively involved in these learning processes. However, the present findings suggest that high self-reported engagement alone did not necessarily translate into better speaking achievement.

One possible explanation is that students primarily consumed content rather than actively practicing speaking. Although educational videos represented the most popular category, a considerable proportion of students also preferred music, gaming, and entertainment videos. While such content can contribute to vocabulary acquisition and listening exposure, it may not necessarily provide sufficient opportunities for productive language use. Speaking competence requires active language production, continuous practice, and interaction rather than passive observation.

The findings also highlight the importance of learning quality over learning quantity. Although many students spent several hours per week using YouTube, duration alone does not guarantee effective learning outcomes. Some students may have watched English videos frequently but without clear learning objectives or structured learning strategies. Consequently, the amount of exposure may not have translated into measurable improvements in speaking performance.

Another factor that may explain the weak correlation is the absence of feedback. Speaking development requires learners to receive corrective feedback regarding pronunciation, grammar, fluency, and vocabulary usage. Unlike classroom learning environments, YouTube often functions as a one-way medium where learners consume information without receiving direct responses to their spoken output. Without feedback, students may continue making the same speaking errors without recognizing or correcting them.

The findings of this study differ from several previous studies that reported positive effects of self-directed learning and YouTube use on speaking performance. Menggo et al. (2022) found that smartphone-assisted self-regulated learning significantly improved students' speaking achievement. Similarly, Saed et al. (2021) reported improvements in

pronunciation and vocabulary development among students who used YouTube for language learning. Syahrial et al. (2021) also concluded that students who independently selected learning materials based on their interests and proficiency levels demonstrated better language learning outcomes.

The discrepancy between the present study and these previous findings may be attributed to differences in learning contexts and implementation. In many earlier studies, students received structured learning guidance, clear learning objectives, or teacher support. In contrast, the students in the current study used YouTube independently without systematic supervision or instructional intervention. Therefore, although YouTube served as a learning resource, the learning process itself may not have been sufficiently organized to generate significant improvements in speaking achievement.

Nevertheless, the current findings are consistent with recent literature suggesting that the effectiveness of YouTube in language learning depends on how learners interact with the platform. Melisa et al. (2023) found that students utilized YouTube for speaking development through self-directed learning, active engagement with video content, and exposure to diverse language input. This suggests that the educational value of YouTube is determined not only by access to language input but also by learners' ability to actively process and apply the knowledge gained from the platform. Consequently, exposure to YouTube content alone may not be sufficient to improve speaking proficiency without meaningful practice and communicative engagement.

Overall, this study demonstrates that self-directed learning on YouTube has potential as a supplementary learning resource, but its independent use does not necessarily lead to significant improvements in speaking achievement. The findings suggest that exposure to YouTube alone may not be sufficient to support meaningful improvement in speaking proficiency. Effective speaking development requires a combination of authentic input, active practice, clear learning goals, feedback mechanisms, and learner engagement.

The findings of this study demonstrate that there was no significant correlation between self-directed learning on YouTube and the English speaking achievement of Grade X students at SMKN 4 Palembang. Although YouTube provides valuable opportunities for language exposure and independent learning, its effectiveness depends largely on how students engage with the platform and whether their learning activities are supported by appropriate strategies and speaking practice opportunities. Therefore, YouTube should be regarded as a supplementary learning resource rather than a standalone means of improving speaking achievement.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aimed to investigate the correlation between students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube and the English speaking achievement of Grade X students at SMKN 4 Palembang. The findings revealed a very weak positive correlation between the two variables ( $r = 0.116$ ) with a significance value of 0.520 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the findings indicate that students' self-reported engagement in self-directed learning on YouTube was not significantly associated with their English speaking achievement.

The results suggest that access to YouTube and exposure to English-language content alone do not necessarily contribute to measurable improvements in speaking performance. Although YouTube provides authentic language input and flexible learning opportunities, speaking development requires additional elements such as active language production, communicative practice, feedback, and effective learning strategies. Consequently, students who

frequently use YouTube for learning English may not automatically achieve higher speaking performance than those who use it less frequently.

This study contributes to the growing literature on technology-assisted language learning by providing evidence from the Indonesian vocational high school context. The findings extend previous research by demonstrating that the effectiveness of YouTube is influenced not merely by the frequency of use but also by the quality of learners' engagement with learning activities. Therefore, meaningful learning outcomes are more likely to emerge when digital resources are accompanied by purposeful learning strategies and active participation.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings indicate that encouraging students to use YouTube for English learning is insufficient unless accompanied by structured learning activities. Teachers are encouraged to guide students in utilizing YouTube through activities such as shadowing, summarizing video content, recording speaking responses, and reflecting on learning progress. Integrating YouTube-based tasks into classroom instruction may help students transform passive viewing into active speaking practice.

### **Theoretical Implications**

The findings support the view that engagement in self-directed learning is a multidimensional process involving learner autonomy, goal setting, self-monitoring, self-evaluation, and active participation. Consistent with the theories of Knowles (1975) and Garrison (1997), effective self-directed learning requires more than access to learning resources. The absence of a significant relationship suggests that high self-reported engagement alone does not necessarily guarantee improvements in speaking achievement unless it is supported by effective learning strategies and meaningful speaking practice.

### **Educational and Policy Implications**

Educational institutions should promote not only technology use but also digital literacy and effective independent learning skills. Schools and curriculum developers may consider incorporating technology-supported speaking activities that combine authentic online resources with guided classroom practice. Such initiatives may help students maximize the educational benefits of digital platforms while minimizing passive learning behaviors.

### **Social Implications**

The findings highlight the importance of developing responsible and strategic digital learning habits among students. Access to technology alone does not guarantee academic achievement. Therefore, learners should be encouraged to set learning goals, evaluate learning resources critically, and actively apply acquired knowledge in authentic communication contexts. These competencies are essential for lifelong learning in the digital era.

### **Future Research Implications**

This study was limited to a relatively small sample from a single vocational high school and employed a correlational design. Future research should involve larger and more diverse samples to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Researchers may also investigate

additional variables related to speaking achievement, such as motivation, speaking anxiety, self-regulation, learning strategies, and teacher support.

Furthermore, future studies may employ mixed-methods or experimental approaches to examine whether structured YouTube-based learning programs can produce stronger effects on speaking development. Qualitative investigations may also provide deeper insights into students' experiences and learning behaviors when utilizing YouTube as a language learning resource.

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