

Leveraging Youtube-based Authentic Videos to Enhance English Learning Motivation among University Students in Palopo

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Abstract

This study examined changes in English learning motivation among university students in Palopo following the integration of YouTube-based authentic videos into English instruction. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used. The quantitative phase involved 120 undergraduate students who completed the English Learning Motivation Questionnaire before and after an eight-week intervention, while 15 students participated in follow-up semi-structured interviews. The mean motivation score increased from 3.28 at pre-test to 4.11 at post-test, and the paired-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant pre-test-post-test difference, $t(119) = 15.72$, $p < .001$. The reported Cohen's d was 1.12, indicating a large pre-test-post-test difference. The qualitative findings highlighted five recurring themes: authentic English exposure, interesting learning experiences, increased confidence, flexible learning, and vocabulary development. Overall, the findings indicate a substantial improvement in motivation following YouTube-assisted instruction. However, because the study used a one-group pre-test-post-test design without a control group, the observed improvement should be interpreted as a change associated with the intervention rather than definitive evidence of a direct causal effect.

Keywords: Youtube, English Language Learning, Motivation, Digital Tools, University Students

Introduction

Motivation is a key driver in language learning because it shapes students' engagement, persistence, and willingness to use the target language. According to the L2 Motivational Self System, second-language motivation can be understood through the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience (Dörnyei, 2009). Self-Determination Theory further emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in supporting more self-determined forms of motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). These perspectives provide a useful basis for examining how digital learning environments may support university students' motivation to engage with English.

In higher education, maintaining motivation is particularly important because students are expected to continue learning beyond formal classroom time. Research on informal digital learning of English indicates that motivation, self-confidence, enjoyment, and willingness to communicate are closely related to students' engagement with digital English-learning activities (Lee & Drajati, 2019; Lee & Lee, 2021; Mulyono & Saskia, 2021). These findings support the use of learning resources that allow students to interact with English in flexible and personally meaningful ways (Hambali et al., 2023).

The integration of digital tools has reshaped language learning by expanding access to audiovisual input, interaction, and self-directed learning opportunities. Reviews of technology-enhanced language learning show that digital tools can support language practice, engagement,

and motivation when their use is aligned with clear pedagogical goals (Shadiev & Yang, 2020; Hasumi & Chiu, 2024). YouTube is especially relevant because it provides a large range of freely accessible audiovisual materials, including grammar explanations, vocabulary practice, interviews, public talks, documentaries, and everyday conversations (Andriani & Riskawati, 2022).

One significant advantage of YouTube is its capacity to expose learners to English used in varied communicative contexts. Unlike materials created only for textbook practice, many YouTube videos contain naturally occurring speech, pronunciation, expressions, gestures, and cultural cues. Previous EFL studies have shown that YouTube-based materials can support speaking practice and provide learners with opportunities to observe authentic or semi-authentic language use (Saed et al., 2021; Zulaefa & Rizal, 2023).

Research also suggests that YouTube can contribute to more engaging language-learning experiences when students are given structured opportunities to interact with relevant video content. Reflective video projects and YouTube-supported learning have been associated with improved engagement, confidence, and language practice among EFL learners (Sari et al., 2020; Habibi et al., 2024). The possibility of selecting topics that match students' interests may further strengthen their sense of involvement in the learning process.

The on-demand nature of YouTube also allows students to pause, replay, and revisit materials according to their individual needs. Such features can support self-regulated language learning because students can repeat difficult sections, review vocabulary, and observe pronunciation outside formal class time. Studies of English learning through YouTube and other informal digital environments have similarly highlighted the value of learner control and flexible access (Wang & Chen, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2021).

Several studies have explored YouTube in EFL contexts. For example, examined the use of YouTube for developing speaking skills among Jordanian university students and reported improvement in speaking-related outcomes after YouTube-supported instruction (Saed et al., 2021). Their findings support the pedagogical value of carefully selected videos for providing models of pronunciation, vocabulary, and spoken interaction.

Studies in Indonesian and other Asian EFL contexts have also shown that affective variables and digital learning activities are related to students' willingness to communicate and engagement with English. In an Indonesian context, motivation and self-confidence were significant factors associated with willingness to communicate across face-to-face and digital environments (Mulyono & Saskia, 2021). Similar findings indicate that productive informal digital learning activities can be linked with students' motivation and communication behavior (Lee & Draji, 2019).

YouTube-specific research in Indonesia likewise indicates that learners value the platform for speaking practice, perceived usefulness, and enjoyment. Perceived enjoyment and other technology-acceptance factors were important in explaining the use of YouTube for English-speaking development among Indonesian university students (Habibi et al., 2024). Students perceived YouTube as helpful for speaking fluency, vocabulary, motivation, and reduced shyness (Zulaefa & Rizal, 2023).

Despite these advantages, YouTube also presents practical and pedagogical challenges. The large volume of available content requires students and lecturers to evaluate relevance, accuracy, source credibility, and suitability for learning objectives. Research in higher education shows that both students and instructors may experience difficulty locating and verifying

appropriate educational videos, which supports the need for curated materials and explicit guidance in video selection (Greeves & Oz, 2024).

In the Palopo context, practical implementation also needs to account for differences in students' access to devices and internet connectivity. For this reason, regular access to YouTube through a smartphone or personal computer was included as one of the participant-selection criteria in the present study. YouTube was therefore integrated as a structured supplementary resource rather than treated as an unrestricted replacement for classroom instruction.

Palopo, a city in South Sulawesi, provides a relevant regional higher-education context for examining YouTube-assisted English learning. Rather than assuming that findings from large metropolitan or international settings apply uniformly, this study focuses on how university students in Palopo experience authentic audiovisual materials within their own learning environment. This contextual focus is important because motivational responses to digital learning may be shaped by local learning habits, access conditions, and opportunities to engage with English outside the classroom.

The replayable and self-paced characteristics of online video can also support students who require repeated exposure to English input. Learners can revisit difficult content, compare pronunciation, and review vocabulary outside class, which may strengthen autonomy and continuity between formal and informal learning activities (Wang & Chen, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2021).

Recent research has increasingly examined the relationship between digital English learning, motivation, enjoyment, and communication. Technology-enhanced language learning research shows that digital environments can support collaborative, flexible, and learner-centered language practice (Su & Zou, 2022; Hasumi & Chiu, 2024). Longitudinal research on informal digital learning has also identified meaningful associations between digital English engagement and willingness to communicate over time (Taherian et al., 2024).

Existing studies nevertheless show that motivational responses to digital English learning vary across contexts. Research has linked informal digital English learning with enjoyment and willingness to communicate, but these relationships are influenced by learners' affective characteristics and educational settings (Lee & Sylvén, 2021; Lee et al., 2024). Consequently, evidence from one national or institutional context should not automatically be generalized to students in Palopo.

At the same time, much of the YouTube-specific EFL literature has concentrated on speaking performance, learner perceptions, and technology acceptance rather than on a structured pre-test–post-test examination of learning motivation. The previous studies demonstrate the educational relevance of YouTube, but they also leave room for further investigation of how motivation changes when authentic videos are systematically integrated into university English instruction (Saed et al., 2021; Habibi et al., 2024; Zulaefa & Rizal, 2023).

The theoretical gap addressed in this study concerns the contextual integration of authentic digital learning resources with established motivational perspectives. Previous research indicates that informal digital English learning can be associated with enjoyment, self-confidence, and willingness to communicate (Lee & Lee, 2021; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Lee et al., 2024). The present study extends this line of inquiry by examining motivational change in a structured YouTube-assisted learning sequence and by using qualitative data to explain students' experiences during that sequence.

Based on the identified empirical and theoretical gaps, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How can YouTube be effectively leveraged to support English language learning motivation among university students in Palopo? Specifically, this research aims to (1) investigate university students' perceptions of YouTube as a digital learning platform for English language learning, (2) examine changes in students' English learning motivation before and after the integration of YouTube-based authentic videos, and (3) identify the features and types of YouTube content that students perceive as most supportive of their learning motivation in the local higher-education context. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on university students in Palopo, its integration of quantitative pre-test–post-test data with qualitative explanations, and its contextual examination of authentic audiovisual materials through established motivational perspectives.

Method

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using an explanatory sequential design, in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed first, followed by qualitative data to explain and enrich the quantitative findings. This design was selected because the study aimed to examine changes in students' English learning motivation after the integration of YouTube-based authentic videos and to understand students' explanations for those changes. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data provided a more comprehensive account of students' motivational development during the YouTube-assisted learning period.

The quantitative phase adopted a one-group pre-test–post-test design. This design was used to measure students' English learning motivation before and after the implementation of YouTube-based authentic videos while maintaining the natural classroom setting and existing academic schedule. Because the study did not include a control or comparison group, the design can demonstrate a statistically significant pre-test–post-test change but cannot establish that the observed change was caused exclusively by the intervention. Accordingly, causal interpretations were avoided in the analysis and discussion.

The study was conducted at universities in Palopo, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, during the 2026 academic year. The participants consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in compulsory English courses. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who met three criteria: (1) they were actively enrolled in an English course during the semester of data collection, (2) they had regular access to YouTube through smartphones or personal computers, and (3) they voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. A total of 120 students participated in the quantitative phase of the research. Subsequently, 15 students representing high, moderate, and low motivational gains were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews during the qualitative phase to provide deeper insights into their learning experiences.

Prior to the intervention, all participants completed the English Learning Motivation Questionnaire (ELMQ) as the pretest. The instructional intervention was then implemented over eight weeks, with two learning sessions conducted each week. During the intervention, YouTube-based authentic videos were systematically integrated into classroom instruction as supplementary learning materials. The selected videos represented authentic English communication and included TED Talks, BBC Learning English, National Geographic documentaries, travel vlogs, educational podcasts, interviews with native speakers, daily conversation videos, and short documentary clips. The videos were selected based on several pedagogical criteria, including language authenticity, communicative relevance, audiovisual

quality, subtitle availability, cultural appropriateness, and alignment with the learning outcomes specified in the English course syllabus.

Each instructional session followed a structured learning procedure consisting of three stages. During the pre-viewing stage, the lecturer introduced the learning objectives, activated students' background knowledge, and provided key vocabulary required to understand the video. During the while-viewing stage, students watched the selected YouTube videos while completing comprehension tasks, note-taking activities, vocabulary identification exercises, and guided discussions. Finally, during the post-viewing stage, students participated in collaborative discussions, oral presentations, reflective writing activities, and communicative tasks designed to reinforce both language acquisition and learning motivation.

The primary research instrument was the English Learning Motivation Questionnaire (ELMQ), which was adapted from the L2 Motivational Self System proposed by Dörnyei (2009) and the Self-Determination Theory developed by (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The questionnaire consisted of 30 Likert-scale items ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The instrument measured six dimensions of English learning motivation: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, learning interest, self-confidence, learning persistence, and willingness to communicate in English. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent expert validation involving three English language education specialists. A pilot study involving thirty students from a different university was conducted to evaluate the clarity, validity, and reliability of the instrument. Item validity was examined using Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation, while internal consistency reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The pilot analysis indicated that the overall Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeded 0.80, suggesting satisfactory internal consistency for research purposes.

To complement the quantitative findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen participants following the completion of the instructional intervention. The interview protocol explored students' perceptions of YouTube-based authentic videos, factors contributing to changes in learning motivation, perceived benefits and challenges, preferred video characteristics, and suggestions for improving English instruction through digital media. Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' consent before being transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were calculated to describe students' motivational profiles before and after the intervention. Data normality was examined using the Shapiro–Wilk test. Since the data met the assumption of normality, a paired-samples t-test was performed to determine whether the pre-test and post-test motivation scores differed significantly. Cohen's d was also reported to describe the magnitude of the pre-test–post-test difference.

The qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis involved familiarization with the data, initial coding, development and review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and preparation of the final analytical account, consistent with current good-practice guidance for thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2023). The qualitative findings were subsequently integrated with the quantitative results to explain students' experiences and the factors they associated with changes in English learning motivation. To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative findings, member checking and peer debriefing techniques were employed. Participants were invited to review the interview summaries to confirm the accuracy of their responses, while two independent researchers examined the coding process

to enhance analytical credibility. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the institutional research committee, and informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection. Participation was entirely voluntary, and all personal information was kept confidential throughout the research process.

Table 1. Research Design

Phase	Activity	Description	Output
Phase 1	Pre-test	Students completed the English Learning Motivation Questionnaire (ELMQ) before the intervention.	Baseline motivation scores
Phase 2	Treatment	Students participated in English learning activities using YouTube-Based Authentic Videos for eight weeks.	Learning experiences using authentic videos
Phase 3	Post-test	Students completed the same motivation questionnaire after the intervention.	Motivation scores after treatment
Phase 4	Interview	Selected students participated in semi-structured interviews.	Qualitative data explaining motivation changes

Table 1 summarizes the four main phases of the study, beginning with the baseline motivation measurement and continuing through the eight-week intervention, post-test, and qualitative follow-up. The sequence reflects the explanatory sequential design because the interview phase was used after the quantitative phase to clarify students' learning experiences.

Table 2. Research Procedure

Week	Learning Activities	YouTube-Based Authentic Videos
1	Pre-test and orientation	Introduction to the learning platform
2	Listening and vocabulary practice	BBC Learning English
3	Speaking practice	TED Talks
4	Daily conversation	English Vlogs
5	Pronunciation practice	Native Speaker Interviews
6	Critical listening	National Geographic Documentary
7	Communication activities	Travel Vlogs
8	Reflection, Post-test, and Interview	Review of selected authentic videos

Table 2 presents the weekly implementation of the intervention. The sequence moved from orientation and baseline measurement to listening, vocabulary, speaking, pronunciation, and communication activities before concluding with reflection, post-test administration, and interviews in the final week.

Table 3. Research Variables and Instruments

Variable	Indicators	Instrument	Scale
English Learning Motivation	Intrinsic Motivation	Questionnaire	Likert 1–5
	Extrinsic Motivation	Questionnaire	Likert 1–5
	Learning Interest	Questionnaire	Likert 1–5
	Self-confidence	Questionnaire	Likert 1–5
	Learning Persistence	Questionnaire	Likert 1–5
	Willingness to Communicate	Questionnaire	Likert 1–5

Table 3 shows how English learning motivation was operationalized through six dimensions: intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, learning interest, self-confidence, learning persistence, and willingness to communicate. All dimensions were measured using the same five-point Likert questionnaire.

Table 4. YouTube-Based Authentic Videos Used During the Intervention

Week	Video Source	Video Type	English Skill	Learning Objective
2	BBC Learning English	Educational Lesson	Listening	Understanding everyday expressions
3	TED Talks	Public Speaking	Listening & Speaking	Identifying main ideas

Week	Video Source	Video Type	English Skill	Learning Objective
4	English with Lucy	Grammar Lesson	Grammar	Improving grammatical accuracy
5	Easy English	Street Interview	Speaking	Understanding authentic conversations
6	National Geographic	Documentary	Listening	Developing vocabulary through authentic contexts
7	Kara and Nate	Travel Vlog	Speaking	Learning informal expressions
8	VOA Learning English	News Report	Listening	Summarizing information

Table 4 lists the YouTube sources and video types used during the intervention. The selected materials covered listening, speaking, grammar, vocabulary, and everyday communication while remaining aligned with the stated learning objectives for each week.

Results

Students' English Learning Motivation Before and After the Implementation of YouTube-Based Authentic Videos. Descriptive statistics were calculated to compare students' English learning motivation before and after the implementation of YouTube-Based Authentic Videos. The results indicate an increase in the overall motivation scores following the eight-week intervention.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Students' English Learning Motivation

Variable	N	Mean	SD
Pre-test Motivation	120	3.28	0.47
Post-test Motivation	120	4.11	0.43

Table 5 shows that the mean English learning motivation score increased from 3.28 (SD = 0.47) at pre-test to 4.11 (SD = 0.43) at post-test. The descriptive difference of 0.83 points indicates a clear upward shift in the overall motivation score following the eight-week YouTube-assisted learning period.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the Shapiro–Wilk test was performed to examine whether the data were normally distributed.

Table 6. Results of the Shapiro–Wilk Normality Test

Variable	Statistic	Sig.
Pre-test Motivation	0.984	0.184
Post-test Motivation	0.988	0.276

As shown in Table 6, the Shapiro–Wilk significance values were 0.184 for the pre-test and 0.276 for the post-test. Both values exceeded 0.05, indicating that the two sets of motivation scores did not show a statistically significant departure from normality and were therefore analyzed using a paired-samples t-test.

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' English learning motivation before and after the intervention.

Table 7. Results of the Paired Sample t-Test

Variable	Mean Difference	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
English Learning Motivation	0.83	15.72	119	<0.001

The paired-samples t-test in Table 7 showed a mean pre-test–post-test difference of 0.83, $t(119) = 15.72$, $p < .001$. This result indicates that the post-test motivation scores were statistically higher than the pre-test scores within the same group of 120 students. To determine the magnitude of the intervention, Cohen's d effect size was calculated.

Table 8. Effect Size of the Intervention

Cohen's d	Interpretation
1.12	Large Effect

The reported Cohen's d value was 1.12, which falls within the large-effect category used in this study. In the context of the one-group design, this value is interpreted as a large standardized pre-test-post-test difference rather than as proof that the intervention alone caused the observed improvement.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen participants to gain a deeper understanding of their learning experiences. Five major themes emerged from the thematic analysis.

Table 9. Emerging Themes from Students' Interviews

Theme	Frequency	Percentage
Authentic English Exposure	15	100%
Interesting Learning Experience	14	93.3%
Increased Confidence	13	86.7%
Flexible Learning	12	80.0%
Vocabulary Development	11	73.3%

Table 9 shows that authentic English exposure was reported by all 15 interview participants, followed by interesting learning experiences (93.3%), increased confidence (86.7%), flexible learning (80.0%), and vocabulary development (73.3%). These themes provide qualitative explanations for the motivational changes observed in the quantitative phase.

Table 10. Mean Scores of Each Motivation Dimension Before and After the Intervention

Motivation Dimension	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Improvement
Intrinsic Motivation	3.35	4.26	+0.91
Extrinsic Motivation	3.48	4.12	+0.64
Learning Interest	3.20	4.25	+1.05
Self-confidence	3.02	4.03	+1.01
Learning Persistence	3.41	4.18	+0.77
Willingness to Communicate	3.18	3.98	+0.80

Across the six motivation dimensions, all post-test means were higher than the corresponding pre-test means. The largest increases occurred in learning interest (+1.05) and self-confidence (+1.01), followed by intrinsic motivation (+0.91), willingness to communicate (+0.80), learning persistence (+0.77), and extrinsic motivation (+0.64).

Representative Interview Excerpts

Theme 1: Authentic English Exposure

"I could hear how native speakers actually communicate in daily life. It helped me understand English beyond the textbook." (Participant 4)

Theme 2: Interesting Learning Experience

"Learning through YouTube videos made the class more enjoyable because the materials were related to real situations." (Participant 9)

Theme 3: Increased Confidence

"After watching several videos, I became more confident in speaking English because I learned common expressions and pronunciation." (Participant 12)

Theme 4: Flexible Learning

"I could watch the videos again at home whenever I did not understand the lesson."
(Participant 2)

Theme 5: Vocabulary Development

"The videos introduced many new words that I had never learned from textbooks."
(Participant 6).

Discussion

The present study examined changes in English learning motivation among university students in Palopo following an eight-week period of instruction supported by YouTube-Based Authentic Videos. The mean motivation score increased from 3.28 at pre-test to 4.11 at post-test, and the paired-samples t-test showed that this within-group difference was statistically significant. The reported Cohen's d of 1.12 further indicates a large standardized pre-test–post-test difference. Taken together, these findings show a substantial improvement in motivation during the intervention period, while the absence of a control group means that the improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the YouTube-based intervention.

One possible explanation for the improvement lies in the authentic and contextualized nature of the learning materials. YouTube-Based Authentic Videos exposed students to pronunciation, vocabulary, expressions, gestures, and communication patterns presented in meaningful situations rather than as isolated language items. Previous studies have likewise reported that YouTube can provide useful speaking models and contextualized language input for EFL learners (Saed et al., 2021; Zulaefa & Rizal, 2023). The interview theme of authentic English exposure supports this interpretation because all 15 interviewed students identified it as a meaningful part of their learning experience.

Another important finding concerns students' intrinsic motivation. Interview participants described YouTube-supported learning as more enjoyable and relatable than learning that relied only on printed materials or teacher explanation. This pattern is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which proposes that more autonomous and meaningful learning experiences can support intrinsic motivation when learners experience greater autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The ability to replay videos and review content independently may have contributed to these experiences without implying that YouTube alone was responsible for the motivational change.

"Learning through YouTube videos made the class more enjoyable because the materials were related to real situations." (Participant 9)

This statement suggests that authentic videos stimulate students' curiosity and interest by presenting language within contexts that they can easily relate to. Such findings are consistent with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Which proposes that intrinsic motivation develops when learning activities satisfy learners' needs for autonomy, competence, and enjoyment. The flexibility offered by YouTube also allowed students to revisit difficult materials independently, promoting autonomous learning and increasing their confidence throughout the learning process.

The findings also showed improvement in students' self-confidence and willingness to communicate. Interview participants reported that repeated exposure to spoken English helped them become more familiar with pronunciation and commonly used expressions. Research on

digital English learning has similarly linked motivation, self-confidence, and productive digital engagement with willingness to communicate (Lee & Draji, 2019; Lee & Hsieh, 2019; Mulyono & Saskia, 2021). From the perspective of the L2 Motivational Self System, these experiences may help learners form a clearer image of themselves as future English users (Dörnyei, 2009).

"After watching several videos, I became more confident in speaking English because I learned common expressions and pronunciation." (Participant 12)

This finding indicates that repeated exposure to authentic spoken English reduces communication anxiety and gradually increases learners' willingness to communicate. The result is consistent with Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System, which emphasizes that learners become more motivated when they begin to visualize themselves as competent future users of the target language. Authentic videos provide concrete models of successful English communication, allowing students to construct a clearer image of their future English-speaking selves.

Another noteworthy finding is the increase in students' learning interest. The dimension mean rose from 3.20 to 4.25, representing the largest increase among the six motivational dimensions. The diversity of YouTube content may have helped maintain interest by combining visual, auditory, and contextual information and by presenting language in topics that students perceived as relevant. Similar studies have reported positive learner perceptions, enjoyment, and engagement when YouTube is used for English learning (Sari et al., 2020; Habibi et al., 2024).

Flexibility emerged as another factor that students associated with their motivation. YouTube allowed learners to pause, replay, and review videos whenever necessary, which is particularly useful when students need additional exposure to vocabulary, pronunciation, or spoken interaction. Research on self-regulated English learning through YouTube and informal digital environments has also emphasized the value of learner control and out-of-class access (Wang & Chen, 2020; Lee & Lee, 2021).

"I could watch the videos again at home whenever I did not understand the lesson." (Participant 2)

This flexibility appears particularly beneficial for students with different levels of English proficiency because it accommodates individual learning needs. Students are able to revisit unfamiliar vocabulary, observe pronunciation repeatedly, and reflect on language use without experiencing the pressure often associated with classroom interaction. Consequently, YouTube supports self-regulated learning, an important characteristic of successful learners in higher education.

Vocabulary development also emerged as a recurring interview theme, reported by 11 of the 15 participants. Students explained that the videos introduced words and expressions in meaningful contexts, which helped them connect vocabulary with situations, speakers, and communicative purposes. Previous YouTube-based EFL research has similarly identified vocabulary development as one of the perceived benefits of video-supported language learning (Zulaefa & Rizal, 2023; Sari et al., 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, the findings are consistent with motivational and technology-enhanced language-learning perspectives. The increase in intrinsic motivation and the interview emphasis on enjoyment and flexibility are compatible with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). While the increase in confidence and willingness to communicate

can be interpreted through the L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei, 2009). More broadly, reviews of technology-enhanced language learning indicate that multimodal and learner-controlled digital environments can support engagement and language practice when they are pedagogically structured (Shadiev & Yang, 2020; Su & Zou, 2022; Hasumi & Chiu, 2024).

Compared with previous studies, the present research provides a contextual contribution by examining YouTube-assisted English learning among university students in Palopo. Previous research has documented relationships among informal digital learning, enjoyment, motivation, and willingness to communicate in a range of EFL settings (Lee & Sylvén, 2021; Lee et al., 2024; Taherian et al., 2024). The present findings add evidence from a regional Indonesian higher-education context while remaining cautious about generalization beyond the participants and setting studied.

The novelty of this study lies not in claiming that YouTube independently causes higher motivation, but in identifying the experiences that accompanied the observed pre-test–post-test improvement. The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings indicates that authentic language exposure, learning flexibility, contextualized vocabulary, interesting audiovisual materials, and increased speaking confidence were the main factors students associated with their motivational development. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that digital English learning is shaped by the interaction between technological affordances, affective variables, and learners' communicative engagement (Lee & Lee, 2021; Lee et al., 2024; Greeves & Oz, 2024).

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine changes in university students' English learning motivation following eight weeks of English instruction supported by YouTube-Based Authentic Videos. The quantitative findings confirmed a significant increase in students' motivation, with the mean score rising from 3.28 (SD = 0.47) at pre-test to 4.11 (SD = 0.43) at post-test, $t(119) = 15.72$, $p < .001$, with a large effect size (Cohen's $d = 1.12$). Qualitative findings supported these results by showing that students particularly valued authentic English exposure, interesting learning activities, increased confidence, flexible learning, and vocabulary development. These findings imply that carefully selected YouTube-Based Authentic Videos can be systematically integrated into university English instruction to enhance student engagement, confidence, and learning motivation. However, the study was limited by its one-group pre-test–post-test design without a control group, participants from universities within one geographical area, and the relatively short eight-week intervention period. Therefore, the observed improvement cannot be attributed solely to the intervention or generalized broadly. Future researchers should employ control or comparison groups, recruit larger and more diverse samples across institutions and regions, and conduct longitudinal studies to examine the sustainability of motivational changes. Further research should also investigate whether increased motivation is accompanied by improvements in English proficiency, particularly speaking, listening, vocabulary, and academic performance, using more advanced analytical approaches where appropriate.

Acknowledgment

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