

# **Improving EFL Undergraduate Students' Speaking Proficiency Through YouTube-Based Videos**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims at presenting to what extent the use of YouTube-based videos can improve the students' speaking ability and describing the teaching and learning process when YouTube-based videos are implemented in the virtual EFL classroom. The subject of the study is the undergraduate students of management study major Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Serang Raya. Classroom action research design used in this study. The research data were collected through speaking assessment and interview. The findings revealed that there was an improvement in the students' speaking ability. Some aspects which are improved included students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and content. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the YouTube based videos is able to enhance effectively the undergraduate students' speaking ability. With this language learning approach, it is hoped that it can also increase students' motivation in learning English language.

Keywords: YouTube-based Video, Speaking, Undergraduate Students.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, English as an international language plays very crucial role in many areas of life. Learning and mastering English language, especially speaking ability, are necessarily needed for the EFL undergraduate students to allow them to communicate with their other people or English native speakers globally. In Indonesia, English is used as a foreign language where using English for daily activity is something very rare. English is only taught in the classroom situation and some particular requirements in a language proficiency test. As compulsory subjects in every level of education, English is taught to the EFL students from the elementary to higher education levels. To meet that condition, one of reputed private universities in Banten initiate themselves to have a virtual speaking class for practical engagement out of the regular English class. The undergraduate students in this class are expected to be able to use English language for daily communication in the context of business situation that is referred to their major study. The main target and final goal of the students in the speaking class, therefore, is to have the oral communication capability. That is the students should be able to communicate with the other people accurately, fluently and appropriately.

However, there has a bitter case between the objective and the current situation in the speaking class. Undergraduate students of management study major face a plenty of problems in mastering the speaking ability. Based on the researcher's experience in English classroom activities, the researcher found some problems encountered by the students. First, the students' speaking ability is still low, unsatisfying, and far from the expectations. The students don't

pay much attention to the class. Generally, students in this class have low learning motivation and interest. They feel shy, nervous, reluctant and lack of confidence when answer questions from their teacher or have a presentation. Second, they cannot fluently express their ideas by using appropriate vocabulary and correct grammatical patterns; the students only can speak the first two or three sentences, and then totally get stuck and speak their mother tongue (Javanese) and second language (Indonesian) make a clear distinguish during the presentation; moreover, they often feel hesitate to pronounce the words, and most of them mispronounce the words. Third, the atmosphere of the class did not support any speaking activity. The teacher used a monotonous teaching style that makes the students bored and lose interest in the subjects which affect the students' ability. The teacher also seldom creates some instructional media to facilitate students to speak. As a consequence, the students were reluctant and unmotivated to speak. In line with the speaking problems which are mostly encountered by EFL students in the English language learning situation, Ur explains (1991:121) that there are some problems faced by the students in speaking. The problems of speaking include student inhibition, nothing to say, the low of participation, the theme to be spoken, and the use of mother tongue;

### 1) Inhibition

The students usually inhibited when trying to speak some words in speaking activities. Because they worry about making mistakes and simply shy in speaking English language.

### 2) Nothing to say

The students cannot think of anything to say, because they have

no motivation to express themselves in speaking. Actually, the students often lack confidence and less of vocabularies in their speaking ability. And they feel insufficient in language skills to express exactly what they want to say.

3) Low participation

The students have low participant when they speak, this mean that they have only very little talking time. This problem is compounded by the tendency of some learners to dominate, while other speaks very little or not at all.

4) Mother tongue use

The students usually use mother tongue in speaking activities, because it is easier, and also they feel less exposed if they are speaking their mother tongue. If they are talking in small groups it can be quite difficult to get some classes – particularly the less disciplined or motivated ones-to keep to the target language.

The situation of the class described above becomes a problem that must be solved by the teacher in the teaching-learning process and EFL teachers in this case play important role in controlling the students' success in learning. The EFL teacher is required to make a good learning environment that can encourage and engage the students to study and make them comfortable, interested, and motivated in learning English. To actively engage the students in the learning process and enhance their motivation of learning the language, it is highly recommended for the EFL teacher especially to create a good media, make a conducive situation and creative activities. Dealing with the crucial role of EFL teachers, Nunan (1999, p. 232) said that teachers should help their students

by establishing strategies to manage all forms of communication to ensure that all students have fair and equitable opportunities to develop their interpersonal speaking and listening skills through large and small group discussions.

## 2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

According to the objective and the conditions mentioned above, it is very urgent and necessary for the teacher of speaking class to make every effort to change some of these situations into positive ones. Therefore, from those needs in teaching, the researcher proposes YouTube to be a strategy in teaching speaking. YouTube was chosen because this site gives many positive contributions in the language teaching and learning process. It provides a huge of video content that is explorable for language learning and teaching classroom usage. YouTube as a media is used as an effective learning media by the teacher to solve the problems of language learning. Khalid (2012, p. 527) defined YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share and view videos. According to Burke, et al. (2009, p. 2) YouTube is a public-access Web-based platform allowing people to easily upload, view, and share video clips across the internet through [www.YouTube.com](http://www.YouTube.com), other websites, mobile devices, blogs, and email. YouTube is considered by the researcher as an alternative strategy to enhance students 'speaking ability. After watching YouTube-based videos, it is expected that EFL undergraduate students can get the ideas to speak from the real environment of the native speakers so that the students will have an opportunity to do imitative, intensive, responsive, intensive, interactive and extensive speaking performance. Students can also get new vocabularies and the examples of pronunciation that give

them the opportunity to make some improvements of their speaking. Speaking ability will be better if it is supported by the real environment or authentic material as the students' schemata. The implementation of this strategy includes the pre-task based phase, the task cycle, and language focus phase. This strategy is expected to help the students solve the problems and improve the students' speaking proficiency.

The objective of the study is, first, to present to what extent the use of YouTube-based videos can improve the students' speaking ability and second, to describe the teaching and learning process when YouTube-based videos are implemented in the language learning classroom.

### 3. METHOD

To investigate the use of YouTube-based Videos in teaching and learning, a qualitative approach using an Action Research (AR) method was employed in this research. According to Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014, p. 11) Classroom action research typically involves the use of qualitative, interpretive modes of enquiry and data collection by teachers (often with help from academic partners) with a view to teachers making judgments about how to improve their own practices. The aim of investigating this study was to solve the problems happened in the EFL classroom that is faced by the students. It is in line with Latief (2008, p. 2) who argued that Classroom Action Research is the research design that is constructed to improve the quality of learning in the classroom. In addition, McNiff and Whitehead (2011, p. 7) said that action research is an enquiry form enabling practitioners everywhere to investigate and evaluate their work. This study was conducted in one of private

universities in Banten. The subjects of this study were the undergraduate students of management study major first academic year. This class consist of 28 students. Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014, p. 18) mention some steps in each cycle of action research. They described the spiral of self-reflection in terms of a spiral of self-reflective cycles of: • planning a change, • acting and observing the process and consequences of the change, • reflecting on these processes and consequences, and then • re-planning, • acting and observing, • reflecting, and so on...

Based on the explanation above, the researcher attempted to design the stages of conducting the study. Action Research cycles have been arranged in order to investigate the effectiveness of applying the YouTube based videos as the learning strategy in improving EFL undergraduate students' speaking ability. It can be illustrated as follow;

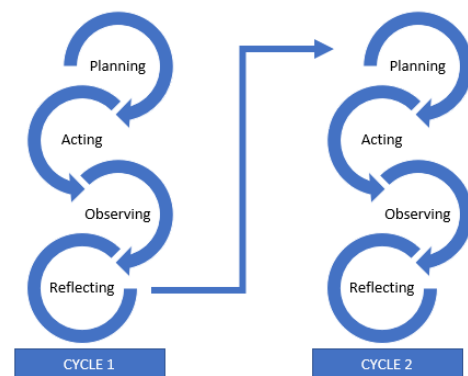


Figure 1. The Action Research Spiral (adopted from Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2014, p. 18)

The above figure clearly displays the iterative nature of action research along with the major steps of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In this study, the researcher utilizes the same steps in order to get the data objectively. June et al. (2016, p. 60) mentioned what is in each step

of the cycle. First, planning “I need to make the participants become more engaged in their learning and develop critical thinking. In the first round of the research I plan to use videos relevant to the topic of discussion (Job Analysis) and draw up an activity is related to the video and the topic and presented them to the participants. Second, acting, “I carry out the activity in the class. Students were first briefed about the activities and the plan of the day. Third, observing, “I discuss with the students about the activity and lesson that has been conducted. The students seem to be quite confused with the first session, especially in terms of the given instructions”. Third, “Reflecting Is the session very confusing? What went right? What went wrong? Have I overlooked the needs of the participants to ask questions about the activities before it was conducted?”

To collect the data, the researcher applied some instruments namely; observation checklist, field notes, performance tests, questionnaire, and interview. First, observation checklist was used to obtain the data about undergraduate students' activities in teaching speaking by using YouTube-based videos in the classroom. The observation checklist is focused on how the undergraduate students of management study major involved in the pre-task based phase, the task cycle, and language focus phase. Second, field notes were used to capture any data that were not covered in the observation checklist. Thus, the field notes might utilize to identify some aspects reflected in teaching and learning process, such as appropriate teaching instruction, things to be improved, and students' interaction with the peers that are beyond the coverage of the observation checklist. Third, speaking test was in the form of the result of the speaking test which was used for describing the students' speaking ability; the students' mean score,

and the individual score after implementing the strategy. This test was administered at the end of the cycle. The test was in form of speaking performance test, in which the undergraduate students were asked to perform the conversation in pair. The students, in pair, choose the topic by themselves. To confirm the validity of the data, therefore, the triangulation method is used. At the end of the cycle, the questionnaire is administered to the students. This is to confirm the data of the students' performance test and their feeling. In addition, some students also are involved to be interviewed. In this case, the researcher only chooses three undergraduate students to be interviewed.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1 Cycle One**

Cycle one had been done for two meetings. the findings were based on the result of data analysis from observation sheets, field notes, test, and questionnaire. The method of teaching is using the Task-based Language Teaching (TBLT). Fauziati (2014, p. 184) defined that “TBLT is an approach which seeks to allow the students to work somewhat at their own pace and within their own level and area of interest to process and restructure their interlanguage”. In TBLT, there are three steps offered; first, the pre-task phase, the task cycle, and the language focus.

First, in the pre-task phase, the activities started with greeting, checking the students' attendance list, and telling the learning objectives and the tasks assigned. This activity also provided brainstorming and activating background knowledge and context for the students before having speaking practice. The teacher provides picture and videos related to the lesson. Afterward, the teacher also asked the students to read the words and sentences

provided by the teacher for pronunciation practice as the warming up activity.

Second, in the task cycle, the activity is divided into three stages i.e. task, planning and report. in the first stage, students, in pair, having a task to watch the video played by the teacher. while watching, they were allowed to take some notes. The video was played for twice. for the first time video played, the students are only allowed to take a note while in the second time, they are allowed to take a note and discuss with their partner. In the second stage, they plane the script or text to perform the conversation in front of the class. In the last stage, then, they perform the conversation in pair in front of the class.

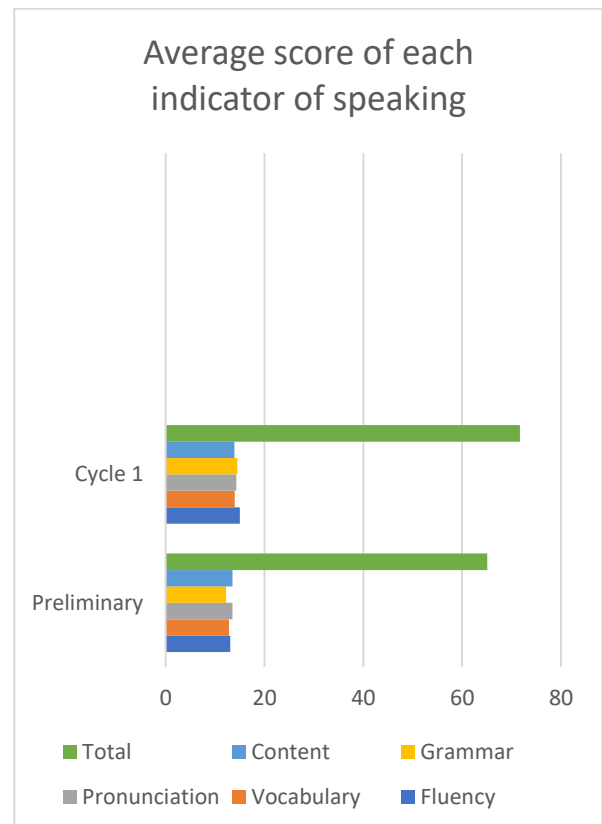
Third, the language focus, in this phase, all the students gave the comment or suggestion about their friends' performance. After students gave the comment, then the teacher's turn to give feedback and comment. After the comment and suggestion given by both the students and the teacher, it is time for the teacher to have some evaluation of the teaching and learning of today. The teacher asked the students about the lesson and activity of today and the students give the answer to the teacher. afterward, the class then is closed.

The result of this activity taken by the teacher through the observation, test, questionnaire and interview is a follows: first, based on the teachers' observation when the video was played, most of the students paid attention to the screen. It was found that averagely 80% - 95% of the students paid attention to the video at the first and the second meeting. This finding showed that there was an improvement in terms of students' motivation and interest in this speaking class. At the time they watched the video, the students wrote the

information gotten from the video on the work-sheet. However, when they are in time to discuss with their partner, the students looked still passive. It might be caused by the lack of vocabulary students have. Looking up the vocabulary on dictionary was often done by the students during the discussion.

The performance test is conducted at the end of the cycle or in the third meeting. The result of the students speaking test was improved even though it was not so significant. In the preliminary study, the average score of the students' speaking test was 65.1 from 28 students, while the maximum score was 71. However, the average score of speaking in Cycle 1 was 71.7 from 28 students while the maximum score is 75. The score is shown in the following table:

Table 1 The Students' Speaking Performance in cycle One



This is also supported by the result of the questionnaire administered to the students, 89% of the students said that they like the class, 93% said that YouTube-based video is helpful for them, and 93% of the students were motivated to learn English by using YouTube videos. Afterward, the teacher also had an interview with three students. All of them said that YouTube-based video is so helpful and interesting.

#### **4.2 Revision**

Cycle 1 had been done efficaciously and proven that the activity of the learning and teaching using YouTube-based videos is succeeded. However, it is still found that the students' speaking improvement was not so significant. therefore, there were still some points that need to be improved by the teacher. Several points need to improve. First, the students in cycle two were set up in group 3 – 4. Second, the YouTube-based videos used by the teacher itself. In cycle one, the teacher only showed the videos in offline mode and play them only twice in the task cycle phase. However, in the cycle two, the teacher asked students to bring minimum bring one laptop per group. The students then had chances to play the videos from YouTube in online mode and they can watch it for many time in the task cycle phase.

In addition, the revision in Cycle 2 also focused on how to help students enrich their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation and improve the students' idea by developing material, teaching instruction. This based on the result of students' speaking skills score in the cycle one which showed that their vocabulary, pronunciation, and content are still not so good. For enriching and improving vocabulary and pronunciation, in the pre-task phase, the new vocabulary with the meaning related to the topic was shown. In

cycle two, the students also had a longer time for memorizing vocabulary and practicing pronunciation. The meaning of the words was also explained in the native language of the students (Bahasa Indonesia). To stimulate the students' idea, the worksheet was completed with more detailed questions related to the content of the video. The questions about the content of the video were also displayed on the video before the students watched it. Students in this cycle two had more time to watch YouTube-based video and they can find out the appropriate and similar videos on YouTube by themselves. For instance, the topic of this meeting is about "conversation in a hotel", then the students can find out the same videos on YouTube related to the theme.

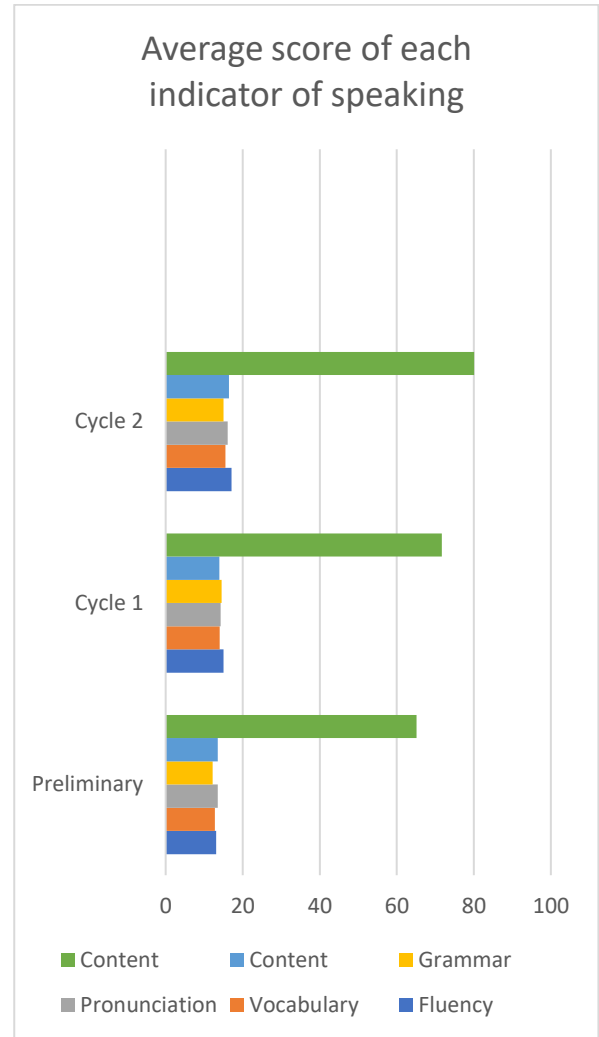
#### **4.3 Cycle Two**

The teaching method in the cycle two is as similar as that in cycle one. it used TaskBased Language teaching. The significant difference on this cycle for the previous one is that the YouTube-based video played mode. In this cycle, the students are allowed to watch the videos in online mode and use their own devices (it could be a laptop, tablet, or others that allowed by the university). The number of a group also is different; they are in this cycle in a group of 3 – 4. Thus, the time allotment for the students to performance also was added. Like cycle one, the result of the activity in cycle two also taken by the teacher through the observation, test, questionnaire, and interview is a follows: first, based on the teachers' observation when the videos were played, most of the students paid attention to the screen and the videos they watch. It was found that averagely 95% - 100% of the students paid attention to the videos both at the first and the second meeting. The situation of the

class was also more conducive since all of the students follow the class seriously.

This finding showed that there was a significant improvement in terms of students' motivation and interest in this speaking class in comparison with the preliminary study and cycle one. While watching the videos, the students wrote the information gotten from the video on the work-sheet. the students looked more active when they are in time to discuss the materials with their partners. Based on the result of the speaking test, there was a significant improvement of the students' achievement. The average score of students' speaking test was 80.1, the highest score was 85 out of 28 students. The score is shown in the following table:

Table 2 The Students' Speaking Performance in cycle Two



This is also supported by the result of questionnaire administered to the students, 100% of the students said that they like the class, 100% said that YouTube-based video is helpful for them, and 100% of the students were motivated to learn English by using YouTube videos. Afterwards, the teacher also had an interview with three students. All of them said that YouTube-based video is so helpful and interesting.

### 5. DISCUSSION

The use of YouTube-based videos in teaching speaking was designed to make the students motivated and not bored in following the class. To allow students work in groups in doing the tasks also the supported point which makes the students active in the class. In addition, YouTube-



based videos also help the student learn about speaking in terms of the way of speaking (fluency), vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and content of what to speak. After getting the information from the video, the students get an idea to speak. Further, discussing with their group lets each student have an opportunity to give and share information orally to the group's members. At this time intensive and extensive speaking performances unconsciously are done by the students. The success of the teaching of speaking is determined by some factors, one of which is the types of media used by the teacher in the class. The use of YouTube videos could be an alternative since it provides materials for speaking class freely and easily. The various topics and frequencies of speaking using supporting media such as YouTube can help the students to improve their speaking achievement. The involvement of the students in the speaking class was clearly shown from their active participation during the teaching and learning the process.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings conducted in this study, it could be concluded that the implementation of YouTube-based videos in teaching speaking can improve the students' speaking skills and motivation. This improvement is proven by the students' speaking achievement and the score gained. The score of the speaking test has fulfilled the criteria of success. In addition, the students actively involved in learning activities and had high motivation toward the use of YouTube-based videos in the speaking class. The nature of the video, which provides picture and audio at the same time, is able to help the students train their pronunciation, enrich their vocabulary, and make them easier to find an

idea in producing sentences while speaking. The students can get information faster and feel more confident in dealing with the lesson as they not only depend on their speaking skills but also on their comprehension. In addition, watching videos also unconsciously help the students learn grammar in an automatic way. The students got the input so well from the speakers, who are mostly native English, in YouTube-based videos. The more students watch the video also help them to easily practice their own speaking, thus it helps the student improve their fluency in speaking. There is a large amount of videos on YouTube that can be downloaded freely as a teaching source. It can be the source of teaching for the teacher as the authentic materials.

Therefore, following up the conclusion, some suggestions are proposed to the English teachers/lecturers, schools, and further researchers. First, the suggestion is for the English teachers, especially to those who teach English speaking class. For the researcher has shown that the use of YouTube-based videos can improve the students' speaking skill, English teachers are highly suggested to use YouTube-based videos as the authentic materials. The teacher can use YouTube in offline mode or if it is possible in online mode would be much better. The duration of videos playing and the content of the should be appropriate to the students' level, for that the teacher has to carefully chose them. Second, the suggestion is for university. The university is expected to support the teachers in utilizing the technology such as YouTube, for instance by providing good internet connection in the university. The last, for the further researcher, it is expected to study more about the advantage and disadvantage of using YouTube-based videos.

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