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# A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF WATCHING YOUTUBE EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS ON THE IRAQI EFL LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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## ABSTRACT

***Iraqi English as a foreign language (EFL) learners still have difficulty mastering the language even after getting a lot of teaching. The conventional teaching methods are often ineffective in developing basic language skills, which has, in turn, led to unsatisfactory results in academic performance. This study examines how watching instructional videos on YouTube affects the English language proficiency of Iraqi EFL learners in order to solve this issue. This research specifically investigates how watching videos with varying frequencies, types of content, and different levels of engagement with educational content affects English language performance. Students from two distinct Basra schools Ira Al-Khansa Secondary School for Girls & Al-Markazia Secondary School for Boys participated in a structured questionnaire survey as part of an empirical inquiry. The survey data were analyzed and the correlations between the variables examined using structural equation modeling. The result of the research clearly illustrates that watching with varying frequencies, types of content, and engagement with educational content significantly and positively influences English language performance for EFL learners. In addition, it underscores the importance of overall digital literacy, which is a requirement essential for positive learning from educational videos on YouTube. The study's findings clearly show that using educational YouTube videos may help Iraqi EFL students become more fluent in English.***

**KEYWORDS:** The Performance of EFL Students, YouTube Instructional Videos, Frequency of Viewing, Content Type, Learner Engagement, and Digital Literacy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The English language is widely acknowledged as a fundamental communication tool that serves as the basis for professional, educational, and cross-cultural contacts (Dashtestani, Hejazi, & Albadri, 2025; Zheng et al., 2025). In the context of Iraq, English language teaching is practiced at all educational stages (Dashtestani et al., 2025). In spite of being exposed to English language teaching for a longer period, the English language skills of Iraqi English language learners remain limited in terms of speaking, listening, vocabulary, and grammar skills.

Despite the attempts that have been made by educational institutions, as well as the government, to enhance the quality of teaching, as well as the efficiency of institutions, the learning results remain unsatisfactory. The nature of teaching practices within the Iraqi educational system is largely characterized by a teacher-centered approach that focuses on learning by heart and following the textbooks (Ajaj, 2024). Classroom methods have usually been limited to teaching from textbooks with little student interaction, despite efforts to generally adopt a more communicative, student-centered approach, especially when teaching English (Almurashi, 2016). Additionally, my experiences in English learning are limited, with little exposure to English outside the classroom, let alone being immersed in English (Almurashi, 2016).

The reliance on classical teaching practices within Iraqi learning institutions has also been cited as a contributing factor to the lackluster performance of learners (Kanber et al., 2025). In this regard, YouTube has been recognized as a potential teaching tool that might help with these instructional deficiencies. This resource provides a vast array of English learning materials, such as English grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and English conversation skills. Its audiovisual nature helps learners be introduced to contextualized, authentic, and real-life uses of English, which go a long way in optimizing English learning (Rahmawati, Pasandalan, & Novitasari, 2024). Furthermore, YouTube supports a variety of learning modes, such as visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learning, which helps different learners interact with the learning tool in a way that is most appealing to them, thus optimizing learning comprehension (Beautemps & Bresges, 2021).

Despite these factors, in the Iraqi educational environment, the academic use of YouTube is still largely under-explored. Despite the fact that students often interact with non-academic internet content, relatively little is known about YouTube's usage as a learning aid, the content that is used, and the frequency with which students have access to such resources. While YouTube has been utilized in educational contexts (Burke & Snyder, 2008; Chintalapati & Daruri, 2017; Curran et al., 2020), its potential to support EFL learners, especially within Iraq's borders, has not received much attention. An area which has also been largely under-explored is how deeply learners are engaged with the content offered within the realms of YouTube, as well as the impact such use has on language proficiency. This particular research also considered the use of digital literacy as a moderating variable, taking into consideration that the application of the tool as a learning tool requires a certain degree of literacy. In short, a lack of such literacy skills might make the application of learning skills from modern learning software such as YouTube ineffective.

Specifically, prior research has mostly looked at the utilization of digital media in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) from a broad, Western-oriented paradigm, sometimes ignoring regional issues like cultural resistance to non-traditional teaching methods, a dearth of real, high-quality educational content, and a lack of familiarity with digital technology. Thus, there is a glaring lack of study on how Iraqi EFL learners' language competency is impacted by their educational use of YouTube videos, particularly usage rate, content type, and learners' engagement with the online instructional content. In addition, an even further research void is evident on the moderating potential of differential English language proficiency with respect to the relationship that might exist in this particular way of educational content use. Thus, within the confines of this project, the primary research objective is to determine how instructional YouTube videos affect Iraqi EFL learners' language ability.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional classroom settings are now dynamic, interactive, and learner-centered thanks in large part to educational technology. Because it incorporates multi-media aspects, it promotes engagement, allows for individualized learning trajectories, and expands access to a variety of educational materials. As a result, technical development is frequently seen as the hallmark of contemporary civilization and the distinguishing characteristic of progression in the twenty-first century. Almost every aspect of human existence is impacted by its influence. In general, a lot of people's experiences are greatly improved by technology. Technology in educational settings is made up of a variety of tools and platforms designed

to help students learn new things, build their skills, and achieve academic success.

Advanced technologies are crucial for schools, colleges, and universities because they make complex instructional activities easier. Information transportation has really become easier and more efficient thanks to a number of digital platforms, computers, as well as instructional software. Teachers can explain information in a more effective way, whereas students understand and remember information better. One of the most impressive inventions of modern times is YouTube, which was increasingly used for pedagogical purposes. Students can get immediate feedback and acquire practical skills impossible to learn from textbooks due to the implementation of videos, simulations, and language learning tools. YouTube has become an important global source of formal and informal learning. Being the largest online video-sharing website, YouTube offers an immense number of videos on educational, cultural, social, scientific, and entertaining topics. The website is a useful tool for improving users' abilities, particularly in the educational setting where pupils should hone their cognitive and critical thinking abilities.

YouTube videos have become one of the most widely used techniques to improve concept understanding and knowledge retention among digital video resources, which are now widely accepted for usage in educational contexts (Rahmawati et al., 2024). The usage of YouTube, the world's third most powerful internet network, in classrooms is growing. YouTube is being used by educators more and more to enhance their lessons, mainly by introducing fresh content to improve students' understanding and skills. Recently, the tool has also formed part of homework assignments among students, further reinforcing its support function for autonomous learning (Kusmaryono & Basir, 2024). Jones & Cuthrell (2011) identified YouTube's built-in interactive features, such as video commenting, as particularly useful in contributing to language skill development since such features facilitate learner participation and communicative practice in great measure.

Given the established pedagogical value of YouTube, this study explored its contribution to overcoming the chronic problem of low EFL achievement in Iraqi learners. Three fundamental aspects of YouTube usage habits were especially investigated for this study: learners' interaction with video material, the type of content seen, and the frequency of viewing. Within the study's structure, these were regarded as independent variables. This study recognized digital competence as an important catalyst for technology-enhanced learning. Students are unable to reap the benefits of instructional technology like YouTube if they lack fundamental computer abilities. For this reason, the conceptual model incorporated digital literacy as a moderating variable. As a result, the study's foundation was examining the connections between EFL learners' performance, digital literacy, learners' engagement, frequency of watching, and kind of material (Figure 1).

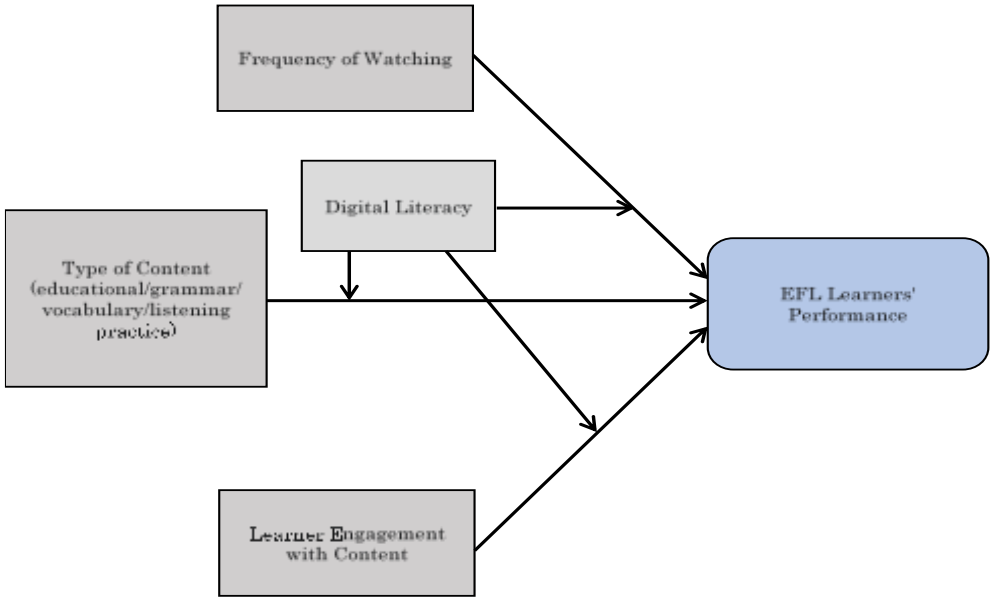


***Figure 1: The Study's Framework Highlighting the Connection between Digital Literacy, YouTube Instructional Videos, and the Performance of EFL Learners.***

## 3. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

### *3.1. YouTube Video Viewing Frequency and EFL Students' Performance*

The frequency with which a person views any type of media, including digital material, streaming services, and television, is referred to as watching frequency. The concept of this study has to do with how often students use or watch educational YouTube videos. Recent studies have shown that digital media assist in supporting language acquisition, and more consistent exposure to such media has a positive role in language development, as noted by Mehta et al. (2025) and Yu & Wang (2025). Higher frequency and better language development are positively correlated in the context of YouTube-based training. Learners would be able to acquire real-world vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammatical structures through this repetition. The frequency of watching may be measured using a variety of metrics, including the number of times the material is seen during a given time period, such a week or month, or over the length of each session, which can vary from a few seconds to several minutes and hours. Because EFL learners have little opportunities to converse in English in their native environments, repetitive watching helps to improve language acquisition through repeated and prolonged exposure to the target language. Thus, there may be a strong correlation between learners' language proficiency and how often they watch instructional videos on YouTube. Therefore, the comprehension of learners and their overall ability to understand the language would improve as they continually consume the English-language content through the platform. The hypothesis could be presented as follows:

H1: EFL learners' performance is positively impacted by how often they view YouTube videos.

### *3.2. EFL Learners' Performance and the Content Type of YouTube Videos (Educational, Grammar, Vocabulary, & Listening Practice)*

The term "content type" in this study refers to instructional resources intended to enhance students' listening, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation abilities. Content type plays an especially fundamental role in YouTube video access influencing the language development of EFL learners, as identified by Lee (2025). According to Rahmawati et al. (2024), films made specifically to address linguistic components such as vocabulary enrichment, grammatical structures, listening comprehension, as well as adequate pronunciation give pupils focused and intentional exposure to the target language. Students' speaking and listening abilities will be greatly enhanced by such educational exposure to English. By providing methodical explanations and examples that are rooted in context, these tools aid in the long-term retention and deeper comprehension of language information. Conversely, a variety of content kinds help learners acquire vocabulary, which makes it easier for them to increase their lexical repertoire. Specific language domains covered by instructional material encourage targeted learning and enable learners to enhance one skill or another, in contrast to broad or entertainment-based media. According to Lee (2025), YouTube may serve as a valuable resource for a variety of instructional materials, making it an excellent tool for assisting EFL students in their English language learning process. On this basis, the following theory can be put forth:

H 2: The performance of EFL students is favorably correlated with the type of content found in YouTube videos.

### *3.3. Learner Interaction with YouTube Videos and the Performance of EFL Students*

Learner engagement is the degree to which a student is clearly motivated, interested, and involved in the learning process. For EFL learners to improve performance through meaningful contact with language input, the idea of learner engagement with YouTube material in a digital environment is crucial. Because it affects academic performance or accomplishment, language skill development, and information retention, engagement is seen as a crucial sign of successful learning. Increased fluency, improved listening comprehension, improved pronunciation, and internalization of new terminology are all more likely to occur in engaged learners.

These kids are also more likely to go deeper into the subject matter, ask questions, participate in supplementary learning activities, & apply what they learned to real-world situations. This kind of active interaction improves the salience & memorability of input by making passive knowledge intake more interactive. Therefore, increased use of video-based learning materials is linked to better understanding and more effective English language acquisition. Based on such considerations, a hypothesis may be made as follows:

H3: the more the learner engagement with the content of YouTube videos, the better the performance of EFL learners.

### *3.4. Digital Literacy's Moderating Role*

The capacity to use digital technology to find, assess, produce, and share knowledge in an ethical and efficient manner is known as digital literacy (Abiddin, Ibrahim, & Aziz, 2022; Detlor et al., 2022). One important moderator that improves the connection between YouTube-based learning characteristics and EFL learners' performance is digital literacy. This concept includes a variety of abilities, such as the capacity to utilize digital technology, comprehend information found online, and cooperate and communicate digitally (Ndibalema, 2025). As a result, students with greater levels of digital literacy will be better able to monitor pertinent and high-quality content, navigate educational platforms with ease, and interact positively with audiovisual materials. In this regard, digital literacy is now regarded as a basic ability that enables students to make well-informed decisions about the type of information to choose and how to engage with it. Given the aforementioned factors, digital literacy will significantly enhance the EFL learner's YouTube-based learning outcomes. Additionally, learners who are digitally savvy are better able to plan how often they watch by deliberately including instructional videos into their normal study schedules. In essence, digital literacy makes it possible for students to maximize the educational value of online platforms and gain confidence when interacting with digital settings. However, the positive impact of YouTube videos on the growth of languages may be restricted since those with low computer abilities may find it difficult to locate or use helpful material. To put it another way, digital literacy boosts student engagement, material quality, and viewing frequency all of which enhance EFL performance. (Palacios-Hidalgo & Huertas-Abril, 2025). The following theories might be put up to address the moderating impact of digital literacy in light of this discussion:

H4: The association between EFL learners' performance and how often they view YouTube videos is moderated by digital literacy.

H5: The relationship between EFL learners' performance and the type of YouTube video content is moderated by digital literacy.

H6: The moderating factor between EFL learners' performance and their interaction with YouTube videos is digital literacy.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This study used a quantitative approach to examine how YouTube instructional videos affected the performance of Iraqi EFL learners. Almarkazia Secondary School for Boys and Alkhansaa Secondary School for Girls, two close certified schools in Basrah, Iraq, comprised the population of fifth-grade English pupils. YouTube-based learning included three dimensions: learner engagement with material, kind of content, and frequency of viewing; digital literacy served as a moderating factor. The overall impact of these factors on the language proficiency of EFL learners was evaluated.

Data was collected using a cross-sectional survey approach. Despite the fact that YouTube's educational value has been previously examined, no pre-existing instrument was found to evaluate the particular aspects this study examined. As a result, a new measurement scale was developed that takes into account the five factors being investigated. After a thorough examination of the literature, forty items were found. These questions were then narrowed down to a purified set of 30 items based on feedback from a focus group discussion led by linguistics professors who are academic specialists in the topic. To evaluate the validity and reliability of the suggested items, a pilot sample of seventy individuals was used for a preliminary factor analysis.

After validation, a total of 27 scale items were kept based on both face validity and validity. Table 1 shows the cleaned goods. By counting how often the students utilized YouTube to study English, the frequency of viewing was ascertained. The diversity and applicability of the information viewed in relation to learning English were assessed in order to determine the kind of content. The ability of students to actively and intently engage with video materials was measured as learner engagement with content. The capacity of students to use digital resources to support learning through YouTube was used to gauge their level of digital literacy. Lastly, the reported improvements in vocabulary, speaking, listening, and linguistic correctness were used to gauge the EFL learners' performance. Students at Almarkazia Secondary School for Boys and Alkhansaa Secondary School for Girls received a total of 500 questionnaires.

The fundamental selection at random methodology, a probability-based strategy that offers each member of the population a comparable likelihood of being selected, was used for these (Meng, 2013). Official attendance data from both schools were used to choose the respondents. To reduce bias, participants were selected at random from these lists. Members of the study team and course instructors oversaw the data gathering process. The latter gave the pupils guidance and

assistance while they filled out the surveys. 410 of the 500 surveys that were sent out were gathered. Thirty statements were eliminated throughout the data screening procedure because the replies were inconsistent or lacking. As a result, 380 valid surveys were retained for analysis. Partial least squares techniques were utilized to evaluate the data, and SEM was employed to determine the influence of the various study parameters.

***Table 1: Questionnaire Items.***

| Variable | Questionnaire Items | Reliability |
|---|---|---|
| Frequency of Watching | 1. I watch English-learning YouTube videos every day.<br>2. I watch English-language videos on YouTube for a few hours per week.<br>3. One of my primary resources for English practice is YouTube.<br>4. I frequently utilize YouTube to strengthen my English language abilities.<br>5. Learning English through YouTube has become second nature.<br>6. In order to comprehend English-language videos on YouTube, I frequently rewatch them. | α = 0.788 |
| Type of Content (Educational/Grammar/ Vocabulary/Listening Practice) | 1. I watch YouTube videos that concentrate on grammar.<br>2. I watch YouTube videos that expand my vocabulary.<br>3. I watch recordings of discussions or English speeches to practice listening.<br>4. I choose educational platforms intended for English language learners.<br>5. I mostly watch educational videos and steer clear of entertaining material.<br>6. I choose movies according to the ability I wish to develop (e.g., listening, grammar, etc.).<br>7. I often browse YouTube for various English learning resources. | α = 0.828 |
| Learner Engagement with Content | 1. I use YouTube to view English language learning videos and take notes.<br>2. In order to comprehend the topic better, I pause and replay portions of YouTube videos.<br>3. I engage in the exercises and activities that are demonstrated in the videos.<br>4. In English-language videos, I frequently attempt to talk or mimic the speaker. | α = 0.833 |
| Digital Literacy | 1. I am able to efficiently look for and assess instructional material online.<br>2. I feel comfortable using digital resources like YouTube, online dictionaries, and educational applications to get better at English.<br>3. I am able to utilize and explore various web platforms on my own.<br>4. I am able to recognize trustworthy and legitimate internet information sources.<br>5. When utilizing digital devices or programs, I am able to handle simple technological concerns. | α = 0.711 |
| EFL Learners' Performance | 1. In the past several months, my vocabulary has greatly increased.<br>2. I feel more comfortable speaking English now.<br>3. I've gotten better at listening comprehension in English.<br>4. I am able to write English more precisely and coherently.<br>5. I find it easier to follow English reading passages. | α = 0.715 |

## 5. RESULTS

The main analytical technique used in the study was PLS-SEM. PLS-SEM is commonly used for analyzing complicated models with several components in linguistic and educational research. According to Shehzad et al. (2019), Razzaq & Hamzah (2024), and Hair, Howard, & Nitzl (2020), it is appropriate for use. A number of data screening procedures were performed as part of the preliminary steps prior to the main analysis. A few missing values were observed, and they were addressed by applying the mean replacement method to retain data completeness. The assumptions about the normality of the data were satisfied, and no notable outliers were found. Descriptive statistics and measurement data were produced to carry out the analysis once all screening processes were completed. Table 2 provides preliminary results, which are presented in Figure 2.

***Table 2: Data Statistics.***

| Items | Mean | Median | SD | Kurtosis | Skewness |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FW1 | 2.545 | 3 | 1.23 | -0.802 | 0.356 |
| FW2 | 3.331 | 3 | 1.319 | -1.182 | -0.197 |
| FW3 | 3.308 | 3 | 1.316 | -1.133 | -0.21 |
| FW4 | 3.201 | 3 | 1.346 | -1.17 | -0.114 |
| FW5 | 3.291 | 3 | 1.321 | -1.078 | -0.215 |
| FW6 | 3.268 | 3 | 1.286 | -1.058 | -0.178 |
| TC1 | 3.197 | 3 | 1.237 | -0.956 | -0.156 |
| TC2 | 2.749 | 3 | 1.098 | -0.516 | 0.312 |
| TC3 | 2.763 | 3 | 1.085 | -0.685 | 0.231 |
| TC4 | 3.137 | 3 | 1.269 | -0.981 | -0.22 |
| TC5 | 3.14 | 3 | 1.296 | -1.022 | -0.245 |
| TC6 | 2.97 | 3 | 1.278 | -0.976 | -0.001 |
| LEC1 | 2.993 | 3 | 1.232 | -0.892 | -0.041 |
| LEC2 | 2.96 | 3 | 1.242 | -0.95 | -0.092 |
| LEC3 | 3.314 | 3 | 1.278 | -1.013 | -0.248 |
| LEC4 | 3.334 | 3 | 1.289 | -1.018 | -0.238 |
| DL1 | 3.298 | 3 | 1.364 | -1.183 | -0.241 |
| DL2 | 3.348 | 3 | 1.334 | -1.136 | -0.257 |
| DL3 | 3.264 | 3 | 1.324 | -1.104 | -0.165 |
| DL4 | 3.077 | 3 | 1.164 | -0.804 | -0.125 |
| DL5 | 3.124 | 3 | 1.183 | -0.838 | -0.205 |
| EFLLP1 | 3.124 | 3 | 1.233 | -0.875 | -0.183 |
| EFLLP2 | 3.064 | 3 | 1.213 | -0.906 | -0.156 |
| EFLLP3 | 3.11 | 3 | 1.266 | -0.947 | -0.219 |
| EFLLP4 | 3.338 | 3 | 1.22 | -0.764 | -0.325 |
| EFLLP5 | 3.264 | 3 | 1.232 | -0.815 | -0.277 |

Note: FW = Watching Frequency, TC = Content Type, LEC = Engagement of Learners with Content, DL = Digital Literacy, EFLLP = The Performance of EFL Learners

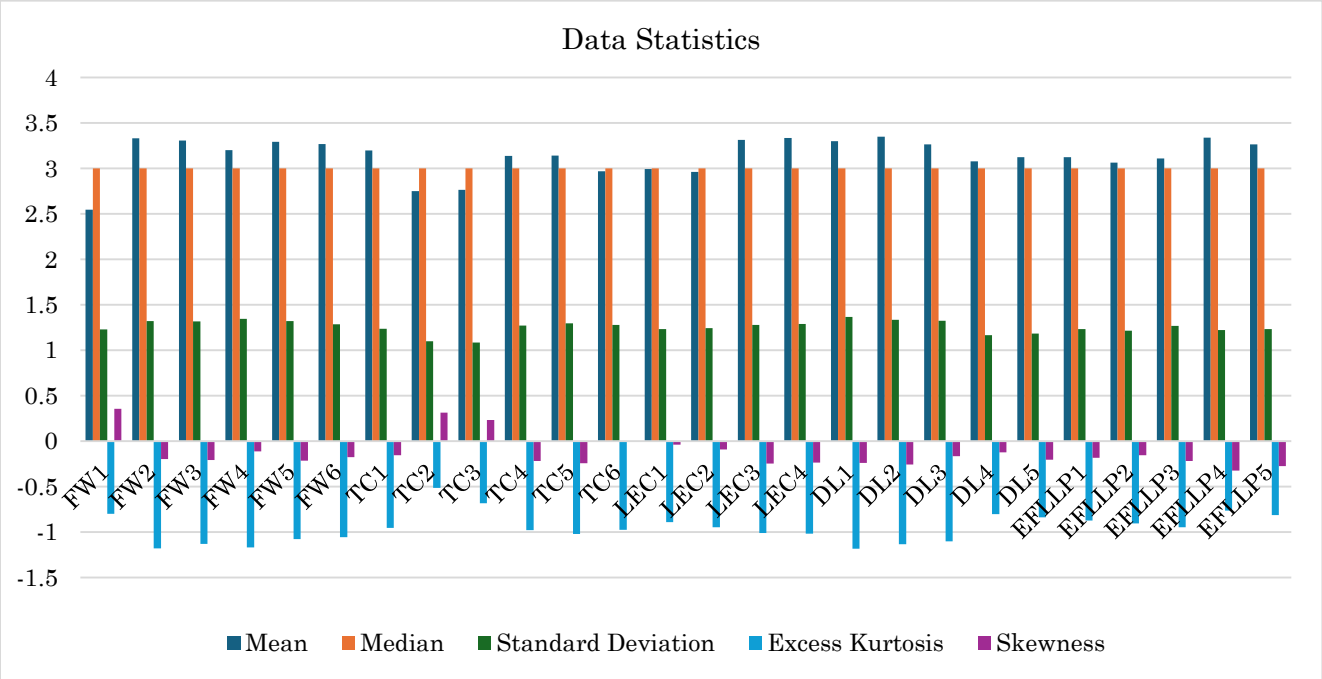


***Figure 2: Statistics of Data.***

**Note: FW = Watching Frequency, TC = Content Type, LEC = Engagement of Learners with Content, DL = Digital Literacy, EFLLP = The Performance of EFL Learners.**

PLS-SSEM is a statistical method used for evaluating inter-variable links, especially in cases involving complicated theoretical frameworks, predictive verifications, non-normal distribution,

and small samples. The social sciences, education, and marketing research have all made extensive use of PLS-SSEM, which takes the role of structural equation modeling based on covariance (CB-SSEM). The reliability and accuracy of the measurement model were examined in the initial phase of the PLS-SSEM study. Several measures were used to assess the convergent validity criteria. Hair et al. (2020) state that factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) should all be more than 0.50, 0.70, and 0.70, respectively (Hair et al., 2010). The fact that every need, as listed in Table 3, is satisfied supports convergent validity. Techniques like the Heterotrait-Monotrait proportion of correlations (HTMT) are employed for discriminant validity. The optimal HTMT ratio is less than 0.90 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). As Table 4 illustrates, all HTMT ratios met the criteria most of the time, demonstrating the uniqueness of a set of research components.

***Table 3: Convergent Validity.***

| Variable | Item | Loading | Alpha | CR | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Literacy | DL1 | 0.904 | 0.919 | 0.94 | 0.757 |
| | DL2 | 0.881 | | | |
| | DL3 | 0.885 | | | |
| | DL4 | 0.843 | | | |
| | DL5 | 0.835 | | | |
| The Performance of EFL Learners | EFLLP1 | 0.868 | 0.912 | 0.934 | 0.739 |
| | EFLLP2 | 0.886 | | | |
| | EFLLP3 | 0.874 | | | |
| | EFLLP4 | 0.837 | | | |
| | EFLLP5 | 0.832 | | | |
| The Performance of EFL Learners | FW1 | 0.543 | 0.917 | 0.938 | 0.721 |
| | FW2 | 0.889 | | | |
| | FW3 | 0.905 | | | |
| | FW4 | 0.911 | | | |
| | FW5 | 0.906 | | | |
| | FW6 | 0.878 | | | |
| Learner Engagement with Content | LEC1 | 0.868 | 0.892 | 0.925 | 0.755 |
| | LEC2 | 0.878 | | | |
| | LEC3 | 0.885 | | | |
| | LEC4 | 0.843 | | | |
| | TC1 | 0.821 | 0.876 | 0.907 | 0.622 |
| | TC2 | 0.661 | | | |
| | TC3 | 0.684 | | | |
| | TC4 | 0.884 | | | |
| | TC5 | 0.86 | | | |
| | TC6 | 0.795 | | | |

***Table 4: Discriminant Validity.***

| | DL | EFLLP | FW | LEC | TC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Literacy | | | | | |
| The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.752 | | | | |
| Watching Frequency | 0.792 | 0.595 | | | |
| Engagement of Learners with Content | 0.647 | 0.691 | 0.705 | | |
| Content Type | 0.638 | 0.727 | 0.554 | 0.663 | |

Hair & Sarstedt (2019) state that the bootstrapping method was used in the second phase of the PLS-SSEM study. In Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling, bootstrapping is a non-parametric resampling technique used to assess the importance of the links inside a structural model. The bootstrapping technique entails replicated estimations of the theoretical model on a number of small samples that are obtained from the original research dataset. This is used to infer the significance of the endogenous parameters that have been calculated. The sign of connections has been established by the beta value, while the significance has been ascertained by the t-value, which is set at 1.96. It is evident from Table 5 that the three components of YouTube in education watches, type, and learning engagement with content were significantly linked to the performance of English language learners. Each of the three variables obtained a t-value more than 1.96, supporting hypothesis 1, 2, and 3.

Specifically, the results of the study support

Hypothesis 5, which examined how digital literacy influences the link between language performance as well as content type; that is, as Figure 3 shows, digital literacy increases the impact of content type on language performance. On the other hand, there is no evidence to support the moderating impact of watching frequency (studied in hypothesis 4) and language performance (examined in hypothesis 6) on the impact of language learning engagement. This indicates that while content type, a key component of the current study, is strongly positively impacted by digital literacy, the other two variables are not.

***Table 5: Results.***

| | β | Mean | SD | T Statistics | P Values |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Watching Frequency -> The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.167 | 0.165 | 0.059 | 2.832 | 0.005 |
| Learner Engagement with Content -> The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.52 | 0.523 | 0.058 | 8.974 | 0 |
| Moderating Effect 1 -> The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.051 | 0.05 | 0.06 | 0.839 | 0.402 |
| Moderating Effect 2 -> The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.014 | 0.013 | 0.004 | 3.49 | 0.001 |
| Moderating Effect 3 -> The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.002 | 0 | 0.061 | 0.025 | 0.98 |
| Content Type -> The Performance of EFL Learners | 0.212 | 0.217 | 0.071 | 3.01 | 0.003 |

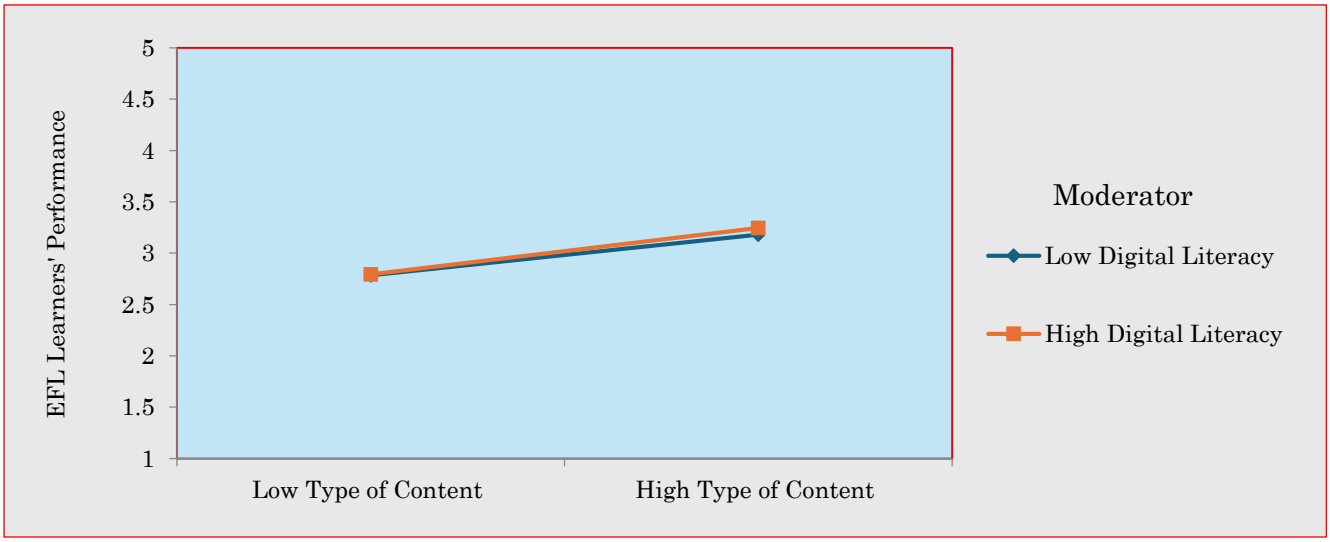


***Figure 3: The Association between the Kind of Material and the Performance of EFL Learners, Moderated by Digital Literacy.***

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current study looked at how watching instructional videos on YouTube affects Iraqi EFL learners' English language acquisition performance. Six hypotheses pertaining to the direct and moderating impacts of three YouTube-use dimensions frequency of viewing, kind of material, and learner engagement that were connected to the performance of EFL learners were developed in order to achieve a general study goal. This study focuses on teaching Iraqi English as a foreign language while making sure that digital learning materials are used effectively. The results offered important insights and further supported four of the six hypotheses with empirical evidence. The findings related to Hypothesis 1 demonstrated that learners' performance is positively impacted by how frequently they view English-language videos. According to the positive correlation, regular contact with English through multimedia platforms improves fundamental language abilities including general fluency, vocabulary expansion, pronunciation, and listening comprehension. This is in line with previous studies, such the one conducted by Brinton et al. (2015), which discovered that students' video-watching habits improved their academic performance, but not for EFL students. When evaluating the impact of video lecture involvement on student results, Ozan & Ozarslan (2016) came to similar conclusions.

The sort of information that students receive has a significant impact on language development, as demonstrated by the support for Hypothesis 2. Grammar and vocabulary, listening practice, and pronunciation were the main topics of instructional resources that were highly successful in improving the performance of EFL learners. This again thereby supports the argument for the quality and relevance

of content and not just the quantity. According to Uchidiuno et al. (2018) and Dart (2020), customized instructional content can increase student outcomes. According to the present study, organized instructional films are superior to general or entertainment-focused media when it comes to language learning.

Regarding Hypothesis 3, the findings demonstrated that learner interaction with video material had a substantial impact on EFL performance: The more interactive and attentive learners were while using the video learning, the better their achievement of language. Thus, YouTube has a complete educational value not based merely on the number of times they visit YouTube but rather also on how the learner actively participates and is able to focus on the object. Engaged learners retain more vocabularies, solidify understandings, and enhance speaking and listening skills. This corroborates other studies that demonstrated a substantial correlation between involvement and academic performance, including Carroll et al. (2021), Galal et al. (2023), and Jiang & Peng (2025). However, the study shows that in order to guarantee efficient use of online resources, learners require instruction and supervision.

More insight was gained by looking at digital proficiency as a moderator variable. The fourth hypothesis examined the impact of digital literacy on the association between EFL learners' performance and frequency of viewing. This hypothesis was not supported by the outcome. Similarly, there was no statistically significant moderating influence between learner involvement and performance in Hypothesis 6. On the other hand, hypothesis 5, which suggested that technology may act as a mediator in the link between content type and EFL learners' performance, was confirmed. This finding is interpreted to mean that learners with higher levels of digital competencies may be able to access, manage, and make more effective use of high-value learning content. Significantly, digital literacy seems to increase the effectiveness of specific video content, such listening or grammar-learning sessions, in improving language acquisition among students who are more tech-savvy.

## 7. IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

By evaluating how various aspects of YouTube usage affect Iraqi EFL learners' English performance an area that hasn't been well examined in the empirical research up to this point this study filled a key gap in the knowledge and addressed an important educational problem. The findings have significant implications for policymakers interested in embedding digital media to enhance language learning outcomes. Teachers, curriculum designers, and educational administrators who try to improve EFL instruction using technology-enhanced learning methodologies may find the findings to be practically helpful. Teachers should aggressively urge students to interact with instructional films on a regular basis. Repeated exposure to video resources can increase familiarity with real-life expressions, actual language use, a variety of dialects, and conversational structure all of which are typically insufficiently covered in EFL programs that rely heavily on textbooks. To help students improve their speaking, listening, and understanding skills, educators are urged to use digital video content into their teaching strategies. Policies should consider the quality and relevance of YouTube material in addition to the number and frequency of engagement. It should concentrate on giving students the chance to form intentional digital learning habits with the help of teachers who can direct them toward high-quality, goal-oriented learning materials. More importantly, in order to improve student autonomy, engagement, & language competency in FLE, administrators should promote more utilization of educational technology. Seeing the validated effect of digital literacy, governments, teachers, and policymakers must equally be aware of its status as a key supporter to enhance the maximum impact of learning with YouTube. Digital literacy programs should be assigned through special workshops or training courses, enabling learners to acquire such skills as retrieving, evaluating, and using digital content effectively. In this respect, it is necessary to reinforce the digital capacity of EFL learners to assist learners in becoming successful in recent technology-mediating academic environments.

## 8. FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Notwithstanding its contributions, this work has many shortcomings that also suggest directions for further investigation. First off, just one subgroup of Iraqi EFL students from two different secondary schools Alkhansaa Secondary School for Girls & Almarkazia Secondary School for Boys were included in the research. As a result, the findings' generalizability to other educational or cultural contexts is constrained. Therefore, future research should involve a more diversified & sample-wide study population in order to increase the results' external validity and generalizability. Second, this study did not investigate a multi-level & multi-dimensional analysis of the digital literacy levels and

dimensions that can affect students' capacity to use YouTube for learning. The operational, cognitive, analytical, social-emotional, and projective elements of digital literacy should all be analyzed in future study in order to measure learners' digital literacy in a more comprehensive manner. Thirdly, rather than using established or objective measuring instruments, the current study relied on self-reporting methods to evaluate the performance of EFL learners. This might result in performance results that are skewed or subjective. Future studies in this area must use direct assessment methods, such as structured writing assignments, listening skills, oral communication, and reading competency, rather than questionnaire-based tools, in order to provide more reliable and quantifiable results.

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