

YOUTUBE FOR ASSISTING AUTONOMOUS DEAF ENGLISH LEARNERS IN MASTERING EFL

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Abstract: Teaching English to students with special needs has been a concern in Indonesia. However, there were still some limitations in the practice of teaching and learning in class. Thus, this research tried to portray the use of YouTube to improve the quality of English learning outside the classroom. This research attempted to depict YouTube's use to assist autonomous deaf learners in mastering English as a foreign language. This research utilized case study research and thematic data analyses. The subject of the research was one autonomous deaf English learner. The data collecting technique was a written interview through an online chat application. The first result of the research pointed out that there were four learning manners of the autonomous deaf learner in optimizing the English learning process through YouTube, namely using the caption feature, backward feature, comment section, and google translate to learn more about English. The second result revealed that the autonomous deaf English learner obtained three insights from the learning process through YouTube: grammar knowledge, vocabulary, and general knowledge, particularly about knitting. Finally, it may be concluded that the YouTube features that served captions, backward buttons, and comment sections became the paramount factors for supporting the learning autonomy of the deaf learner in mastering English as a foreign language.

Keywords: *deaf, YouTube, autonomous, learner, EFL*

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian educational institutions mandate Indonesian students to be multilingual (Bedir, 2019). All schools and universities emphasize Indonesian as the primary language and one or two foreign languages as the supplementary ones (Fauyan, 2019). It creates a solid foundation for language development in all educational settings, including inclusive schools or inclusive universities where students with special needs sit together to study with normal kids. English is the language that has attained the status of foreign language in Indonesia. The pivotal role of English in this current era urges the students, including the deaf students, to be proficient in English so that they can compete in future work settings (Zainuddin et al., 2019).

Although educational institutions have concerned about the English teaching process for deaf students, there are still many limitations in the English teaching and learning process for deaf students. Research conducted by Ntinda et al., 2019 reported

that deaf students felt it convenient to be visual learners, which becomes a challenging learning environment where the most significant knowledge is transferred by mouth solely in the classroom.

Another study conducted in an inclusive English language classroom in Ethiopia revealed that during English language classes, mainly listening and speaking activities, the communication challenge encountered by students and teachers is more significant (Getnet, 2019). It is due to the deaf students' difficulties in producing a sound that becomes a problematic learning situation (Khasawneh, 2021).

Despite some obstacles to English learning, success in English learning is not an impossible thing to be achieved for deaf students. The key to gaining success relies on deaf students' motivation. Šrejbrová, 2000 mentioned that the main point of English learning success is motivation because the effort that has to be made to learn English as a foreign language by deaf students is incomparable to the effort that has to be made by hearing students. She added that typically, the learning progress of deaf students in learning a foreign language is slower and deaf students must provide more patience in the learning process.

Gardner in Gough, 2014 pointed out that motivation is often defined as the combination of effort and desire to reach the learning goal, added to a passion for language learning. In addition, Gough, 2014 said that motivation becomes a critical aspect in learning a foreign language and the motivation to learn a foreign language is unique for every language learner.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Autonomous English learners

Autonomous learners are recognized by specific behavior, and it may differ from one another depending on several factors such as age, learning condition and others. But one thing is clear that the autonomous learners must be interested and motivated in what they are doing so that they become responsible and aware of the process of learning (Lander & Kuramoto, 2013) . The learning autonomy can be achieved by involving a range of learning strategies and decision-making skill in the area that is basically determined by the schools (Dhami, 2022). Not only that combination, but it is also supported with motivation that subsequently leads the students to be autonomous learners. The learning autonomy encourages the learners to have self-directed learning behavior. By being an autonomous learner, someone can exploit the learning sources and opportunities outside the classroom to achieve better learning outcomes in foreign language learning (Kormos & Csizér, 2014). Reeve et al., 2012 add that when learners can regulate the learning action by combining their interests and values, they are called autonomous learners. Moreover, motivation also becomes the driving aspect that forces learners to be successful foreign language users. Ushioda, 2006 argues that intrinsically motivated learners are more responsible and aware of their learning process so that it can be obtained more effectively.

Internet and YouTube to support deaf students' English learning

In tertiary education, college students are generally expected to learn their foreign language mainly through self-studies. Morávková, 2011 stated the students in

universities have more flexibility and freedom to study English independently, adjusted to their pace of learning. They could access all learning materials available in any learning source. The advance supports this fact in today's technology. Internet serves a positive impact on the process of English learning (Haratikka, 2020). It provides the students' connection to the whole world and makes them more aware of the importance of English for international communication (Morávková, 2011). More specifically, the internet has many features that make deaf learners benefit from the highly visual presentation and information (Morávková, 2011).

Many learning sources in the form of texts are available on the internet, and some educational websites provide specified texts for learning English as a foreign language (Morávková, 2011). Deaf students are keen on accessing interactive English learning material; one of them is video, which may boost their ability to understand the language and accelerate their knowledge of the English language (Nasir et al., 2021). A study by Li et al., 2022 reported that deaf students consume many videos from a video-based platforms such as YouTube. The reasons are various such as for entertainment, learning something, and others. Deaf students learn much from accessing the YouTube platform, leading to positive learning outcomes from self-learning.

Captioning for deaf students' English learning

Deaf students have an emergent need for captioning when they access videos on YouTube. The video captions help deaf students understand the video content and learn from the learning process. Captioning provides additional sense and stimulates learning because hearing and seeing deaf students may improve their retention and comprehension of the learning material presented in the video (Shepherd & Alpert, 2015). The quality of captioning is not always excellent. Some language errors such as inaccuracy, spelling, grammar, and others appear in the machine-generated caption on YouTube.

Some studies carried out by some researchers Gernsbacher, 2015; Shiver & Wolfe, 2015; Whitney & Dallas, 2019 revealed that despite the video caption that contains errors, it could still help deaf students in understanding the video content as a foreign language learners. Furthermore, a study by Li et al., 2022 reported that errors such as grammar and spelling would not significantly affect deaf language learners because they can predict the correct one by comparing it with the video context.

Prior studies have shown the potential aspects of YouTube with captioning features for assisting the deaf student in learning English. However, no study still points out the use of YouTube as a learning source for the autonomous deaf English learner. Thus, this study investigates the issue by answering the research questions:

1. How does an autonomous deaf English learner gain knowledge from YouTube videos?
2. What English language insights that the autonomous deaf English learner gain from YouTube videos?

METHOD

This study is a case study to provide a detailed analysis of an individual case and, simultaneously, develop a more general theoretical statement about the regularities in the observed phenomena (Fidel, 1984). The case study method's objective was to describe how the YouTube platform assists autonomous deaf learners in mastering English as a foreign language. The data collecting method used interviews. The interview was conducted with the research participants through the online system. The researcher asked questions to the research participants in a written form conducted through WhatsApp. There were three research participants in this study. The research participant is a non-English major student of Sanata Dharma University who took a General English class. She is a second-semester student. She is deaf. Her age was 19 years old. According to the CEFR English level, the research participant was classified as B2 Intermediate. They could build a conversation with a broader range of context covering personal opinions and other informal discussions, though errors frequently appeared in complex sentences. The research was conducted in 2022 when the covid-19 pandemic still occurred. The second participant is the mother of the deaf student and the English lecturer of the deaf student. Both mother and lecturer are included as the research participants in this study as the triangulation data to validate the research result. The data were gathered in the form of paragraphs, sentences and phrases. Then, the researcher analyzed the data by employing thematic data analysis procedures proposed by Braun & Clarke, as cited in (Muslimin & Harintama, 2020). The thematic data analysis started with self-familiarity with the data, coding, analyzing the theme, reviewing the theme, and naming and reporting the analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Autonomous English learner

In the initial stage of the interview, the researcher asked about the deaf student perception of English. This section described the overview of the deaf student as being an autonomous English learner. The student described that ***"I find it challenging to learn English. When I write something, I try to check again what I wrote. I feel it is important to ensure that the sentences are clear, with no repetition and ambiguity."*** The statement mentioned by the student illustrated that she was an autonomous learner. Her learning autonomy encourages self-directed learning behavior (Kormos & Csizér, 2014). Her learning behavior was not mandated by the teacher or someone else. The learning behavior came from within herself. She was encouraged to do further exercises in English learning by checking her writing. The student also did self-study. She tried to practice English by producing English writing.

Moreover, she was aware of her English language production. She double-checked what she wrote so that there were no errors on it. It is in line with what has been stated Kontra, 2017 that self-study was an effective method for learning a foreign language when the deaf learner was mainly doing reading and writing activities for learning. The deaf student's primary activity in learning was reading and writing.

"I like English, and I am challenged to learn about the English language. I feel like I

have good English skills. Moreover, I believe that mastering English can enhance my knowledge." It is in line with what had been mentioned by Ushioda, 2006 that intrinsically motivated learners are more responsible and aware of their learning process so that the learning objectives can be obtained more effectively. It was proven with the student's action of learning that she watched the YouTube video that was delivered in a foreign language and used English subtitles. This activity showed that the student's interest and intrinsic motivation encouraged her to do the English learning activity. The student's intrinsic motivation was described in the statement that she wanted to understand the YouTube video content using English subtitles and her expectation of enhancing her knowledge by watching YouTube content with English subtitles.

This data was validated with the triangulation data from the English lecturer that the deaf student was intrinsically motivated. Her performance in the classroom showed that she often participated in-class activities. She raised her hands many times when the lecturer invited the students to engage in the classroom learning process actively. The deaf student was also reported to be disciplined in submitting the English assignments.

YouTube supports the autonomous deaf student in learning English

This section discussed the first research question about how YouTube supports autonomous deaf student English learning. The discussion started with the variety of online applications that the student used to support English foreign language learning. The result is illustrated in figure 1.

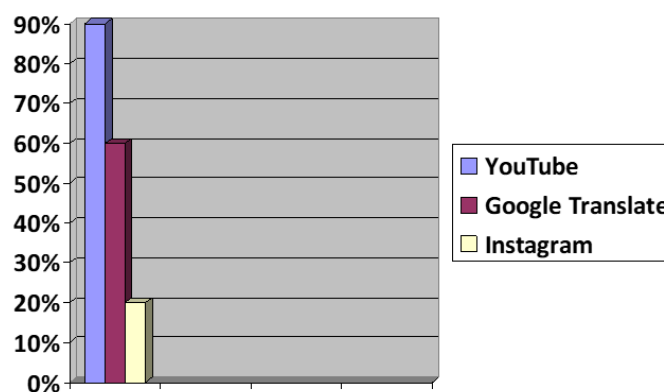


Figure 1. The Frequency of Online Application Usage by the Autonomous Deaf English Learner

Figure 1 showed that the autonomous deaf student used three online applications to support English language learning: Instagram, google translate and YouTube. The frequency of usage within a month was shown in figure 1. The most used application was YouTube. The autonomous deaf student used YouTube with a frequency of 90% within a month. She stated that she spent two hours a day regularly accessing YouTube. The purposes included entertainment, learning English through the content, enhancing knowledge and others. The fact was supported by a research finding Haqqu et al., 2019 revealing that nowadays, people, especially teenagers, use YouTube to access video information to satisfy various motives. Then the second application commonly

used by the autonomous deaf student was google translate. That application was used with a percentage of 60 % per month. She used Google translate application to find out the meaning of the unknown words she got from the YouTube video. It was in line with the research finding Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017 presenting that Google translate was a frequently used application due to its feature of showing the meaning of unknown words. Thirdly, the application that the autonomous deaf student rarely used was Instagram. It got a frequency of 20% within a month. The autonomous deaf student did not like to use Instagram because what she learned from Instagram was slang words. English slang words were not the point of learning that she focused on. Thus, she rarely used Instagram for English learning.

YouTube was the application that supported the autonomous deaf learner with various types of video content. The video available on YouTube includes various kinds of genres, ranging from the most formal ones (such as National Geographic documentaries and educational videos) to the nonformal ones for entertainment (Lin, 2022). Moreover, the strength of the YouTube application was the ease of sharing videos and vice versa (Haqu et al., 2019). Due to that, both video content creators and viewers can easily access the YouTube platform.

In this study, the data showed that the autonomous deaf student watched Korean variety shows and videos with the theme of knitting as her regularly watched videos. She said, ***"I like watching variety shows from Korea, and I like watching knitting videos. I think a Korean variety show is amusing, so I like to watch it to make me happy. Then, knitting is my hobby, so I try to get more knowledge by watching YouTube videos."*** The students selected the videos based on their interests. She watched the Korean variety shows because she liked Korean culture, and she got entertained through the videos. When she watched it, she activated the English subtitle for that video. The subtitle or captions provided by YouTube helped the autonomous deaf student understand the video content and improve her English knowledge.

The autonomous deaf student said, ***"In order to improve my English skills, I activate the caption on YouTube. It helped me to understand the video that I watched. The text from the caption supports the visual video that I watched. YouTube captions show the written English version of what is discussed in the video."*** The data revealed that captions on YouTube were the essential point of a feature that supports the autonomous deaf student in learning English. It was supported by several studies that reported the importance of captions for deaf and language learners. Captions are a tool that benefits people who are deaf, although other groups of learners, including foreign language learners, also use them (Collins, 2013). In addition, captions, also known as subtitles, are accurate to meet the needs of the deaf (Parton, 2013). However, the autonomous deaf students admitted that sometimes the quality of YouTube captions was inaccurate. She mentioned that ***"I find some grammatical errors in the YouTube captions. Sometimes it makes me confused, but the errors are minor."***

I still can understand the point of the information. The finding was in line with the study carried out by Parton, 2013 reporting that YouTube captioning is not 100% accurate, but it primarily provides the audiences with a reasonably good job.

The following research result revealed that the backward feature in YouTube was necessary to support the autonomous deaf student in learning English. She stated, ***“When I am confused with the video, I will play the video again by dragging the video button to the back. I repeat it again and again until I understand it.”*** The data illustrated the effort of the autonomous deaf student in coping with the difficulties in learning English by repeating the video with the backward button. This YouTube feature enabled her to understand the information in the video at her own pace. The backward feature on YouTube also kept the autonomous deaf student from the frustration caused by the difficulties in understanding English information. It made her more comfortable adjusting the speed of English learning based on her capabilities. This data was strengthened by the research finding Qomaria & Zaim, 2021 reporting that it was common for language learners to replay the videos where they encountered language difficulties. They did it to solve the difficulties with their own pace of learning.

The research result then showed that the comment section on YouTube became the learning space for the autonomous deaf learner. The data presented that the autonomous deaf learner learned many English language forms from the comment section. ***“When I watched the knitting video, I went further to know more information from the comment section. I got much knowledge, both those related to knitting and English, from the comment that I read.”*** There was considerable knowledge that the autonomous deaf student got from the comment. YouTube comments involve language and intercultural learning for the language learner (Benson, 2015).

Then, in English learning through YouTube, she used other applications when the autonomous deaf did not know any vocabulary. The autonomous deaf learner tried to find out the vocabularies that she did not know yet by using the google translate application. ***“When I find some words that I do not know, I use google translate to check them. Google translate helps me understand the unknown vocabulary from YouTube videos. The access to google translate is so easy and cheap.”*** It is in line with what had been said by Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017 that language learners use google translate most frequently to get the meaning of unknown words. Furthermore, language learners also used it to help them understand English sentences and text from an online platform, one of which is YouTube.

Insights that the autonomous deaf student gain from learning English through YouTube

This section answered the second research question about the English insights the autonomous deaf learner gained from YouTube videos. There were three points which were grammar, vocabulary, and general knowledge. The first finding was

grammar. The autonomous deaf student stated, ***"I learned grammar from the sentences I read. I read it then, and after some moment, I translated it into google translate. Then, I got the meaning of it. Next, I analyzed the structure of the words and browsed google to know more about the sentence structure."*** From that explanation, it was shown that the autonomous deaf learner gained grammar through her curiosity about specific sentences that appeared in the YouTube caption. She was assisted by online applications such as google translate and google browser to seek more information related to the grammar structure that she tried to understand.

The second result revealed that vocabulary was the insight that autonomous deaf learner gained from YouTube video captioning feature. She mentioned, ***"What I learned a lot from the caption feature on YouTube was vocabulary. I felt my vocabulary was increased through the exposure to English sentences on the YouTube caption. When I saw unfamiliar vocabularies, I tried to look up the meaning of it in the online dictionary."*** The result clearly illustrated that YouTube significantly impacted the students' vocabulary acquisition. The students' vocabulary achievement was significantly improved in foreign language learning (Kabooha & Elyas, 2018). Moreover, Heriyanto, 2015 also exposed that YouTube positively impacted the students' process of acquiring new vocabulary. Learner found it easier to memorize new vocabulary because they had already known the use of the words in the actual context of communication through YouTube videos.

The last point the autonomous deaf learner gained from the YouTube video caption was general knowledge. The autonomous deaf learner said, ***"I learned much knowledge related to knitting from the YouTube video caption. The caption helped me to understand the sentences said in the video. The knowledge was insightful, and I felt I could not gain the knowledge without the help of YouTube caption."*** The finding proved that YouTube enriched the autonomous deaf learner's general knowledge. Through the visual communication presented in the YouTube caption, the autonomous deaf learner got more general knowledge, specifically the knowledge related to knitting, which became her interest.

The data in this section was validated with the triangulation data gained from the mother of the autonomous deaf learner. The mother mentioned that the autonomous deaf learner was motivated to learn English through YouTube. She often showed and shared what she was watching and learning with her mother. Then, the mother gave response positively by encouraging the autonomous deaf learner to continue her activity of learning English through the YouTube video caption.

CONCLUSION

This research had two objectives: to reveal how autonomous deaf English learners gain knowledge from YouTube videos with captioning features and to portray the English language insight that the autonomous deaf English learner gain from YouTube videos

with the captioning feature. The finding and discussion yielded some results. The first key finding showed four learning manners of the autonomous deaf learner in maximizing the English learning process through YouTube: using caption feature, backward feature, comment section, and utilizing google translate to seek further information dealing with the English language. The second finding exposed that the autonomous deaf learner gained three insights from the English learning process through YouTube: grammar knowledge, vocabulary, and general knowledge, specifically about knitting as becoming her interest. In a nutshell, YouTube features such as caption, backward button and comment section had a significant and positive relation with learning autonomy of the deaf learner. Those YouTube features support the deaf learner and enable them to learn English from YouTube with ease and convenience. The suggestion for further research was to dig out deaf student learning strategies for improving English knowledge through YouTube.

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