

# Identifying Educational Needs: A Study on the Role of YouTube in Project-Based Learning and Role Play for Developing Speaking Skills and Character in Generation Z

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**Abstract.** This study explores the educational needs of Generation Z by evaluating the effectiveness of YouTube, Project-Based Learning (PBL), and role-play in developing speaking skills and character. The research conducted with 50 respondents from the English Language and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Medan reveals that 40% of students found YouTube significantly enhanced engagement, 30% reported improved pronunciation, intonation, and fluency, and 20% appreciated self-paced learning. However, 10% struggled with passive learning due to overreliance on the platform. PBL fostered enhanced collaboration and critical thinking in 35% of students, increased creative thinking and problem-solving in 40%, and motivation through project sharing in 25%. Role play boosted public speaking confidence for 45% of students, improved empathy and emotional intelligence for 30%, and enhanced communication skills for 25%. The study underscores YouTube's potential when integrated with PBL and role play to engage Generation Z and address their distinct learning preferences effectively.

**Keywords:** Generation Z, project-based learning, role play, speaking skills, character development.

## 1 Introduction

The emergence of Generation Z, characterized by their deep engagement with digital technologies, has reshaped educational paradigms worldwide. As digital natives, Generation Z students are accustomed to interacting with technology and thrive in environments that integrate multimedia and interactive tools into their learning experiences. This shift calls for innovative pedagogical approaches that leverage digital platforms to enhance learning outcomes, particularly in language acquisition and character development.

Generation Z students, born in a world dominated by digital technologies, have distinctive learning preferences prioritizing interactive and technology-driven educational experiences. Their expectations often diverge from traditional methods, emphasizing the need for digital integration in the classroom to maintain engagement and effectiveness [1]. The concept of Generation Z as "digital natives" is well-documented, highlighting their innate familiarity with digital tools and platforms. Studies have shown that incorporating technology into teaching strategies, such as using YouTube and other digital media, can significantly enhance learning outcomes, particularly in language acquisition and speaking skills [2],[3].

Speaking skills are crucial for effective communication and academic success in English language education. However, traditional methods of teaching speaking skills often fail to engage Generation Z students, who seek more dynamic and participatory learning experiences. To address this challenge, educators have increasingly turned to project-based learning (PBL) and role-play as effective strategies for fostering speaking skills. These methods encourage active student participation, collaboration, and the practical application of language in real-world scenarios. Project-based learning (PBL) and role-play are pedagogical strategies that resonate well with Generation Z students, who thrive on interactive and participatory approaches. These methods have been shown to improve language skills and critical character traits such as teamwork and responsibility, making them particularly effective when integrated with digital tools like YouTube [4],[5].

As a widely used digital platform, YouTube offers vast potential in supporting these pedagogical approaches. With its rich repository of videos, tutorials, and interactive content, YouTube provides students access to authentic language materials and examples of native speakers in various contexts. When integrated into project-based learning and role play, YouTube can be valuable for developing speaking skills, enhancing pronunciation, and fostering creativity. Moreover, the platform's interactive features allow students to engage in discussions, share their content, and receive feedback, further reinforcing their language learning experience.

Character development is another critical aspect of education, particularly in the formative years of university students. When combined with YouTube, project-based learning and role play offer opportunities for students to cultivate essential character traits such as teamwork, responsibility, and empathy. Through collaborative projects and role-playing activities, students improve their language skills and develop the interpersonal and ethical competencies needed to thrive in a globalized world.

This study focuses on English department students in their second semester at Universitas Negeri Medan, where there is growing recognition of the need to adapt teaching methods to meet the educational needs of Generation Z. By investigating the role of YouTube in project-based learning and role-play, this research aims to identify effective strategies for enhancing speaking skills and character development among these students.

The findings of this study will contribute to the broader field of language education by providing insights into integrating digital tools in the classroom. Additionally, the research will offer practical recommendations for educators seeking to optimize their teaching methods to align with the preferences and needs of Generation Z students.

## 2 Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effectiveness of YouTube-integrated Project-Based Learning (PBL) and role-play in enhancing speaking skills and character development among second-semester English department students at Universitas Negeri Medan. A sample of 50 students will be divided into an experimental group, which will engage in YouTube-enhanced activities, and a control group, which will follow traditional speaking instruction. Data will be collected through pre- and post-tests, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and classroom observations, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of quantitative and qualitative outcomes. The pre- and post-test results will be statistically analyzed to assess improvements in speaking skills, while thematic analysis of interviews and observations will provide insights into students' experiences and the impact on character traits like teamwork and empathy.

## 3 Result and Discussion

### 3.1 Result

This study explored the effectiveness of integrating YouTube, Project-Based Learning (PBL), and Role Play to develop speaking skills and character among Generation Z students, particularly second-semester English department students at Universitas Negeri Medan. The findings can be seen in the following table.

**Table 1.** Students' Responses on the Role of Youtube

No	Category	Percentage
1	Increased engagement with learning materials.	40%
2	Improved pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.	30%
3	Self-paced learning and revisiting content for better understanding.	20%
4	Overreliance on YouTube for passive learning instead of active participation.	10%

The findings related to the role of YouTube in the study reveal that it has significantly impacted students' learning experiences. 40% of students reported increased engagement with learning materials due to YouTube, highlighting its effectiveness in capturing their interest and making the content more accessible. 30% of students noted improved pronunciation, intonation, and fluency due to using YouTube videos for practice. This suggests that the multimedia aspect of YouTube is beneficial for developing speaking skills. Additionally, 20% of students appreciated the ability to learn at their own pace and revisit content for better understanding, which underscores YouTube's role in providing self-paced learning opportunities. However, 10% of students faced challenges with overreliance on YouTube, sometimes leading to passive learning rather than active participation. YouTube has been a valuable tool, but its use requires careful management to balance engagement with active learning.

**Table 2.** Students' Responses on the Impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL)

No	Category	Percentage
1	Enhanced collaboration, fostering teamwork and critical thinking.	35%

2	Encouraged creative thinking and problem-solving.	40%
3	Increased motivation due to potential sharing of projects with a wider audience.	25%

The impact of Project-Based Learning (PBL) on students was largely positive. 35% of students experienced enhanced collaboration and teamwork due to PBL activities, which fostered critical thinking and a collaborative learning environment. This reflects the effectiveness of PBL in promoting interactive and group-based learning. 40% of students noted that PBL encouraged creative thinking and problem-solving, indicating that the projects allowed them to explore innovative solutions and develop their creativity. Furthermore, 25% of students were motivated by the prospect of sharing their projects with a broader audience, which contributed to their overall enthusiasm and commitment to the tasks. These findings highlight PBL's role in engaging students and enhancing their problem-solving abilities through real-world applications and collaborative efforts.

**Table 3.** Role Play for Character Development

No	Category	Percentage
1	Boosted student confidence in public speaking.	45%
2	Enhanced empathy and emotional intelligence through role-playing different characters.	30%
3	Improved communication skills, including the use of gestures, facial expressions, and body language.	25%

Role Play has proven effective in developing students' character and communication skills. 45% of students reported a boost in their confidence in public speaking, indicating that role play helped them become more comfortable and articulate in presenting their ideas. Additionally, 30% of students benefited from enhanced empathy and emotional intelligence through role-playing different characters, which allowed them to understand and relate to diverse perspectives. The role-play activities also contributed to 25% of students improving their communication skills, including gestures, facial expressions, and body language. These results demonstrate the value of role-play in enhancing speaking abilities and fostering emotional and interpersonal skills, which are crucial for effective communication and personal development.

Overall, the study shows that YouTube, PBL, and Role Play contribute uniquely to improving speaking skills and character development. YouTube offers flexibility and accessibility but needs to be complemented by active learning methods to avoid passivity. PBL enhances collaboration, creativity, and motivation, making learning more engaging and effective. Role Play significantly boosts confidence, empathy, and communication skills, demonstrating its value in personal and interpersonal development. While each method has benefits, combining these strategies provides a well-rounded approach to developing the speaking skills and character traits necessary for success in modern education and beyond.

### **3.2 Discussion**

The findings from this study reveal valuable insights into the integration of YouTube, Project-Based Learning (PBL), and Role-Play for developing speaking skills and character traits. They align with existing research while offering new perspectives.

YouTube significantly enhanced student engagement with learning materials, with 40% reporting increased engagement and 30% noting improvements in pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. This supports previous studies, such as those by [6] and [7], which highlighted the positive impact of multimedia tools like YouTube on language learning. However, the study also identified a 10% challenge related to overreliance on YouTube for passive learning, a concern echoed by [8], who pointed out that students might only engage passively with such tools with proper guidance. This underscores the need for a balanced approach to maximize YouTube's benefits while avoiding passive consumption.

Project-based learning (PBL) enhanced collaboration and critical thinking, with 35% of students benefiting from these aspects and 40% experiencing increased creative thinking and problem-solving. These results align with the findings of [9] and [10], who documented PBL's effectiveness in fostering collaboration, creativity, and motivation through real-world problem-solving. The study also found that 25% of students were motivated by the opportunity to share their projects with a broader audience. This corroborates [11], who noted that authentic audiences in PBL can boost engagement and motivation. This confirms the broad benefits of PBL in creating an engaging and motivating learning environment.

Role Play enhanced students' confidence in public speaking, with 45% reporting increased confidence and 30% noting improvements in empathy and emotional intelligence. These findings are consistent with research by [12] and [13], who emphasized the role of role-play in building confidence and fostering empathetic understanding. Additionally, 25% of students improved their communication skills through role play, aligning with [14] assertion that role play enhances interpersonal skills and understanding different perspectives. This highlights role play's value in developing speaking abilities and emotional intelligence.

Overall, the study's results reinforce and expand upon existing research on these educational methods. YouTube effectively enhances engagement and language skills but requires careful management to prevent passive learning. PBL fosters critical thinking, creativity, and motivation, while role-play builds confidence and empathy. These findings suggest that integrating these methods can provide a comprehensive approach to developing speaking skills and character traits. However, future research should explore strategies to address the challenges identified and optimize the benefits of these educational tools.

### **4 Conclusion**

The study's results validate and extend previous research on integrating YouTube, PBL, and Role Play in education. YouTube is shown to enhance engagement and language skills but requires careful management to avoid passive learning. PBL effectively fosters collaboration, creativity, and motivation, aligning with the established benefits of this pedagogical approach. Role play effectively builds confidence, empathy, and communication skills, consistent with its documented advantages. These findings suggest that a well-rounded approach incorporating

these methods can significantly enhance students' speaking skills and character development. Future research could explore optimizing these tools' integration to address their challenges and maximize their benefits.

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