



## **FROM SUBTITLES TO SPEAKING: “HOW DIGITAL MEDIA NATURALLY HELPED ME MASTER ENGLISH”**

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### **Abstract**

When we think about learning English, most people imagine textbooks, grammar exercises, and classroom lessons. But for me, the real progress started somewhere else — in my headphones and on my screen. Watching K-dramas with subtitles, listening to English music, and spending time on YouTube became more than just entertainment. They turned into powerful learning tools. Through these daily exposures, I started to read faster, understand spoken English better, and even speak more fluently without much pressure. To explore whether others have had a similar experience, I asked several classmates how they learn English outside school. Their answers revealed that I wasn't the only one using media as a learning method — many had found similar benefits in music, films, and online content.

### **Introduction**

When we think about learning English, most people imagine textbooks, grammar exercises, and classroom lessons. But for me, the real progress started somewhere else — in my headphones and on my screen. Watching K-dramas with subtitles, listening to English music, and spending time on YouTube became more than just entertainment. They turned into powerful learning tools. Through these daily exposures, I started to read faster, understand spoken English better, and even speak more fluently without much pressure. To explore whether others have had a similar experience, I asked several classmates how they learn English outside school. Their answers revealed that I wasn't the only one using media as a learning method — many had found similar benefits in music, films, and online content.



## **DISCOVERING NEW WAYS TO LEARN**

As I first began learning English, I was deeply interested in it. It felt like entering a completely new world. However, over time, my motivation started to fade. I became overwhelmed by confusing grammar rules, endless vocabulary lists, and the fear of speaking. At one point, I even took a break from studying. I realized that traditional learning methods no longer worked for me, so I began searching for new and more engaging ways to improve my English.

One of the first things I tried was listening to English podcasts on YouTube. I chose topics I was genuinely interested in, but understanding them was difficult at first. To help myself, I turned on the subtitles. I encountered many unfamiliar words, and whenever I saw a new one, I looked it up in a dictionary to learn the meaning. What helped the most was that these words often appeared repeatedly throughout the video. Because I didn't want to interrupt the podcast too often, I started remembering them naturally. Seeing the same word in context several times helped me learn it effortlessly, without memorizing.

Later, when podcasts started to feel repetitive, I switched to watching movies and K-dramas, which I've always enjoyed. At first, I searched for dubbed versions in my native language, but they were not always available. So I started watching them in Korean with English subtitles. Surprisingly, this method allowed me expand my vocabulary and improve my reading speed. I was reading subtitles quickly and understanding them at the same time. This method was not only enjoyable but also helped me perform better in my English exams.

## **THE POWER OF MUSIC IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Another method that enabled me improve my English naturally was listening to English songs. At first, I listened just for fun, enjoying the rhythm and melody. But as I started paying more attention to the lyrics, I realized that songs could also teach me real, everyday English. When I liked a song, I would first try to understand the words by just listening. Then, I searched for the lyrics and read them carefully, trying to catch the meaning of every line.

Of course, I often came across words or phrases I didn't know. Instead of ignoring them, I looked them up in a dictionary and tried to understand how they were used in the song. Because I heard those words again and again whenever I listened to the song, they became easier to remember. In time, I started to recognize grammar



patterns, new expressions, and even idioms just by listening to music. It also improved my listening skills, because songs are usually fast and full of emotion, so I had to train my ears to follow along.

Most importantly, learning English through music never felt boring. I could learn even when I was walking, doing chores, or just relaxing. That's why songs became one of my favorite ways to improve vocabulary and listening without pressure.

### **LEARNING THROUGH YOUTUBE AND INTERNET VIDEOS**

In addition to songs and dramas, YouTube became another important part of my English learning journey. At first, I started watching short videos and vlogs just for fun, but soon I realized that they were also helping me understand how real people speak in everyday situations. Unlike textbook English, the language in these videos was more natural and full of useful expressions, slang, and informal phrases. This made me feel more connected to the real way English is spoken around the world. One of the things I liked most about YouTube was the variety. I could choose topics I was interested in — like lifestyle, studying, cooking, or even English learning itself — and watch videos in English that matched those topics. When I didn't understand something, I turned on the subtitles or slowed the video down. Just like with podcasts and music, I often came across new vocabulary, and I looked up the meanings and wrote them down. I also began to copy the way native speakers pronounced words and used their tone, which helped me become more confident in speaking English.

Over time, watching YouTube videos became more than just practice — it was like having a daily English environment. It helped me improve not only my vocabulary and listening, but also my pronunciation and natural fluency. Even when I was tired of traditional studying, these videos kept me learning in a way that felt easy and enjoyable.

### **WHAT OTHER LEARNERS THINK**

To understand whether other students also use digital media in their English learning, I asked 10 of my classmates about their preferred learning methods outside the classroom. The results showed that modern and creative approaches are quite popular.



6 students said they prefer watching short videos to improve their English

5 students enjoy learning through music

4 students like listening to podcasts

4 students regularly watch movies

Only 3 students said they prefer traditional methods, such as textbooks and grammar exercises

These responses suggest that many learners, like me, find media-based methods more engaging and effective. Using the internet and entertainment not only helps them learn new vocabulary, but also keeps them motivated and interested in the language.

## **CONCLUSION**

In my journey of learning English, I discovered that progress doesn't always come from textbooks or grammar drills. Instead, real improvement came when I started using English in ways that felt natural and enjoyable — through music, movies, K-dramas, podcasts, and YouTube. These tools not only helped me expand my vocabulary and improve my listening skills, but also made learning feel like a part of my daily life, not just a school subject.

The small survey I conducted showed that many other learners feel the same way. Most of them prefer using digital media instead of traditional methods. This shows that learning can be more effective when it is interesting, personal, and connected to real-life experiences.

For anyone who feels stuck or bored with usual study routines, I truly recommend trying these methods. Learning English doesn't have to be stressful — it can be fun, meaningful, and even exciting if you choose the right tools.