Exploring Students' Perception on the Benefits of TikTok Content for English Language Learning

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Abstract. Since its emergence, TikTok has expanded as a social media platform by facilitating the spread of educational content, particularly English language learning, which has become increasingly attractive to students in Indonesia. This study explores students' perceptions of TikTok's effectiveness in enhancing English proficiency. By focusing on emotional experiences and practical usage, it fills a gap in the literature and provides a deeper understanding of TikTok's educational impact. A qualitative approach involving 70 social media-active students was employed. Data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews, assessing social media use and perceived platform effectiveness. Results showed a strong preference for TikTok as a supplementary English learning tool due to its accessibility and engaging content. However, issues like internet connectivity and privacy concerns were noted. In conclusion, TikTok has potential as a resource for language practice and skill improvement, suggesting the need to integrate social media into educational strategies for more interactive learning environments.
Keywords: Educational content, English language learning, Social media, Students' perception, TikTok App

Abstrak. Sejak kemunculannya, TikTok telah berkembang sebagai platform media sosial dengan memfasilitasi penyebaran konten edukatif, khususnya pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, yang semakin menarik bagi siswa di Indonesia. Studi ini mengeksplorasi persepsi siswa tentang efektivitas TikTok dalam meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris. Dengan fokus pada pengalaman emosional dan penggunaan praktis, ini mengisi kekosongan dalam literatur dan memberikan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam tentang dampak pendidikan TikTok. Pendekatan kualitatif yang melibatkan 70 siswa aktif di media sosial digunakan. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan wawancara, menilai penggunaan media sosial dan efektivitas platform yang dipersepsikan. Hasil menunjukkan preferensi yang kuat terhadap TikTok sebagai alat bantu belajar bahasa Inggris karena aksesibilitas dan kontennya yang menarik. Namun, masalah seperti konektivitas internet dan kekhawatiran privasi dicatat. Kesimpulannya, TikTok memiliki potensi sebagai sumber untuk praktik bahasa dan peningkatan keterampilan, yang menunjukkan perlunya mengintegrasikan media sosial ke dalam strategi pendidikan untuk lingkungan pembelajaran yang lebih interaktif.
Kata kunci: *Konten pendidikan, pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, media sosial, persepsi siswa, aplikasi TikTok*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social media platforms have reshaped how people communicate and consume content, particularly among teenagers who are highly engaged with these technologies (Sumadevi, 2023). One platform that has gained significant traction is TikTok, primarily due to its short, captivating videos covering a wide array of topics, from entertainment to education (Paloma Escamilla-Fajardo et al., 2021). Initially popular for its entertainment content, TikTok has evolved into a multifunctional platform that now offers educational resources, including language learning materials. Specifically, many users and content creators have leveraged the platform to share language learning tips and lessons, particularly for English learners (Shahid & Khan, 2024). This growing trend has sparked interest in exploring how social media, especially TikTok, can support language acquisition.

The integration of social media in education is not a novel concept. Previous studies have investigated platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook for their potential in language education, offering tools such as instructional videos, interactive content, and opportunities for real-time communication (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). These platforms provide learners with access to real-life language usage and immersive experiences. However, TikTok's unique format, with its brief, engaging, and often user-driven content, offers a distinct approach to language learning. This platform's ability to capture the attention of younger audiences makes it a valuable tool for informal, supplementary education, particularly in language learning contexts. Several studies have explored TikTok's role in promoting English language skills. For instance, Addinna (2022; Adnan & Morat (2022); Rama et al. (2023) have examined TikTok's impact on students' English proficiency, identifying both benefits, such as increased motivation and engagement, and challenges, including the platform's potential for distraction.

Despite the growing body of literature on social media and language learning, the role of TikTok as a focused, supplementary tool for developing specific skills, such as English speaking, remains underexplored. While previous research has highlighted the general benefits of using social media for language learning, these studies often concentrate on overall language acquisition without delving into the specific skill sets that can be improved through these platforms. Additionally, much of the existing research has focused on social media's informal educational potential outside of structured classroom settings, leaving a gap in understanding how TikTok might function within more formal learning environments. Thus, there is a need for research that investigates how students perceive TikTok's effectiveness as a tool for developing English-speaking skills, particularly within the context of a formal educational framework.

This study seeks to address these gaps by exploring the perceptions of class X students at SMA Perintis 1 Bandar Lampung regarding the effectiveness of TikTok in enhancing their English-speaking skills during the academic year 2023-2024. The primary objective of this research is to assess whether TikTok can serve as an effective supplementary tool for improving speaking skills, complementing traditional methods of instruction. The study aims to understand how students utilize TikTok for language learning, how it influences their speaking proficiency, and what challenges or limitations they may face when incorporating TikTok into their language learning routine.

By focusing on student perceptions, this research contributes to the growing field of technology-enhanced language learning and offers insights into how TikTok might be integrated into formal education. This study's novelty lies in its emphasis on English-speaking skills, a critical component of language proficiency, and the exploration of how social media can be harnessed to support this skill in a structured educational context. It will also provide a deeper understanding of the challenges students may encounter when using TikTok for educational purposes, particularly in balancing entertainment and learning. In doing so, this research aims to expand the current discourse on the role of social media in education and offer practical implications for educators looking to integrate these platforms into their teaching strategies.

In summary, while prior research has demonstrated the potential of social media platforms for language learning, there remains a lack of focused studies on TikTok's role in developing English-speaking skills within formal educational settings. This study addresses that gap by

examining students' perspectives on TikTok's utility as a supplementary language learning tool and seeks to determine its effectiveness in improving English-speaking skills. The findings of this research will contribute to understanding how TikTok can be leveraged in educational contexts to enhance language learning outcomes, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers alike.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. English Language Learning

English language learning has been a major focus of educational research for decades, with various methodologies and approaches emerging over time (Zein et al., 2020). Traditional approaches, such as grammar-translation and direct methods, focused on structured learning through explicit grammar instruction and vocabulary memorization. However, these approaches were often criticized for not providing students with practical language skills for real-world communication. As a result, more communicative and interactive methods, such as the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, gained popularity in the latter half of the 20th century, emphasizing the need for learners to engage in meaningful communication (Nggawu & Thao, 2023).

In more recent years, the use of technology in English language learning has become increasingly important. Digital tools such as language learning apps, online platforms, and multimedia resources have provided learners with greater flexibility and access to diverse linguistic inputs (Tabasi et al., 2024). Research shows that integrating technology into language learning can significantly improve motivation and engagement, particularly when it allows for interactive and personalized learning experiences. However, while technology is beneficial, it must be used strategically to complement traditional learning techniques and not replace human interaction, which is essential for developing communication skills (Sarker et al., 2019).

Another important aspect of English language learning is the role of cultural exposure in language acquisition (Hossain, 2024). Learning a language is not just about mastering its structure but also understanding the culture behind it. Studies indicate that exposure to authentic cultural contexts—whether through literature, media, or interaction with native speakers—enhances language proficiency by helping learners grasp idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and pragmatic language use. As the global demand for English proficiency increases, educators are encouraged to provide a well-rounded approach that combines language instruction with cultural learning, facilitating both linguistic competence and intercultural understanding.

2. Digital Platform as English Language Learning Development

Digital platforms have transformed language learning by providing learners with interactive, flexible, and often more engaging tools compared to traditional methods (Ramadhan, 2023). Many platforms, such as YouTube, Duolingo, and Memrise, offer content tailored to language learners of various levels. These platforms incorporate multimedia elements like videos, audio clips, and quizzes to reinforce vocabulary and grammar while allowing learners to practice listening and speaking skills. In particular, platforms like YouTube allow learners to access authentic language content created by native speakers, fostering both comprehension and cultural awareness. Studies have shown that these tools can improve learners' motivation and offer personalized, self-paced learning experiences.

In comparison to these platforms, TikTok offers a unique format with its short, easily digestible videos, enabling users to consume language content quickly and frequently. Its user-generated content encourages learners to engage with authentic language usage in informal settings, which may lead to better language retention and understanding of colloquial expressions. Unlike more structured platforms like Duolingo, TikTok fosters a more organic learning environment where users can discover new content through trends, challenges, and viral videos. This informal style of learning can be both motivating and relatable for students, though the lack of structured progression might pose challenges for some learners in achieving specific language goals.

3. TikTok as a Language Learning Tool

TikTok offers a range of features that make it an effective platform for language learning. Its short-video format caters to attention spans and encourages concise, digestible content, which can be ideal for language learners who want quick, focused lessons. The app's interactive features, such as hashtags and challenges, allow users to find specific language-learning content and engage with trending educational videos. Additionally, TikTok's "Duet" and "Stitch" functions enable learners to practice by responding to or collaborating with native speakers, fostering real-time interaction and dialogue. This kind of peer-to-peer learning can promote language practice in authentic, informal settings, creating a more engaging experience compared to traditional methods.

TikTok also supports both visual and auditory learning styles, as users can watch videos with subtitles, listen to native pronunciations, and see cultural contexts firsthand. Through exposure to varied accents, dialects, and informal speech patterns, learners can gain a more comprehensive understanding of language usage in real-world settings. Furthermore, TikTok's user-driven content allows learners to become creators themselves, encouraging active language production rather than passive consumption. However, there are challenges, such as the potential for inaccurate language information or distractions from non-educational content. Despite these concerns, TikTok's dynamic and interactive nature presents a novel way to supplement traditional language learning methods.

METHOD

In order to achieve the research aims, this study employs a qualitative approach. According to (Creswell, 2014) qualitative research is a form of investigation that seeks to obtain a comprehensive comprehension of diverse phenomena encountered by persons participating in the research. This encompasses the students' evaluations on the efficacy of TikTok content for the purpose of learning the English language, with a specific emphasis on the emotional factors that impact their learning journey. This study included a sample of 70 students from SMA Perintis 1 Bandar Lampung. The sample was chosen using purposive sampling methods. In order to be included in the sample, students had to meet two criteria: they needed to be active users of social media and have previous experience using social media for educational purposes, which was made possible by their access to suitable equipment.

The survey encompassed inquiries regarding the length and objective of social media usage, as well as the most commonly utilised social media platforms for the goal of learning English. In the final section, students assessed the efficacy of social media in acquiring English language skills using a four-point Likert scale, which encompassed responses ranging from strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing. This portion consisted of twenty-one items that examined the positives of social media,

such as the impact on students' emotions, the development of language abilities, and the overall benefits. In addition, there was a component consisting of five items that focused on concerns related to social use. The statements were derived from Sharma (2020) which stated the questionnaire was formulated in Indonesian to mitigate potential misinterpretations. The questionnaire is supplemented by an interview to acquire a comprehensive understanding of students' perception.

Table 1. Student Questionnaire Indicators on the Use of Social Media for English Language Learning

Aspects	Indicator	Item Number	Item Total
Student Behavior in Using Social Media	1) Time Spent on Social Media before and during learning from TikTok educational content	1,2	2
	2) Purpose of Using Social Media	3	1
	3) The amount of time spent learning English through social media	4	1
	4) The most frequently used social media application for learning English	5	1
Student Perception	1) Advantages of using social media to learn English		
	• Students' feelings of using social media to learn English	1-9	9
	• Skills and components of English used on social media	10-14	5
	2) Challenges of using social media to learn English	15-18	4

Once the data has been gathered using questionnaires and interviews, it needs to be analysed. The questionnaire data is inputted into a table and analysed using frequencies and percentages obtained from Google Forms. The researcher then interprets the results. The interview data is analysed using the braun and clark model, which includes the processes of data reduction, presentation, and drawing a conclusion. Data reduction involves the process of carefully choosing, concentrating, and condensing original data obtained from different sources. The collected data is subsequently displayed in formats such as tables, graphs, and essays to facilitate researchers' comprehension of the information and enable them to determine appropriate subsequent steps. The interview data are presented in a narrative format. Ultimately, researchers formulate and validate conclusions by addressing research inquiries, ensuring the precision of data through triangulation, which entails cross-checking information from various sources and methodologies to establish its authenticity.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Time spent on social media

The questionnaire results revealed the duration of their social media use in the days before and after, specifically related to their interaction with TikTok's English-language educational materials, in the initial two survey questions. The findings suggest that social media usage increased after the launch of TikTok's English educational content.

Table 2. Use of Social Media before and after content

Duration	Before the Existence of TikTok Content		After the Existence of TikTok Content	
	Frequency	**Percentages**	**Frequency**	**Percentages**
1 - 3 hours	30	42.9%	12	17.1%
4 - 6 hours	19	27.1%	19	27.1%
7 - 9 hours	11	15.7%	23	32.9%
More than 9 hours	10	14.3%	16	22.9%
Total	**70**	**100%**	**70**	**100%**

In terms of increased social media usage, it is driven by the shift to online education and digital platforms such as Google Classroom, which require students to frequently use mobile devices for learning. In addition, TikTok's engaging content has made it a preferred tool for educational purposes over traditional resources such as dictionaries, which students find boring. The flexibility and extra free time associated with online learning further encourages students to use social media for both education and entertainment (Ramadhan, 2023). In addition, students' desire to stay abreast of technological developments also motivates them to stay active on these platforms. As a result, social media now plays a central role in students' educational and social experiences. This shift has not only increased the appeal of learning but also significantly increased the time students spend on social media platforms.

2. Purpose of using social media

This questionnaire was designed to explore students' various purposes for using social media. It is important to note that participants were given the opportunity to select more than one answer, reflecting the diversity in how students utilize social media. The following table presents a comprehensive analysis of the questionnaire findings. The following are the findings from the questionnaire regarding the purpose of using social media.

Table 3. Purposes on Using Social Media

Purposes	Frequency	Percentage
For learning purposes	52	**74.3%**
To search for information or news	40	57.1%
For entertainment and lifestyle	37	52.9%
To communicate with family and friends	41	58.6%
To find motivation	11	15.7%
To fill free time	11	15.7%

The interviews reinforced the findings on the role of social media in education, highlighting its accessibility and global reach, especially through mobile devices. Student 3 emphasized that social media provides easy access to diverse information, enriching students' knowledge and expanding their learning opportunities by exposing them to global content, including English-language materials. This accessibility promotes educational growth and international interpersonal relationships. The interview results confirmed that students use social media primarily for educational purposes, followed by information acquisition, entertainment and communication. Social media has become an important part of students' daily lives, supporting both academic and personal needs (Erland Hamzah, 2015). Therefore, educational institutions can benefit from integrating social media into their teaching methods to improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

3. Time Spent on Social Media Learning a Language English

This questionnaire highlights the duration of students' use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram with the aim of improving their proficiency in English. The data obtained aims to provide a deeper understanding of the impact of social media on students' English language acquisition.

Table 4. Time spent on social media for learning English per days

Time	Frequency	Percent
1-3 Hours	37	52.9%
4-6 Hours	21	30%
7-9 Hours	5	7.1%
More than 9 Hours	7	10%
Total	**70**	**100%**

The data and student statements in the interviews underscore the important role TikTok plays in facilitating English language learning. Students are attracted to its diverse international content and its blend of entertainment with educational value. One student said that TikTok videos help language learning by using mnemonic devices such as acronyms to remember words more easily. Another student emphasized that social media allows easy access to information on mobile devices, thus allowing students to reach English content from anywhere around the world. Overall, these insights illustrate how TikTok serves as both an instructional tool and a source of fun, thus making it a popular choice for improving language skills among students (Pebrimireni & Fauziya, 2024). Its wide access to global information makes TikTok a valuable medium for acquiring proficiency in English and other languages.

4. The most frequently used social media in improving English skills

The last component of the questionnaire encouraged participants to indicate the social media sites they used to improve their English. This section allowed for multiple choices to cater for a variety of interests. The purpose of this section was to collect extensive data on the preferred social media sites used for learning English. According to the survey findings, TikTok was the most preferred choice, with Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp as the next choices.

Table 5. The list of most frequently used

Application	Frequency	Percent
Tiktok	51	72.9%
Instagram	37	52.9%
Youtube	39	55.7%
Facebook	9	12.9%
Whatsapp	21	30%
Other	21	30%

Students confirmed that TikTok is a valuable tool for learning English, especially because of its exposure to international content. One student highlighted how TikTok's "For You Page" often features videos from different countries, allowing them to discover different languages and cultures. Students in Jakarta, who were already familiar with English, found it helpful to maintain vocabulary through abbreviated words while enjoying educational and entertainment content on TikTok. Other students emphasized that platforms such as TikTok, YouTube and Instagram are essential for improving language skills, helping them acquire new vocabulary, improve pronunciation and enhance listening skills. For example, following English-speaking

influencers and listening to foreign music further sharpens their understanding of the language. Students appreciate the mix of education and entertainment that the platform offers, making learning more fun. In addition, TikTok facilitates global information sharing and informal interactions with English, thus improving everyday communication skills (Rininggayuh et al., 2024). These findings highlight the benefits and challenges of using social media for English language learning, providing insights into strategies to maximize its educational potential.

5. Students' feelings about using social media to learn language English

The questionnaire indicates that students possess favourable attitudes towards utilising social media as a means of learning the English language. This suggests a positive view of social media sites as efficient instruments for acquiring language skills. The results indicate that students perceive social media as easily accessible, participatory, and advantageous for enhancing their English proficiency.

Table 6. Students' feelings about using social media to learn language English

Statement	Alternative Answer			
	SA	A	NA	SNA
Learning English using social media is fun	48.60%	50%	1.40%	0%
Learning English using social media makes you more confident in communicating with other people.	45.70%	45.70%	8.60%	0%
Learning English using social media makes you calmer when participating in English classes.	34.30%	54.30%	11.40%	0%
Learning English using social media makes you more independent.	40%	55.70%	2.90%	1.40%
Social media makes you feel more relaxed and comfortable when learning English.	52.90%	42.90%	1.40%	2.90%
Social media provides many resources for learning English.	58.60%	38.60%	1.40%	1.40%
Social media is easy to use for learning English.	40%	54.30%	5.70%	0%
I can use social media anytime and anywhere.	57.10%	41.40%	1.40%	0%
I can easily interact with other people on social media.	48.60%	42.90%	4.30%	4.30%

The questionnaire results show that students find using social media to learn English fun and effective. Many of them feel more confident in their English skills, thanks to the educational content they follow online. Interacting with English materials on social media also helps them to participate more in class, creating a relaxed and engaging learning environment. Students appreciate the freedom that social media provides, allowing them to access a variety of resources that complement traditional learning methods. The interview results support this finding, as the students mentioned that social media helped expand their vocabulary and exposed them to different accents, slang and idioms. This exposure increases their understanding of language and culture. In addition, social media also improves comprehension and pronunciation (Utami, 2018). By engaging in videos, movies and podcasts, students learn to recognize natural language patterns and increase their confidence in speaking. Overall, both questionnaires and interviews show that social media is an essential tool for students who want to improve their English vocabulary, listening skills and pronunciation.

6. Skills and components of the English language used in social media

The questionnaire reveals that social media platforms extensively utilise a range of English language abilities and components, with a specific focus on receptive skills like listening and reading, as well as vocabulary and pronunciation. Presented below is a table that demonstrates the application of these abilities and components on social media platforms.

Table 7. Skills and components of the English language used in social media

Statement	Alternative Answer			
	SS	S	T.S	STS
Social media gives me the opportunity to use my speaking skills in English.	34.30%	64.30%	1.40%	0%
Social media gives me the opportunity to gain new English vocabulary.	44.30%	50%	5.70%	0%
Social media helps me to improve my knowledge of English grammar.	41.40%	55.70%	2.90%	0%
Social media helps me to improve my knowledge of how to pronounce words in English.	48.60%	48.60%	1.40%	1.40%
Social media gives me the opportunity to use my reading skills in English.	41.40%	55.70%	0%	2.90%

The results of the questionnaire revealed that the students widely recognized social media as a valuable tool for improving their English language skills. This finding highlights the importance of social media as an additional resource in language learning. Students further confirmed these results, emphasizing the importance of learning accent variations and vocabulary that goes beyond traditional dictionary definitions. Other students shared their experiences of improving pronoun usage and verb conjugation through social media interactions, underscoring the importance of in-depth language practice in the real world. These insights show that students find active participation and practical experience essential to achieving language proficiency, making social media an effective and engaging tool in their language learning journey (Lim et al., 2023).

7. Challenges of using social media for learning English

The table below showcases the outcomes derived from a survey conducted among students regarding the difficulties encountered when utilizing social media for English language learning purposes.

Table 8. Challenges of using social media for learning English

Statement	Alternative Answer			
	SS	S	TS	STS
Banyak gangguan saat sedang belajar bahasa Inggris menggunakan media sosial.	22,9%	42,9%	30%	4,3%
In social media there is inappropriate content.	38.60%	51.40%	8.60%	1.40%
I have technical problems when learning English with social media (quotas, signals, gadgets).	52.90%	40%	5.70%	1.40%
Personal data on social media is vulnerable to misuse.	47.10%	41.40%	8.60%	2.90%

These challenges highlight the difficulties students face and indicate the need for proactive measures to create a safe and effective online learning environment. Comments in the interviews further illustrated these issues, with students discussing how technical issues can impact on their mental health. For example, one student pointed out that connectivity issues can arise from weak signals, while another highlighted the emotional effects of negative news on mental health. These perspectives suggest that addressing technical challenges and their

wider implications for student wellbeing is essential to effectively mitigate their impact on English language learning.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the positive attitudes of students toward using social media, particularly platforms like TikTok, as effective tools for learning the English language. The findings indicate that social media enhances students' oral communication skills, expands their vocabulary, and improves pronunciation through engaging content. While challenges such as internet connectivity issues and unsuitable content were identified, addressing these barriers is essential to maximize the educational benefits of social media. This research advances the field by emphasizing the dual role of social media as both an educational resource and a platform for social interaction, offering new perspectives on language acquisition. Educators can leverage these insights to supplement traditional teaching methods, fostering a more engaging and flexible learning environment. Future research should focus on the long-term effects of social media use on language proficiency and best practices for its integration into curricula, paving the way for innovative applications in language education.

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