



EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF USING TIKTOK TO SUPPORT ENGLISH SPEAKING LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore students' perceptions of using TikTok as an online learning platform to improve English speaking skills. The background of this research was based on the importance of mastering speaking skills in English as a productive skill that supports communication and academic achievement. With the rapid development of the digital era and the increasing use of social media among students, TikTok was perceived to have potential as an innovative learning medium by providing engaging, easily accessible audio-visual content aligned with the preferences of younger generations. This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design, which was conducted in an eighth-grade class at a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with six purposively selected students based on specific criteria. The findings revealed that the majority of students held positive perceptions of using TikTok for learning English speaking skills. They stated that the educational content available on TikTok helped enrich their vocabulary, improve their pronunciation, and increase their learning motivation due to its enjoyable and accessible nature. However, some students expressed neutral to less positive perceptions, preferring traditional learning methods and noting the limitations of TikTok's algorithm, which did not consistently present educational content. In conclusion, TikTok showed potential as a medium for learning English speaking skills, especially when supported by appropriate instructional strategies.

Keywords: Learning, Students' Perception, Speaking, Teaching Platform TikTok

A. INTRODUCTION

English these days is important. Students should learn both their native ones and English language since English is the world's most widely used language. Addinna (2022) stating that English has become a universal language that is spoken all over the world. In Indonesia, English is taught at every educational level, which shows how important it is to learn this language. Charles (2025) also stated that one of the disciplines that is crucial is English, particularly for students majoring in English. Where they must be proficient in all four areas



of English in order to effectively communicate and engage in classroom activities. Because of this, how well they can communicate in English will have a big impact on how well they learn in class.

Pajarwati et al. (2021) noted that English is the first foreign language taught in Indonesia, beginning in elementary school and progressing to university level, as well as the inclusion of English as one of the fundamental courses in the curriculum in Indonesian education. Aziza (2020) also define that people across the world choose to study English as a second language because it is vital. English is taught as a second language in many countries, and children begin studying it at an early age. The language of science, aviation, computing, diplomacy, and tourism is English. Knowing English improves your chances of landing a decent job with an international corporation.

Many people who are learning a language think that speaking fluency is primarily determined by one's capacity to communicate. Tiurma et al. (2021) said that speaking is one of four skills in the English subject that is crucial to master. It facilitates communication between the students, their teacher, and their friends. Speaking is considered to be the most crucial ability that influences achieving language communication goals. In this way, speaking is a skill that students who have studied English as a foreign language must master, it may thus be said. In order to improve the students' speaking abilities, the instructor must pay close attention to the teaching platform for the speaking learning process (Jambari et al., 2021).

The significance of speaking abilities for students can be noticed when they have a chat with a friend or when they need to share their viewpoint directly on a topic that is asked or taught orally by the teacher (Butarbutar, 2021). It is supported by Saragih et al. (2022) that speaking is one among the English skills that produces sound. When speaking, the sentences spoken frequently carry implicit information. Thus, speaking is a skill that can demonstrate someone's ability to communicate. Speaking is one of the productive skills, which implies that it develops after hearing, which is one of the receptive skills.

This means that in order to communicate effectively, English language learners require some sort of speaking instruction exercises. Another idea is supposed by Bulele & Wibowo (2020) for this 21st century, which is an all-digital era with growing technology, is very supportive of learning innovations that students can use and access quickly using social media. Due to



students' strong preference for social media, using it as a learning tool can be a smart tactic. The rise of numerous application platforms that offer engaging features for creating videos gives a sign that the digital era is increasingly dominating smartphone users, as seen from the amount of video content spread on various social media (Macías Urrego et al., 2024).

Teachers must use effective teaching techniques to stimulate students' interest in learning. According to Salsabil & Wahyudi (2023), to provide their pupils with materials teachers might use three different kinds of instructional media. The first category is Audio, which includes audible content like podcasts, mp3 files, and songs. The second kind is visual, which provides something that is visible, such a slide, book, picture, or a number of other things. The next is audio-visual, which combines visual and aural elements that can be seen and heard and helps teachers capture students' interest. Examples of this kind of media that might be able to transmit a lot of information include film, television, and video.

Sharabati et al. (2022) describe TikTok as a Chinese social media and music video platform. With the help of this program, users can simply create brief videos with amazing outcomes. It offers unique and fascinating special effects. The TikTok program has a wide variety of material, including news, education, entertainment, and more people may share their experiences with other people so they can learn fresh information that has been generated by the developer. Because utilizing this program is simple and clear, many learners as well as educators utilize it as a novel teaching tool today. Diana Sarkila et al. (2024) define students may watch and search through various educational speaking videos on TikTok, making learning engaging and entertaining. Include fewer speaking exercises when the teaching method is unacceptable.

Thus, TikTok can be used as an online english teaching platform, especially in improving students' speaking skills. According to Ferstephanie & Lady Pratiwi (2022), TikTok is a platform for short video destinations that anyone can use through a mobile phone. This short video platform has received much attention from the public because it is the most downloaded application. The mission of this TikTok application is to inspire creativity and bring joy because even though the duration of the video displayed is short but can be packaged well, so it is not dull. Many categories of content on TikTok can be enjoyed, like comedy, education,



fashion and beauty, food, and video vlogs. The TikTok application is an application that is liked, admired, attractive, and loved by millennials (Juwariyah et al., 2021).

This study aims to understand how students learn with TikTok and whether they believe the app may help them with their independent English language learning. Humans use their five senses to continue interacting with their environment, and perception is the process by which information is transferred to the brain (Berthoz, 2002). Perception, according to Dubois et al. (2021), is the process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory experiences, giving them significance. It involves exposing a person to a stimulus through their senses. Students' opinions may contain specifics or an overview of how they use TikTok for learning, as well as whether or if using the app to study English genuinely helps students become more proficient in the language.

B. METHOD

This research conducted as a qualitative approach. The research design is used qualitative design because this study concern with process. Zahle (2023) stated that qualitative data collection is exemplified by the use of methods like participant observation, qualitative interviewing, focus group interviewing, and the collection of documents. The research type of this study used case study. Case study is a single instance of some bound systems, which can range from one individual to a class, a school, or an entire community. Priya (2021) identifies in a descriptive case study, the purpose is to 'describe' a phenomenon in detail in its real-world context. It is used extensively in sociology and anthropology.

The research was conducted at an Islamic Junior High School located in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan. The selection of this location was based on its relevance to the customized focus and selected research topic. The reason the researchers chose this location was because the principal and teachers were very supportive of the topic during the initial survey. The participants of this study consisted of one class of 8th-grade students from the academic year 2024/2025 at one of Islamic Junior High School. The research was carried out from May to June 2024.



Table 1. Participants Characteristics

Age	Sex	Total
13-14 years old	Female	15
13-14 years old	Male	11
Total Participants		26

This research uses a purposive sampling technique to determine the informants. Purposive sampling is a method of selecting informants based on specific criteria and the needs of the researcher. The researcher selected the interview subjects through a deliberate selection process. To ensure the appropriateness of the subjects, the researcher observed the participants in the classroom daily over a period of five weeks. Based on these observations, six students were selected as subjects.

1. The students were recommended by their teachers as those who consistently submitted assignments on time and completed their homework using TikTok in accordance with the teacher's instructions.
2. The students were more active in classroom activities.
3. The researcher assumed that these students, who have average English-speaking skills, could provide valuable insights for the research.

After the interview data is collected, the results are transcribed by the researcher and then analyzed. The data is analyzed using the thematic analysis method. After the analysis, the collected data is reduced and simplified. The large amount of data needs to be organized. Organizing the data is essential to make it easier for the researcher to sort out relevant information for use, whether by reducing or reconfiguring it.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research classified the students' perceptions of using TikTok as an online English teaching platform in learning English by using the interviews. The major goal was to answer the study questions by providing the outcomes. The researcher investigated the results of the interviews conducted with a number of one class in 8 grades students pupils at one of Islamic Junior High



School which located on Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan. The next sections extensively studied and analyzed the interview results.

Students' Perception on The Use of TikTok as The Online English Teaching Platform for Speaking Learning Process

From the interviews conducted, it is evident that the students' responses are varied, reflecting both positive and mixed attitudes towards TikTok as a platform for learning English speaking skills. Many students expressed positive views on TikTok's role in supporting English-speaking skills. For example, Student 1 noted that TikTok's educational content helped expand their vocabulary and improve pronunciation, Student 2 found that TikTok made it easier to pronounce difficult words due to repeated exposure on the For You Page (FYP), while Student 5 enjoys learning English to enhance understanding and has used TikTok occasionally for this purpose. The findings are in line with Warini et al. (2020), who found that social media platforms, including TikTok, can facilitate language learning by providing learners with authentic materials and real-world language use.

"Yes, I used to not understand much, but after watching and listening to learning content on TikTok, I've come to understand and improve quite a bit."
(Student 1)

"Yes, because there are some vocabulary words that are difficult to pronounce, but when those words appear on my TikTok FYP, it becomes easier for me to pronounce them."
(Student 2)

"Yes, speaking lessons using TikTok are very beneficial for me."
(Student 5)

Some students exhibited neutral or mixed perceptions. For instance, Student 3 preferred traditional learning methods like books but recognized TikTok's value in enhancing vocabulary through auditory exposure. Similarly, Student 4 found TikTok helpful for acquiring vocabulary but did not see significant benefits for speaking practice, citing the inconsistent appearance of relevant videos on their FYP. The differences in perception may be attributed to individual learning preferences and the algorithmic nature of TikTok, which does not always cater to specific educational needs. These findings are echoed with a study by Yovita & Purnamaningsih (2022), which pointed out that while social media can offer valuable language learning opportunities, the content must be tailored to the learners' needs to maximize

effectiveness. If students are not exposed to suitable educational videos or the content lacks sufficient pedagogical value, the benefits of using TikTok for language learning can be limited.

“No, because I prefer learning from books and just reading them rather than using TikTok.”
(Student 3)

“No, because videos related to pronouncing English vocabulary and sentences rarely appear on my FYP.”
(Student 4)

Challenges were also noted, particularly in the case of students who preferred more structured learning approaches. Student 6, expressed frustration with English learning in general and found TikTok’s educational content rarely appeared on their FYP. This challenge reflects the limitations of using social media platforms in educational contexts, where the control over content and structure is limited compared to traditional classroom materials. As suggested by the input hypothesis by Sadiku (2015), comprehensible input is essential for language acquisition; therefore, the inconsistency in finding appropriate content can hinder the learning process for some students.

“TikTok doesn’t really help me improve my English pronunciation because such content rarely appears on my FYP.”
(Student 6)

The results of this study are consistent with earlier research on the use of social media in language learning. Previous studies have demonstrated that platforms like TikTok offer several benefits for language learners, such as access to authentic language use, increased engagement, and opportunities for informal learning (Lee Mei & Abdul Aziz, 2022; Yang, 2020; Titik Komariyah et al., 2022). However, these benefits are often contingent on factors like the availability of relevant content, students' individual learning preferences, and their prior familiarity with the platform. A notable aspect of this study is the focus on speaking skills, which previous research has explored to a lesser extent compared to reading or vocabulary learning. The findings support the idea that while TikTok can enhance speaking skills by providing auditory input and examples of pronunciation, it may not be a comprehensive solution for all learners due to the variability of content



Students' Interest in Using TikTok and How This Strategy is Helpful for Speaking Learning

The second research question addressed students' interest in using TikTok as a platform for learning speaking skills. The interviews revealed that interest varied significantly across the sample, with some students showing strong enthusiasm and others preferring alternative learning methods. Several students demonstrated a high level of interest in using TikTok for speaking learning, finding the platform enjoyable and helpful.

For example, Student 1 appreciated the convenience of being able to quickly search for explanations on TikTok, making the speaking learning process more enjoyable. Student 5 also found TikTok helpful in understanding English speaking concepts better, using it alongside other resources like Google. This indicates that TikTok's interactive nature and user-generated content can enhance motivation and engagement in language learning. According to the self-determination theory by Asio et al. (2023), the intrinsic motivation to learn is fostered when learners perceive an activity as enjoyable and relevant to their interests. Students who enjoyed using TikTok found it a motivational tool that made language learning less of a chore and more of a fun activity, thereby supporting their willingness to participate in speaking practices.

“Yes, it really helps me understand and recognize English vocabulary that is often mispronounced.”
(Student 1)

“Yes, the vocabulary that appears on TikTok helps me better understand the use of English words that I’ve previously looked up on Google.”
(Student 5)

Conversely, some students expressed only moderate or low interest in using TikTok for speaking learning. For instance, Student 2, while acknowledging the accessibility of TikTok content, preferred independent study. This suggests that while TikTok can be beneficial, it may not be suitable for all learning preferences. Student 6's lack of enthusiasm was linked to frustration with English lessons and the algorithmic limitation of the platform in delivering educational content. This is similar to what has been explained by previous studies related to the same topic (Agting et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2023), who noted that not all students find social media platforms useful for learning due to differences in learning styles and preferences.



“Yes, because there are some vocabulary words that are difficult to pronounce, but when those words appear on my TikTok FYP, it becomes easier for me to pronounce them.”

(Student 2)

“TikTok doesn’t really help me improve my English pronunciation because such content rarely appears on my FYP.”

(Student 6)

D. CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that TikTok can serve as a valuable supplementary tool for learning English; however, its effectiveness varies among students depending on individual preferences and the frequency of educational content in their feeds. Most students reported that TikTok's engaging and interactive content made the learning experience more enjoyable. They found that the platform helped them discover new vocabulary and supported the improvement of their speaking skills. Conversely, some students expressed a preference for more traditional learning methods, suggesting the importance of a blended approach to cater to different learning styles. Additionally, a few students reported limited exposure to educational content on TikTok, which reduced the platform's effectiveness for their language learning.

The results of this study offer several practical implications. For English language teachers, incorporating TikTok or similar digital platforms into learning activities may enhance student engagement and support vocabulary development and pronunciation. However, teachers should also consider students' individual learning preferences and supplement digital tools with traditional methods to create a balanced and inclusive learning environment. For instructional content developers, these findings highlight the need to create more targeted and accessible educational content on platforms like TikTok. By optimizing the visibility of such content in students' feeds, developers can maximize the platform's educational potential.

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